

JUNE 2023

SOBER TIMES

Iowa District 8 AA Newsletter



DISTRICT EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Bonfire Meetings @ Wanatee Park — Meets every other Saturday at the top of Meadowlark Shelter - June 10 & 24, July 8 & 22, August 5 & 19, September 2, 16 & 30, October 14 & 28. Food @ 6pm and Meeting @ 7pm.

An A.A. Group ("The 8:08") 11th Anniversary Big Book Workshop — June 16-17, 2023; St Paul's Lutheran Church, 201 N Ford St, Anamosa, IA 52205

Foxhall Group 23rd Anniversary: Foxhall in the Forest — June 16-18, 2023; Pinicon Ridge Group Campsite #1, 4729 Horseshoe Falls Rd, Central City, IA 52214

2023 Area 24 Spring Conference — June 9 – 11, 2023 at Grinnell College, 1115 8th Ave, Grinnell, IA 50112

District 8 Business Meeting - the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm; Veritas Church, 509 3rd St SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Areas We

Serve

Anamosa
Cedar Rapids
Center Point
Central City
Coggon
Garrison
Grinnell
Hale
Keystone
Lisbon
Marion
Monticello
Mount Vernon
Tama
Urbana
Vinton
Walford



Area Clubs

In District 8 there are three clubs which provide space for A.A. meetings, groups, and events. These are not to be considered "A.A. Clubs", but rather "secondary aids" to the A.A. community. We mention them for the sole purpose of providing addresses for these locations. This is not to be considered an endorsement or affiliation, but indicate a relationship of cooperation.

CR GRATITUDE CLUB

212 Edgewood Rd NW, Suite K
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405

FELLOWSHIP CLUB

3224 1st Ave NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
319-364-0314

INDUSTRIAL CLUB

225 South 35th St
Marion, IA 52302

Check
It
Out

WEBSITE



The AA District 8 website has recently been updated with all kinds of helpful information and the most up-to-date event information. Check it out!
<https://www.aa-cedarrapids.org/>

Below is a map of the
Iowa Area Districts

The Twelve Traditions

Tradition 5

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose - that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. What is a group? A group has a service structure. GSR, Treasurer, maybe some service chairs, and is registered with the General Service Office (GSO). A meeting has few if any of these.

2. What is a spiritual entity? The book says we serve God by serving others. Does my group focus on serving others or just ourselves?

3. What is the message of Alcoholics Anonymous? The answer is found in How it Works. That God could and would if he were sought. Simple and a good place to start. We can always complicate it later.

4. Who is the person still suffering? They might be the person sitting next to me. Might be me. There will be suffering in sobriety. C'mon Tom, be positive. I'm positive there will be suffering in sobriety. We get married, buried, divorced, go broke, get money... and lots more. A.A. is full of people in meetings dying on the installment plan of untreated alcoholism. When I get that, "Uh-oh, how did I get here again?" THAT'S UNTREATED ALCOHOLISM. Forget the boss, the wife, the traffic, the weather, and many more, THAT'S UNTREATED ALCOHOLISM. If I was connected to God, I wouldn't say those things.

5. So... be a member of a group, that carries the message of A.A., to the person still suffering. I'm going to need those folks. Soon.

-Submitted by Tom C, Cedar Rapids, IA

CORRECTIONS DESK ACTIVITY UPDATE

Highlights from the GSO Corrections Coordinator Update:

- Still need men and women participants to write to those in correctional facilities
- Information on how to get access to Digital literature behind the walls
- Corrections Kit Contents information
- Sharing From Behind the Walls Bulletin for those in custody
- 6th Annual National Corrections Conference Nov 10-12, 2023 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Please see the link below for more information.
<https://nationalcorrectionsconference.org/>
- You can find the full update with all information by clicking here or going to the AA website

For more information, you can contact the District Corrections Chair at corrections@aa-cedarrapids.org



The Meeting Guide App

The app helps people find A.A. meetings and resources near them. A.A. service entities provide the meeting data for the app. Meeting Guide is available for iOS and Android smartphones.



HOW AA BEGAN IN IOWA

ARCHIVE NUGGET

In 1940, a personal advice columnist for the Omaha World Herald wrote to AA in New York. She was seeking information on alcoholism to pass on to people who wrote to her about drinking problems in their families. This inquiry sparked an interest in AA in Omaha and by 1943, the first AA group had been organized.

It was at this same time that a Des Moines man named Judge Ray H wrote to AA in New York for help. There were no AA groups in Iowa at the time so the office in New York contacted the closest group, which was the one in Omaha. Don F, a photographer by trade, was asked by his sponsor to make a trip from Omaha to Des Moines to 12-step Judge Ray H. At the time, Judge Ray had been dry for a month while Don, who 12-stepped him, had been sober for only two weeks.

