

Groupline

NOVEMBER 2015

THE SIOUXLAND INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

The Next

Siouxland Intergroup
Meeting is will be 7:00PM
Thursday, Nov 19, 2015
at the Central Office,
614 Cook Street.
www.aasiouxcity.org

**Come early
and grab a
good Seat!**



**If you would
like your EVENT to be listed
in the GROUPLINE or if you
have artwork, poetry or an
article you would like to be
considered for print, please
email your submission to:**

AAcentralofficesc@gmail.com

**Or drop it by the
Central Office
712-252-1333
www.aasiouxcity.org**

**The next DISTRICT 1
meeting will be 7:00PM
Tuesday Nov 10, 2015
at the Hawkeye Club,
420 Jones St, in Sioux City**

CENTRAL OFFICE HOURS

Monday: CLOSED

Tues--Thurs: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Fri: 9:30 am to 6:00 pm

When Anything Goes

From the Grapevine Feb 2007

Will AA stay?

I have attended discussion meetings wanting to help myself and others grow in sobriety, but left these meetings feeling that there wasn't much AA recovery in those rooms. When I spoke about it with my sponsor and other discussion group regulars, they said that there are no bad Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Examine what I had taken to the meeting, they said, and think about what I had done to make it better.

Imagine my despair at the thought that I didn't fit in at the only place I fit in. Did this mean I wanted to drink? I was told it did.

I believe AA members should be allowed to bring up almost any topic--including what's bothering them--at a meeting. What happens next is what matters. If someone says, "I'm mad at my landlord," I don't think the discussion should then focus on bad landlord stories. It could take several directions: Resentment is the number one offender--how we can avoid it? What is your part in the transaction? Did you act with patience, love, and tolerance? Did you pray for guidance? Did you talk to your sponsor? In other words, are we looking to apply spiritual principles in all our affairs?

When I was asked to moderate a discussion meeting, I suggested the topic, "Can we improve our meetings by limiting discussions to AA principles?" The first comment came from a woman with twenty years of sobriety.

"Moderators used to keep the topic on Alcoholics Anonymous but that doesn't seem to be the norm any more," she said. I agreed. Some moderators called on people, told their own mini-leads, or commented after each member's share.

The next comment shocked me. "You are looking for the spiritual side of the program, but you won't find it in a meeting because most people don't practice the Steps," a gentleman said. The meeting quickly shifted to the majority view: "People can say whatever they want,--what is wrong with you?"

"I think you have a deep thirst for the spiritual side of things, so I strongly suggest that you join a church," was the final comment of the evening. I left more confused and despondent than I had been before my very first AA meeting. I felt like I had been yelling for rock and roll at a classical music concert--I could yell all I wanted, but folks came to hear classical music, they were happy with it, and had no desire to change.

I received a copy of the Grapevine and saw that I was not alone. In the March 2006 issue, an article, "Endangered," discussed a group with a dwindling attendance and how they improved.

"We decided that when anyone wanted to use the meeting just as a forum for 'how I'm feeling today' or 'where I'm at today,' we'd talk instead about the solution as outlined in the Big Book," the author wrote. I wasn't nuts, and my attitude wasn't wrong, but what should I do?

Today, I primarily attend lead meetings and keep searching for old-fashioned meetings where AA principles are still discussed. When asked to moderate, I direct a meeting to the Steps. If I feel a meeting was bad because the group was happy just to hear where everybody was at today, that doesn't mean I am at fault. As my good friend Jim says, "If anyone says they haven't been to a bad meeting, he or she isn't going to enough meetings."

Red

THE heavy, steel bar gate buzzed and clicked open. I stepped inside, and the gate slammed shut with a loud bang that spoke volumes. I was behind bars and would remain there.

A uniformed officer ushered me into a small windowless room identified by a sign that read "intake." Instructed to strip, I felt embarrassed and vulnerable. I did as told. Finished with the dehumanizing experience of a body search, I was directed to a shower with disinfecting soap, and told to take a seat on a small bench when I finished. My second dehumanizing experience was underway. Slowly, the gravity of my situation began to sink in. A state penitentiary was to be my home for the next three years. At age 49, I'd received a three-year sentence, and it transformed my life.

