

District 19 Newsletter

Volume 1

May 2009

Number 5

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Check us out on the Web:

<http://www.aaspringfield.org>

District 19 History

Hello, and welcome to the continuation of the complete history of Alcoholics Anonymous Southern Illinois Area 21 District 19 (Article 2). This story is brought to you courtesy of "Alcoholics Anonymous in Springfield Illinois 1941 - 2001" printed for the 60th anniversary of our fellowship. You can expect to find a little more of the story each month here on the website, and a complete printing at the end of the year. Stay tuned....

Carl Sandburg, Illinois Poet Laureate

The May 23rd letter contained a pamphlet titled "A.A.". This first piece of A.A. literature, now extremely rare, was printed in April 1940 on 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" paper and contained 33 pages. It was about a few groups of men and women who had found a solution to their problem. The letter also informed that this solution was explained in their book "Alcoholics Anonymous". Elizabeth immediately sent them \$3.50 to order a copy of this new hope for alcoholics. A follow-up letter

of June 5, 1941 gave Elizabeth the name of Mr. (F.L.) F. at the Gibson Hotel, 5883 Enright in St. Louis as a contact person if she wanted more information. Mr. F. and "Father Ed", a non-alcoholic priest*, had only recently started holding regular A.A. meetings at the Gibson Hotel.

At this time Bill also sent a blue second printing (possibly the first red printing of his new book Alcoholics Anonymous. Armed with the directions contained in this book, Ward M. finally obtained permanent sobriety on Tuesday, December 16, 1941.

However, getting to a meeting was quite an adventure of Ward in those first two years of sobriety. There were no meetings in downstate Illinois. The only groups near him were in either St. Louis or Chicago. So, in addition to studying the book, Ward (with his wife, Mar-

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Group Contributions

Thanks to the Following Groups for Continuing Support of District 19

Thursday Night Big Book
EDIC Big Book Women's
Free to Be Me
The Journey Continues
Alano

(Group Contributions based on District Treasurers Report from February 19, 2009)

Speaker Meetings

Alano

Every Friday
Night Speaker - 8pm

Discovery Noon Group

Last Friday of Month
Birthday Pizza Pie Speaker Meeting
Noon

Discovery

2nd Saturday of Month
Potluck - 6:30pm
Speaker - 7:30pm

Easy Does It

3rd Saturday of Month
Potluck - 6pm
Speaker - 7pm

R-Club

1st Saturday of Month
Potluck - 7pm Speaker - 8pm

Meeting Changes

New Meetings

No new meetings at this time.

Cancelled Meetings

No cancelled meetings at this time.

Meeting Changes

Friday Alano 9:30pm CD12 Step 11 changed to CD
Your Never Too Late

If your group has any changes, or cancellations, please email aadistrict19@gmail.com

Anniversaries / B-days

Congratulations! One Day at a Time

If you would like your anniversary or birthday posted on the website or in the newsletter, please email:

aadistrict19@gmail.com



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Group of the Month

****Cherry & Bates ~ Big Book Study****

This type of A.A. group is rumored as existing, let me tell you it still does. At this particular meeting you see more than your average “elder statesmen” and ne’r a “bleeding deacon” (as the 12X12 calls old-timers).

In this group, there is a seriousness and a sense of growth that is consistent meeting in meeting out. Yes, there are a fair share of new-comers. And, yes, there is a laugh or two, but we are reminded every Thursday, at 8 PM, that if you don’t take the first drink, you won’t get drunk.

This group, The Big Book Study started about twenty years ago in a church in Edinburg. Some of the first A.A.’s at that meeting were Dick G. and Carl H. Even Steve L. ventured over there once. When the meeting moved up here, it met in peoples homes-this was not so uncommon then and has made me wonder if the first “home groups” were like that-smaller and held in homes. Wendell was responsible for helping the group, which had grown, find it’s current location, the church’s basement on Cherry & Bates.

About every third time I attend, someone who is in probably the first five or ten years of sobriety claims, “This is the BEST MEETING IN TOWN”. Why, do you ask? Because it studies the Big Book. This meeting goes through the entire first 164 pages, plus the Roman Numerals about twice a year. To hear an A.A. tell you what he has learned the words to mean, which that A.A. probably learned from another old timer, makes for a fuller understanding of sharing experience of strength and hope. The group has just started over in the book, so it’s a great time to check in for a while or even longer.