AA grew quickly in Des Moines, The White House becoming their first Alano club in 1943. Several original members—Russ C, Emil P, Ray H and Shack W were referred to as the “Four Horsemen.” They traveled around Iowa helping to start groups in other towns. Later in 1943 the next Iowa group formed in Waterloo. In 1944, with the help of the Four Horsemen, AA branched out to Burlington, Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown, Sioux City, Newton and Davenport and AA in Iowa continued to blossom from there. In 1945 the first women’s group started in Des Moines. Also in 1945 groups started in Dubuque and Fort Dodge. In 1946 a group started in Marengo, Spencer, Storm Lake and Estherville.

~Submitted by Rose S, Cedar Rapids, IA. This article, along with the help of several other history enthusiasts, was compiled in March 2023 to share the richness of our local AA history. Special thanks to Dave G, Pat M, Tom C and Jeff M for being mentors and contributors to this article. Full details about how Iowa’s first AA pioneer, Judge Ray H, attained sobriety are described in his book, Clancy Got Well. Disclaimer: The content in this article came from a variety of sources and has not been fact checked. If you have different recollections or have additional history you’d like to share, please consider submitting an article newsletter@aa-cedarrapids.org

Stay tuned for next month's Archive Nugget about Cedar Rapids first meeting

STARTING A NEW MEETING IN VINTON

My name is Tim O’ and I’m an alcoholic. I have been attending AA meetings regularly, since I was 19 years old. My longest stretch of going without a meeting was almost 2 months. I was experimenting, and playing with fire. I lost my support group, what little I had, and had a mini-nervous breakdown at the end, when confronted with something that caused emotional upheaval. The positive I get out of that experience is that it turned me towards the Prayer of St. Francis, and reenforced the knowledge, cathartically, that I cannot go long stretches without attending meetings, unless I want to experience “anti-serenity.” I am not big on service work. I’ve done it, but not with a grateful heart; it was merely an annoyance, that I hope would pay off dividends of bad-karma, for just being annoyed at having to do it. Some service work that I’ve “unintentionally” done, is helping to start new-meetings. I helped to start an NA meeting (sorry, wrong program, I know), in Amherst, Massachusetts, back in the early 80’s, and also an AA meeting in Freiburg, Germany, late 80’s. That was decades ago, as I am now 59 years old, and can now claim a little more than 10 years of sobriety “this time around.” I’ve relapsed about six times. I don’t have devastating relapses, like being “out there” for a couple of years and ending up in an institution or prison, etc., but they are indeed relapses, i.e., a conscious decision to indulge in a mind-altering substance to escape a certain uncomfortable situation. I don’t think we “lose” that sobriety time, like I hear a lot of people say after coming back from a relapse and talking about it, I just think you can’t claim that much “time” anymore. We only have today anyway, correct? Bill W. said, “we alcoholics have great imaginations; we just don’t use them right.” (As Bill Sees It). If I lose myself in my “fantasy world”, am I not sober, or do I have to face reality in every moment of every day? One of my favorite writers, Hermann Hesse, said that our imaginations can be a soothing escape for helping us to deal with life. Maybe we alcoholics can “abuse” that too, if we “indulge” in it too often. Bill also said that we alcoholics have spent too much time in our fantasy worlds, that we should try as much as possible to stay in reality. I think we alcoholics and drug addicts have a tough time with reality, maybe more so than “earth people?” One of my current “kicks” is to try to tell the truth as much as possible, at the least to myself, not for any virtuous reason, but rather I think that we are losing our grip on reality if we lie. It causes our psyche to experience a conundrum of recognition, i.e. it can’t face not knowing the whole truth about a situation, as it doesn’t have all the facts, as the higher conscience is presenting a false-hood to our sub-conscience. This makes our psychological make-up experience that discomfort we knew all too well, when we were out there trying to force our version of reality, what we wanted to be true, and it wasn’t, hopelessly not, on the reality around us, and those who had to engage with us socially.