I grew up on a small Central Florida farm with three older brothers. My parents divorced the year before I started first grade. "Broken home" was the term used in the mid-50s. Not having a father was a burden I would carry throughout my years in public school. This was the first realization that I was different.

Strength and determination defined my mother. Raising four sons alone during that era was not easy. Without an education, she relied on her hard work and keen wits. Life was difficult, luxuries were scarce, but we managed. We never went without the necessities.

Alcohol was always around. I never remember a time when a bottle of liquor was not in the cupboard. Mother had an occasional drink, but, to my knowledge, she never overindulged. My two older brothers were a different story. They drank at any opportunity. I witnessed and participated in alcohol abuse at an early age. The first time I remember being drunk resulted from a dare issued by my older brothers.

As I grew older, my alcohol consumption increased, usually during family parties with alcohol purchased by my mother, since I was underage. Her idea was to protect me. The rationale made sense at the time. She correctly assumed I would drink at any opportunity I had. Providing parental supervision ensured I would avoid trouble. Mother never realized just how far down this path I would travel.

Entering high school, I quickly realized I was encountering a different crowd, one of affluence and social standing. I'd spent my previous school years with others in socioeconomic circumstances like mine; now I was trying to assimilate into groups defined by privilege and opportunity.

I soon learned I did not fit in anywhere. I attempted to leave my farm-boy persona behind, but my acceptance by the popular crowd was never complete. Alcohol was the perfect social lubricant, the drug of choice in those days. My drinking escalated during high school. I found a way to be comfortable in my own skin.

Twenty years after graduation, two failed marriages, the death of my mother and a nephew, I tried the geographic cure for all my problems. I moved to North Dakota, attempting to escape the pain in my life, never realizing most of my pain was self-inflicted. The only way I knew how to deal with the pain was self-medicating and working extremely hard. From my perspective, life was finally manageable.

In June of 1997, out of desperation and loneliness, I married for the third time. My life once again appeared normal. But the drinking quickly became a problem. I had heard it all before. My previous marriages ended because of my drinking. I could never understand the situation. I worked hard and felt I deserved to relax at the end of a long day. I never missed work or had legal problems. I just did not get it.

On Sept. 27, 1998, I was involved in a near-fatal, alcohol-related car crash. Although severely injured, I survived. The other person involved was not as fortunate. This was the first time my drinking had ever caused anyone harm. I was scared sober; I realized just how close to death I had come. If I ever drank again, I would surely die.

I received a charge of negligent homicide. My life was over. I was 49 years old and going to prison as a convicted felon. It could not get any worse. I lost everything I'd owned; immediately after sentencing the bank initiated foreclosure proceedings and repossessed my work equipment. There was no sympathy.

Initially, everyone arriving at prison goes to an "orientation" unit for observation. Part of this process involves talking to an addiction counselor to discuss any substance abuse problems. Of course, I denied having a problem. I admitted to an occasional bout of drinking and quickly added that everyone does that. The counselor agreed that no treatment was needed.

After orientation, I was transferred to a medium security facility. I attended my first AA meeting out of boredom. I did not have a problem, remember? I received a copy of the Big Book. Since I had plenty of time, I started reading, and the more I read, the more I began to see myself. Slowly I came to realize I had a problem, which had started many years before. I was an alcoholic. I needed and wanted help.

I contacted the addiction counselor who had interviewed me during orientation. His response was not favorable. I understood his position. Under similar circumstances, I would have been skeptical too. I continued attending AA meetings and reading anything I could about alcoholism. As a voracious reader, I became proactive. As I read more, I began to identify with the information I discovered.

After 24 months of incarceration and many conversations with the addiction counselor, I received permission to participate in the "intensive" substance abuse program --eight hours daily for five days. I also participated in an anger management program in prison, as well as numerous counseling sessions.

I came to realize this was an opportunity to learn who I was, where I wanted to go and how to get there. I developed an attitude of gratitude during my incarceration.

On Aug. 1, 2001, I walked out of the same gate I had entered 25 months earlier. When that same heavy, steel bar gate buzzed and clicked this time, I did not hesitate. I left with the clothes on my back and a small cardboard box containing my few possessions.