Special Recognition

Website Committee

The AA District website 19 was formed as a dual purpose website for both AA members and non-members as a source for information on AA, meeting listings, events, and other local information. Headed up by Public Information, the District 19 website committee has been given the opportunity to produce the site you see today, complete with a monthly newsletter that originated from the Intergroup Newsletter of yesteryear and has found a new home here on the web with a print version in the making.

As a part of Public Information the website committee is based in the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and thus serves as attraction rather than promotion. The General Service Office has created a set of Guidelines that can be found at: http://www.aa.org/lang/en/en_pdfs/mg-18_internet.pdf.

Serving on the Website Committee can be fun, rewarding, as well as educational. The District 19 Website Committee is comprised of the Public Information Chair, a Website Chair/Webmaster, a co-chair, and committee members who take on roles such as gathering information, writing articles on the events, groups, committees, as well as personal stories of hope. Currently the District 19 website committee has several opportunities for AA members interested in serving in this capacity. If you are interested in getting involved with the Website, please email: aadistrict19@gmail.com or contact your groups GSR for more information



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Whats Happening

April 2009 Local, District and Area Events



12th Annual
LITTLE EGYPT ROUNDUP
May 1st & 2nd, 2009
Marion, Illinois



Unity Picnic
When: Saturday, May 16th
Where: Lake Park, Springfield, IL
Games, and Fellowship start at 11am
Food will be served at 1pm

12th Annual Little Egypt Roundup
Holiday Inn Express—Marion, IL
Speaker Lineup includes two
Springfield locals:
Steve L.—Sat. 9:30am
Kenny O.—Friday 7pm

Unity Picnic
Lake Park (by the zoo)
11am - Bean Bag Toss, Games, and Fellowship
1pm - Hot Dogs, Burgers & Drinks served
Please bring a covered dish or a desert to share
Saturday, May 16th



FIRST ANNUAL
Spring Fling Convention
OUR
PRIMARY
PURPOSE
MEMORIAL
DAY
WEEKEND

First Annual Spring Fling Convention
Hilton Frontnac—1335 S. Lindburg, Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63131

Lots of Speakers, Food and Fellowship...



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District 19 Meeting Minutes

Feb 19, 2009

Ruth opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with the Serenity Prayer, and then read the Declaration of Unity. The long form of the 3rd Tradition and the 3rd Concept were read.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BRIDGING THE GAP/CPC: BTG: Brad stated BTG is back in Gateway on the 1st and 3rd Sun. They take people (small panel) and give presentations and some regular discussion AA meetings. They are starting at 16 adults and may hire a driver for AA meetings. Only 6 people can get out of the facility at this time. The others need help getting to meetings. Please contact aadistrict19@gmail.com. The district attendees contact sheet needed corrections for Brad's contact info..noted. McFarland is looking for a list as well (for exiting persons). GSRs please pass this on to your groups. Triangle is waiting for BTG to come back in as well as 'Illinois Institute of Recovery': IIR is also looking for speakers. Brad states just a matter of time. BTG meeting will be the last Thursday of the month at 6:45 pm: April @ E.D.I club Vance has details listed on website. There will be regular meetings with BAR Association, Psychiatry and Family Practice Resident Doctors (no dates yet). Please contact Brad if you are interested in being on one of these panels.

CPC: Meeting on the 2nd Thursday of April (6:30 pm) @ Alano Pam stated that there are many 12 Step calls being made at Memorial and to get on the volunteer list if interested, they are very powerful and rewarding. McFarland also needs volunteers. Ruth stated that she has some applications for CMS.

PUBLIC INFORMATION/SCHEDULES: Schedules are out and look good.

ANSWERING SERVICE: Brad stated he received a call that the answering service is working and info is getting out there.

WEB SITE/TECH COMMITTEE: Vance stated the website receives 150-300 hits/week. Getting good feedback for the design and convenience of the website and he is always open to new ideas. The Spring Conference details will be posted when times, etc. are figured out. Stories about groups and other AA interests need to keep coming in.

GRAPEVINE: Someone stated that Kevin D. lost his life in a car/motorcycle accident recently. Our condolences to family and friends.