I am not the best version of “a walking Big-book,” and I have stuck around the program, despite my disease, and “my brain that wants to kill me,” not so much out of becoming more virtuous, but rather out of necessity, out of not wanting to experience anymore discomfort-the discomfort of my wanting to force my fantasy on to reality. I try not to use my imagination incorrectly, like I use to so much when I was “still new.” Like imagining people conspiring against me, or having done things to me, which they didn’t. I think I’ve lost a lot of that sickness. “More will be revealed.” At the age of 51, in 2015, I was diagnosed with Aspergers. I’ve been off and on the couch since I was 21, most always to address my being a teenage alcoholic and growing up with two alcoholic parents. After being “so long in the program,” I couldn’t figure out why I still had such a tough time with eye-contact, and why I was still so “non-social”. That counselor thought out loud and said, “wow, this sounds a lot like Aspergers.” I felt like someone had just told me about a secret of my past, like how someone had betrayed me, and they still have “the bag-of-loot” hidden in their basement. All I needed to do was go confront them on it and obtain the loot. I immediately got online, and took a couple of the diagnostic tests they have for “Aspies”. Both said I was highly “aspergerish”. I even tried to cheat on one, tried to “reduce” my answers, and I still came out highly “aspergerish.” I was hoping I would get a free pot prescription from the government, but no such luck. I still romanticize that stuff, even after knowing it only makes me paranoid, depressed, and gives me a pale face. “Mental masturbation” we use to call that in Massachusetts meetings. Ever since knowing about my Aspergers, I no longer have “rage”-relapses, and I am now more forgiving of myself, i.e. I experience more serenity. So, “more will be revealed”, even if it only takes a couple of decades. I am now helping to start a new AA meeting in Vinton, Iowa, 6:30pm on Monday nights at the Wesley Methodist Church, right next to the town library. “Pain-in-the-ass” service work. It keeps me coming back. ~ Submitted by Tim O’, Mt Auburn, IA

Tell me, who hurt you?

My own
expectations.

Questions about AA?

WANT TO TALK TO
SOMEONE WHO
UNDERSTANDS?

Our helpline is
available 24/7.

Call 319-365-5955
to be connected to a
recovering alcoholic.



AA Grapevine is on IG

https://www.instagram.com/alcoholicsanonymous_gv/

Instagram

CROSSROADS CORNER

Home Groups Matter

Hello, my name is Kasi and I am an alcoholic. Although this is the introduction I use at meetings I attend, I could also add that I am a grateful member of the Crossroads group. Although I cannot remember when I "officially" called Crossroads my home group, I knew I was loved and loved the people long before it was official.

Lots of advice is given to a newcomer. 90 meetings in 90 days, get a sponsor, use your phone list, call before you drink, and sometimes, get a home group. First, I feel it is important to explain what a group is, as defined by the long form of our Third Tradition, "Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group...". In our district there are many groups that meet throughout the week in different locations and times. Some meet daily, others once a week, while some are held at the clubs, and others meet at churches. My point being there are numerous options in choosing a group for your home group. And just as we are members of A.A. if we say we are, so are we members of a group if we say we are per A.A. literature.

My decision to pick Crossroads as my home group means, to me, that I have made a commitment to make it every Sunday night at 7pm to Urbana. Collectively we greet people as they come and introduce ourselves to newcomers. When it is my turn in the rotation, I chair the meeting and get there early to set up. For us that means opening the church, setting up the pamphlets, setting out district flyers for upcoming events, making sure the tables and chairs are set up, and of course starting the coffee. I hold a service position in that group. I am accountable to my other home group members. I know the story of our name and the group's beginnings. And once a month I attend our business meeting. At the business meeting many things are discussed concerning the group or A.A. as a whole. Membership in this group comes with the right to vote on issues affecting the group or other matters that may affect A.A. as a whole. According to the pamphlet The A.A. Group...where it all begins, "a process that forms the very cornerstone of A.A.'s service structure. As with all group-conscience matters, each A.A. member as one vote; and this, ideally, is voiced through the home group."

It is important to get and be an active member of a home group. This is a we program; not an I program. My home group feels like family to me. On the occasions that it has arisen they have also made my family feel welcomed and loved as well. I invite all to come and visit us on any Sunday night and find out why we are named Crossroads group! ~ Submitted by Kasi M, Palo, IA



AAGRAPEVINE PODCAST

A new podcast episode is available in English every
Monday at 8:00 AM CT. To hear the podcasts go to

aagrapevine.org/podcast

RECORD YOUR STORY!

GRAPEVINE AUDIO PROJECT

Share as you would in a meeting. Speak for 7 minutes. Pick any topic: an amend you made, a sober trip you took, a Step that helped you, a sponsor you once had, how you pray, what helped you stop drinking and more. It's easy! You can use your smartphone. For more instructions, tips and topics, visit:

www.aagrapevine.org/audio-portal

IT'S EASY
& FUN!

Get your group involved!
See some examples
at www.youtube.com/aagrapevine

Disclaimer: The District 8 Newsletter is edited and published by and for people in recovery. Its articles reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. None of its contributors (or even the Newsletter Editor) speaks for A.A. or District 8 as a whole. In determining the editorial content, the Chair relies on the principles of the Twelve Traditions. However, we respect everyone's right to have their say and to pursue their recovery in their own way. Yet what works for one individual or A.A. Group may not work for another. The Newsletter tries to embody the widest possible view of the A.A. Fellowship. It is solely provided by District 8 of Alcoholics Anonymous as part of 12 Step work in reaching out to the alcoholic who still suffers. To learn about the A.A. program, the best source of accurate information is our text Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book), and other A.A. conference approved literature, much of which can be found at www.aa.org.