The state had released me to a halfway house, until I was determined capable of living on my own. Once I secured my own apartment, I was subject to random visits by parole officers. My travel was restricted to work and necessary shopping. I was required to submit to random alcohol/drug testing. Prior to my release, I had contacted people active in the AA program in Fargo and asked for help. I needed a safety net; I left nothing to chance.

I arrived at the halfway house in Fargo on a Wednesday, and I started a job search right after breakfast the next day. I found a job within the first hour. I told the personnel manager about my circumstances before filling out the application. I held nothing back.

My sponsor, Lee, picked me up to attend my first meeting. The AA community in Fargo welcomed me unconditionally. I discovered a Fellowship of men and women I never could have imagined.

I owe a debt of thanks to all those who helped me during my early days, fresh out of prison. I returned to Fargo and to the penitentiary in 2006 to thank everyone who was instrumental in my recovery. I secured authorization to attend the same Wednesday evening meeting I'd attended while incarcerated, and I was the guest speaker.

My incarceration was a gift. Without such drastic measures, I would have never confronted my alcoholism. It was difficult, but exactly what I needed. I am a much better person because of this experience. My life today is spectacular; I have almost everything I want. I have a relationship that was not possible while I was drinking, and friends who have never seen me drunk surround me.

I continue to deal with electronically controlled gates. Every third Wednesday I participate in an AA meeting at a jail in the Berkshires. But now, when the gates close behind me, I know I will be walking out again within an hour.

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS THRU Oct 30, 2015

GROUP NAME	THIS MONTH	YEAR TOTAL	GROUP NAME	THIS MONTH	YEAR TOTAL
12-Steps & 12-Traditions Discussion Group			No Name Group		\$674.50
21 Club N-S Group		\$95.75	No Matter What Group		
3 & 11 Groups Quarterly Breakfast		\$94.00	One A Day Group	\$26.70	\$259.58
Afternoon Matinee Group			One Page At A Time Group		
Akron AA Group		\$84.50	Pause When Agitated Group		\$10.32
Between The Covers - YPAA		\$27.27	Primary Purpose Group		
Big Book Buddies Studt Group			Room 106 Big Book Study Group at Holy Spirit		\$110.00
Books & Beans Group			Saturday AM 12x12 Study Group		\$50.00
Books & Cookies Group		\$36.00	Second Chance Group		
By the Book Group	\$25.00	\$105.00	Serenity Now Group		
Check your Ego at the Door Group		\$131.57	Sergeant Bluff AA Group		\$350.00
Cheyenne Non-Smking Group			Sioux City Tri-State Roundup		\$1,000.00
Club 21 Group			Solutions Group Women's BB Study Group		
Come and Go Group			Someone Cares Group		\$200.00
Drunks Helping Drunks Group		\$50.00	South Sioux Friday Nite BB Study Group		\$150.00
Early Risers Group			South Sioux Tuesday Niter's Group		
Elk Point AA Group			Spiritual 3-11 Meeting - Hawkeye Club	\$30.75	\$598.90
Emotional Sobriety Group			Steel Magnolias Group		\$50.00
Faith Without Works Group			Stockyards Men's Group	\$150.00	\$600.00
Faithful Fiver's	\$20.00	\$975.00	Sunday 1030AM Spiritual Meeting		
FOUNDER'S DAY			Sunday 3-11 St. Lukes Hospital Group	\$200.00	\$650.00
Friday 530 PM Group	\$40.25	\$234.79	Sunday Nite Spiritual Group		\$300.00
Friday Night Keep It Simple Group S.L.			Sunday Nite Big Book Study Grp	\$40.00	\$40.00
Glenn Ave Group			Sunrise Attitude Adjustment Meeting	\$37.00	\$1031.76
Grupo Nuevo Camino			Group Sunrise Retirement Home Group		
Hawkeye 10AM Group			Sweets and Treats Group		
Hawkeye Steps 3&11 Grp at Mercy Hospital		\$283.25	TGIS in Alton Group		\$150.00
How and Why of It Group			The How & Why Of It 12x12 Group		
Jackson Nebraska Monday Night Group		\$5.00	Tuesday 12 X 12 Group		\$126.00
Leed's Tuesday Open Group			Tuesday Early Bird Group	\$58.00	\$258.00
Leed's Wednesday Brown Bag Group		\$50.00	QUARTERLY UNITY DINNER		\$1,571.00
Leeds Sunday Nite Spiritual Group			We Can Group	\$30.00	\$119.50
Living in The Solution Group		\$180.00	Wednesday BB Study Group		\$294.35
Living Sober Group			Westlawn Group	\$50.00	\$486.18
Many Hands Caring Grp		\$400.00	Where It All Begins Group		
Marble Group		\$100.00	Wise Words Fellowship Club Group		
Morningside Fellowship Group		\$100.00	Women's Open Topic Group		\$35.00
Moville Tuesday Nite Group		\$75.00	Young Persons In AA		\$320.00
OTHER DONATIONS					
Birthday Donations	\$10.00	\$241.00	Individual Gifts		
Cash Donations	\$25.95	\$268.35	Memorial Donation		
Central Office Open House		\$140.77	** Monthly Intergroup Mtg	\$11.00	\$130.00