CORRECTIONS: JD stated that Randy was heading up the Thurs evening Jail meeting, and Roger for Monday. Monday could use some help. Lynn has gone in to women's meetings, but has not been 'approved' yet, she needed another application and will get started officially in a week or two. Elizabeth (JD stated) would like to get a group together to start a Logan's women's meeting. They would need a drug test and interview (not sure from whom, Logan officials?), and have a 20 person (women) list with backups. Seems we need more information; bring books, etc.? Elizabeth stated the Tues meeting needed another team of 2 persons to alternate with existing teams.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Leo S. stated the District 19 March 8th with 9 am breakfast buffet, followed by 10 am speaker, was well attended with about 105 persons. The speaker from Jacksonville was good also. 2010 Springfield Area Conference date is set, getting a contract for hotel together currently. Conference: Mar 12-14 2010, need committee chairs. So far there is a Secretary and Treasurer (I think I got this straight!). Leo noted he will need a lot of help to make this work well. He will visit Champaign this year and get some pointers. There will be a list of jobs needing filled soon. Ruth had been contacted by Kent Johnson, who is currently on a policy committee, and he offered to help if he can.

ARCHIVES: Dean absent.

DELEGATE: No report

OLD BUSINESS: No, just a few old people!

NEW BUSINESS

Topics for next meeting:

- Leo will have date and more info for Spring Conference to pass on.
- Rosemary volunteered to chair/'report on' the grapevine committee. Thanks Rosemary!

Agenda for next meeting:

- SIA date/time and other info
- Dist. 19 June Picnic

Meeting Adjourned by Ruth with Lord's Prayer before 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Lee G.



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District 19 History

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-ian) traveled twice weekly to St. Louis in order to attend the A.A. meetings there.

By the Spring of 1943, Ward saw the need for an A.A. meeting here in central Illinois and a weekly meeting took shape at his home on 1516 Bates Avenue. This Friday night meeting attracted several "potential customers" that Ward had talked to in Springfield plus a few additional "prospects" he had searched out in Decatur. But none were ready "to go all the way with A.A." as they used to say in those days. Ward found that he was repeating the pattern experienced by A.A.'s founder Bill W. in New York. With the notable exception of themselves, none of the small bands were able to stay sober. "They would clear up for a little while and then flop dismally."**

None of this deterred Ward. By mid-1943 a young man by the name of Jerry C. started to attend Ward's meeting and soon appeared very interested in the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Ward stated to a friend at the St. Louis meeting, "I think Jerry is ripe".

Ward finally hit pay dirt in June 1943. While enjoying his favorite treat (a chocolate sundae) at the old Leland Hotel, Ward's conversation with Jerry turned to staying sober and making a full commitment to the "A.A. way of life". Jerry C. became A.A. #2 in Springfield that afternoon and soon assisted in attracting others to the program.

On July 26, 1943 Ward received a short letter from the Alcoholic Foundation's new secre-

-tary, Margaret R. (Bobbie) Burger. Bobby sent him a copy other reply to a recent inquiry about A.A. that had reached the "NY National Headquarters" from Decatur, Illinois. Her reply to this inquiry stated "a small beginning in our work has been made in Springfield." It named Ward as the "contact person" for A.A. in central Illinois. This personal touch of sending out Ward's name and address for "more complete information" was continued until at least December of 1945.

By September 7, 1943 Mike K. had become A.A. #2. He played on a professional sports team in St. Louis but lived in Springfield so he attended meetings in both locations.

Around this time period (1942 or 1943) the annual "New Years Eve Party" started as a small gathering held at Ward's home to celebrate both his A.A. birthday and the New Year. However, it gained in popularity and size. By 1945 it had become a large family event and was held at the public pavilion in Washington Park. The "Party eventually moved to Lincoln Park and is presently held at the Heritage House (3851 S. 6th).*** It still serves as this areas annual opportunity to meet, reunite and celebrate sobriety with fellow members. _____

*Father Edward Dowling: A Jesuit from St. Louis who first met Bill W. in 1940 the returned home to help form the first St. Louis A. A. meeting. He remained Bill's spiritual sponsor, guide and mentor for the next twenty years. When Father Dowling passed away in 1960 the first car in his procession carried two old friends...Bill W. and Ward M.

**Pass It On: A.A. World Services, Inc. 1984, p. 132.

***At the time of the printing of "Alcoholics Anonymous in Springfield Illinois 1941 - 2001"

To be Continued....Stay Tuned. You will find this in a new section next month....