Faithful Fiver Contributors as of Oct 30, 2015

Amy D	Cal H	Carol C	Charlie K	Don P	Eileen M	Greg N
Jerry H	Kathy B	Kevin J	Kevin M	Mike H	Pat G	Pete J
Rick W	Rodney C	Theresa J	Tom C	William B		

Where everybody knows my name

From the Grapevine Oct 2010

It took only five months for this newcomer to see the healing power in her home group

I GREW up watching a lot of TV sitcoms, and recall "All in the Family," where Archie Bunker sat for hours in his chair saying, "Shut up, Edith, and get me a beer." I also remember the show "Cheers," where everyone hollered out "Norm!" and the theme song about "where everybody knows your name, where they're always glad you came." Truthfully, I always loved that feeling of walking into a bar, having the bartender pour my beverage of choice, and people chime out my name, welcoming me home.

My story is not a scripted show with built-in laugh tracks, but it is truly a reality show. Most of my family was out of state, so as a hard-working single woman, loneliness was one of the things that led to my drinking more. It was also one of the things that I struggled with as I began my sobriety, letting go of many friends and activities that had come to define my very existence. Yet as I write, I realize that I'm beginning to have a new home.

I will always remember the Friday night I came to my first AA meeting. I had called an AA-related clubhouse earlier to find out about meeting times. When I walked in that evening, I must have had the deer in the headlights look of the newbie, because someone quickly invited me to sit at the counter and have a cup of coffee before the meeting started. Another guy got a packet of pamphlets and a phone list together for me. I walked into the meeting and tried to pick up on the conversations and the jargon in the room. There seemed to be several people speaking at different times. "Twelve Steps" I'd heard of. "Twelve Promises"? Not a clue. "How It Works"? Totally foreign, and it didn't explain anything just then.

I quickly realized that there were many rituals involved with the meetings and I'd just have to watch and figure it out. They went around the room introducing themselves and when it came to me, I sobbed, "I'm Jill and I'm an alcoholic," choking on every word as it came out of my mouth.

Flash forward to another meeting.

I came to the Saturday morning meeting feeling a bit befuddled. I had just celebrated my fifth month of sobriety and my bellybutton birthday earlier in the week, and was contrasting how great it was to have a sober birthday hinged with morning and evening meetings in contrast to the year before when I'd started with Bloody Marys in the morning, drinks with lunch, wine with a pedicure, dinner and drinks, a few birthday shots and then on to a night of karaoke and booze. Yes, I was feeling good about my newfound sobriety, and beginning to feel secure in it. I was also cleaning my house in other ways.

But this week, three people I knew from the club had relapsed. I began thinking about the people I had seen come in and out the door in this short period of time. This scared the heck out of me. How would I protect my own sobriety? I did not want to become a relapse statistic. As one of the guys was fond of saying, "I know I have another drunk in me, but I don't know if I have another recovery."

This particular meeting had a topic of "Here and Now." The second woman to speak had been sober about two weeks, and her sharing changed the focus of the meeting. Many of the participants directed their stories and their memories toward our newest member.

I saw a number of AA friends that I hadn't seen for a couple of weeks, and was really excited to be with the group. There were also a number of old-timers there, and they were having a good time giving each other grief. But they were also passing along tremendous wisdom. One man with many years of sobriety said to the newcomer, "Don't just come to the meetings, but come to the club, come to the dances, get involved with the people and the activities. Let them become your friends. I met my wife here and we celebrated our 26th anniversary this year."

Another old-timer spoke of the need to allow his Higher Power to be a part of the program, and how he'd been in AA forever, but continued to relapse until he could turn it over to God. The next gentleman said, "I never learned to read very well, but I learned to listen. I listen to audio tapes and CDs from the Big Book, from the Grapevine and from meetings and speakers." He concluded with his favorite line, "You've got to take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth and listen."

The next old-timer razzed the first one for being in the program "200 years" and the group laughed, but then he talked about what those fellows had been through over the last three decades, and how important it is to listen. "Listen to your sponsor, your peers and all the wisdom that is within. While everybody's story may have some unique elements, there are also those elements that are universal. That's why we nod in agreement, in empathy, in understanding. And remember to watch their faces as you listen. You will learn much."

The words he spoke to our newcomer went right to my heart as I was struggling with work on my Fourth Step. "There is nothing you can do, nothing you can say, that somebody here hasn't already done. You can't shock us. We are here, and we will love you, encourage you, support you and kick your butt when it needs it. All you have to do is want to be sober. All you have to do is not take the first drink." As I write now, recalling that meeting, I realize that nothing I am sharing here is really different than what you will hear at any meeting. Rather it was all the good, simple AA wisdom combined. But that is the beauty of AA. Some way, somehow, every meeting I go to seems to have exactly what I need to hear that day and a profound sense of wisdom pervades it.

What a wonderful motley crew, what a wonderful family in sobriety. It struck me then that AA has been around since 1935, and is celebrating its 75th anniversary, but in this room alone there was the collective wisdom and insights of well more than 150 years of sobriety! I've been in the program five months, and already feel so attached to these people, their stories, and their journeys. I have already gone to funerals of family members. I go to lunch with girlfriends, and nod when I see a fellow from AA at church or the local coffee shop. There is no longer a sense of embarrassment at being "one of them."

Just like any big family, we can drive each other nuts once in a while. That's why it is good to go to other meetings at different locations, but I always come home to my family at this club and the variety of the meetings held there. Here, I know someone will notice when I've not been at a meeting in a few days and call and see how it's going, or welcome me back with a question of, "Are you doing OK?" There I know Jeannie or Kris or Beth or Karen will call to see if I need a ride to a meeting. Betty will pull out an energy drink for me when she sees me walk in the door toward the counter. There I know Terry will always tease me for walking in late, Jeff will be at the counter to shout "Jillybean" when I walk in, Ron will hand me a root beer candy, and as I sit next to my friend Jill in a meeting she will say, "I'm Jill and I'm an alcoholic," and I will look at her and say, "No, I'm Jill and I'm an alcoholic," and we will all laugh. And with that, I pass.

Jill M.,

West Bend, Wis.

DISTRICT 1 MEETING

Oct 13, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7pm by Rafael followed by the Serenity prayer.

DCM: Rafael gave the DCM report for Charlene B. who was excused. Rafael talked about business from the Area 24 Fall Conference he attended last weekend. A matter came up regarding cutting back on non AA members in service positions. He asked if anyone had made a bid for the Fall 2017 conference and no one has done so yet. The bid needs to be presented by January 17, 2016 and the vote will be at the 2016 Area 24 Spring conference. There were approximately 300-400 people at the conference this past weekend and about 200 regular voters. Five members from District 1 attended.

Alt-DCM: No report as Mike H. was excused.

Secretary: Report was given by secretary Kathy B. Al F. made a motion to accept the report with corrections and Kristin K. seconded. The motion passed.

TREASURER report not available.

ARCHIVES report is not available.

PCP/ PI: report is not available.

CORRECTIONS: The report was given by Jeff J. He says that meetings and scheduling are going smoothly. Two new volunteers have passed their background checks – Pinky and Jim Z. There are enough male volunteers at this time.

TREATMENT report is not available. Dianne B. reported that the new Grapevine book “Forming True Relationships” is available and can be ordered through the Central Office. Contact Mike H. to place your order.