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The All New Bridging the Gap Newsletter May 2009

What's New?

- Attendance was lacking at our meeting on April 30th. We went from 24 back down to 12! We want to encourage all of those who are not regularly attending to please come to our next meeting at Discovery on May 28th at 6:45. If you are attending now please bring someone along.
- As always we are trying to spread the good word about Bridging the Gap. We are taking a new approach; hopefully more people will show up and get involved. We have placed folders at Discovery, Alano, and Easy Does It which contain: reminder flyers for next month meetings and volunteer forms. These folders will remain at these clubs and will be checked from time to time. Thank you to Charlie F. for overseeing Easy Does It's and to Stacy M. for overseeing Alano's. Thank you also to Laura W. for volunteering to keep meeting schedules at the Illinois Institute of Recovery and Triangle.
- A new format was suggested and that seems to be working really well when going to speak at Gateway. Each person talks about a different subject and then the residents can ask questions between each person. Dan C. and Stacy M. used this approach and were pleased by the response that they received.
- On May 16th BTG is going to have a Tail Gate Party out of the back of Ruth W's truck at Unity Picnic out at Lake Park. The picnic begins at 11 a.m. Anyone wanting to help by giving out BTG info should contact Ruth W.

What can you do now?

- Volunteer to go to Gateway to speak on a panel (1st and 3rd Sunday of the month from 6:30p.m. – 8p.m.). Gateway asks that people coming here have two years of sobriety. Six is the magic number for this, so any volunteers to go or to lead a panel are much needed!
- Volunteer to go to Salvation Army (unfortunately this is for men only). This is on the fourth Saturday of every month at 6 p.m. Randy H. is going to be taking a group this month.
- Dan C. also needs volunteers to go to McFarland's. He has been going there regularly on Monday nights and needs other volunteers to go on a rotating basis. This does require a form that you will need to get from Dan C.
- There is also an opportunity to go speak once a month at the Sangamon County Jail or at a few prisons (we are working on expanding this). This also does require paperwork that you will need to see Pam S. for.
- Be prepared to be called, if you are not called please let Pam S., Ruth W., or Amber E. know so that you can be better utilized. Very soon we are going to need 10 to 15 volunteers a month. So if you are not contacted this month please be patient, your time is coming soon.
- Also please make sure that I (Amber E.), Pam S., or Ruth W. has all of your contact information.

Please feel free to contact aadistrict19@gmail.com if you need to get forms or anything else! We want you to feel a part of this group! If you are feeling left out than reach out and we can better help you. Thanks for all that you do and please remember that our next BTG meeting will be at the Discovery on April 28th at 6:45 p.m. Please come and bring someone along! The more the merrier!



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Announcements

Help Wanted

The District Website needs your help! We have engaged on a mission to bring together the news, events, stories, and highlights of the clubs, groups, and members that make up District 19. The newsletter you see on the tables here today represent the direction we are taking in accomplishing this task, but in order to accomplish this mission, we need to hear from you!

Here is how you can help:

1. Join the website committee as a web reporter.
2. Submit speakers, events, and AA anniversaries.
3. Submit articles about the events that take place within our District or Area.
4. Submit articles about the groups, committees, and clubs that make up our District.
5. Submit articles about your knowledge of the history of District 19.
6. Submit personal stories of experience, strength and hope.

In keeping with anonymity, please refrain from using full last names, phone numbers, addresses, or other personal information in your articles. If personal information is found in the articles, it will be cut before making it on the Web version of the newsletter, but phone numbers or other contact information regarding committees, events, etc. will appear in the paper version of the newsletter distributed to the clubs and meeting places within our district. All correspondence via the web will go through the District email account.

Please refrain from using vulgar or offensive language or remarks from your articles. If you wouldn't say it to your 8 year old, don't put it in your article.

So, you may ask, how does one submit an article? It's simple. Just email your articles to the district email address: aadistrict19@gmail.com, or place your article in the District Newsletter suggestion box located at EDIC, Discovery, or Alano.

If you would like to be more involved, you may join the website committee as a District web/news reporter. Your service would be greatly appreciated. To join, simply email aadistrict19@gmail.com, or talk to Vance D., Scott H., Kathy S., or Mary H.



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