INTERGROUP: Mike H. was not available to give the Intergroup report. Tom C. reported that at the next Intergroup meeting the subject of printing new meeting schedules will be discussed. He anticipates that District and Intergroup will split the cost which will probably be about \$500. There were many questions including whether there will be a fee charged for them. Tom couldn't answer the many questions but asked that people to write their questions down and he would have some answers next month

LITERATURE: The report was given by Joe H. He said that a display of pamphlets was set up at the Tri-State Roundup.

GRAPEVINE: The report was given by Kristin K. She had no new information.

NEWSLETTER: The report was given by Joe H. He says that Bill B. has typed up a rough draft and is available soon but it will be late.

Winterfest report was given by Sandra M. The tickets have been printed and several people have them as well as the Central Office. They will cost \$10. No kids under 12 will be admitted. She recommends that tickets be purchased ahead of time as there are a limited number of people that are allowed in the building.

OLD BUSINESS: If the chair persons have not handed in their budgets, they need to do so.

There has been a change on the Halloween Dance flier. The speaker will be at 8:00pm instead of 7:00 pm.

Regarding the bid for the Fall 2017 conference, it is recommended that all GSR's should read the guidelines for making a bid. Many people have offered to help with making a bid Including Mary B. and Rosie S.

A motion was made by Kristin K and seconded by Joe H. to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed

Respectfully submitted, Kathy B., Secretary.

WINTERFEST

Saturday, January 23rd, 2016

- 5:30 pm Fellowship
- 6:00 pm Chili Feed with Cinnamon Rolls
- 7:00 pm AA Speaker: Teresa S.
- 8-11 pm Dance

No children under the age of 12

LIVE MUSIC!



\$10.00



Sponsored by Al-Ateen

American Legion, George Nelson Post 662 located at 901 Topaz Drive, Sergeant Bluff, IA 51054

Intergroup Meeting Minutes for October 15, 2015

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. by Tom C. with the Serenity prayer, Intergroup Statement of Purpose and Central Office Statement of Purpose.

Secretaries Report: Last month's minutes were read by Stasha K. A motion to accept the minutes as read was made by Cal H., motion seconded by Brad R., motion passed.

Treasurers Report: Brad R. stated no report due to only 3 weeks of data this month.

District Report: Tom C. stated light attendance overall Raphael conducted meeting and bid for 2017 area 24 conference continues.

Functions and Committees: Tom C. stated we are still in need of group line editor to take back and inform groups of opportunity for service work. The Phone Committee is in need of a full time chairperson. Someone to staff and seek out volunteers. In addition, we are in current need of volunteers for the phones. Please contact Stasha K. at [712-301-5478](tel:712-301-5478) or Teresa S. at [602-616-0781](tel:602-616-0781). Brad R requested a protocol for phone volunteers so that everyone uses the same format when answering the phone. Diane B stated Mike H had received fliers with steps/info on what to do with 12 step calls. Looking to use for future training packets for volunteers. Cal H suggested revamping the volunteer lists.

Old Business: The Unity Dinner is going to be in late November or early December and currently asking for group/groups to host dinner.

New Business: Kevin J would like intergroup to host one large event instead of 3 smaller events. Our AA meeting schedules are down to 250 copies. We are in need to update and print more. We as groups need to votes on the number on how many to print-3000 motion Cal H. and Kevin J. Diane B stated some clubs are paying for their schedules and some are not. Tom C. stated to take it back to our groups to vote on charging say \$.25 It is time for elections!! Diane B nominated Tom C. for chair, Jose P. is running for alternate, Brad R. is running for treasurer, Stasha K. for secretary.

Motion to close by Paul T seconded by Kevin J

Respectfully submitted:

Stasha K., Secretary

SIouxLAND INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE—GRATITUDE WITH SERVICE FORM

Return this form by: email to: aacentralofficesc@gmail.com or drop in the mail or stop by the office

Date: _____ First Name: _____ Last: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____ Gender: _____

Sobriety Date: _____ Home Group: _____

Email Address: _____

Volunteer Service Options:

12 step list volunteer

Weeknights Weekends

Phone Night & Weekends

Weeknights Weekends

Committees of Interest:

Public Information Cooperation with Professional Community

Special Events

Literature

Newsletter