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Sheets of Sobriety

May 2020

sos@indyaa.org

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Where's the meeting?

[Indy Online AA Meetings](#) is the most up to date information for online video meetings in the Indianapolis area. As

meetings begin to go back to their regular brick and mortar style, we will keep this list as updated as possible. Word is that many of these online meetings are going to stick around, even after the world goes back to normal. So, no worries if you found one you really loved, chances are it's going to stay! Just be aware times/dates/links/passwords may be changing. On the spreadsheet there is an email if you have questions or updated information!

[The Token Shop](#) has a great listing of online video meetings from all over the USA! [24/7 Online AA](#) has meetings running every hour of day and night. Need a meeting at 3 am? Spend an hour in Australia when you can't go back to sleep! The same wonderful program is worldwide.

If you're not interested in video meetings or still utilize a landline you can visit [Dial-a-Meeting](#).

Just want to listen to some AA greats? Check out these Podcasts & Speakers

<https://www.aaspeaker.com/>

<https://www.xa-speakers.org>

<https://www.recoveryaudio.org/>

<https://player.fm/podcasts/Alcoholics-Anonymous>

It can be difficult to find a sponsor in a time like this or even get a token. [Check out this site](#) for some resources.

To help members during this time, Grapevine is giving everyone [free access](#) to most of our 2020 Grapevine and La Viña issues.



Interview with an "Old-Timer"

~Heather 2/28/2010~

**Why did you come to AA? How did you get here?
How did you know you were powerless over
alcohol?**

I come from a family of sober alcoholics, so I knew about AA. I also thought because I knew about alcoholism and AA, I could prevent being an alcoholic. I was so wrong about that! 'Self-knowledge availed us nothing.' I knew at different times during my drinking career that I was likely drinking too much, too frequently, or to the point of having too many hangovers. But I didn't think I was an alcoholic. I thought I was a normal college student at a Big Ten college. Or a normal twenty-something living the big city life in Los Angeles. Or the normal expat living

abroad and enjoying an exciting corporate life in Tokyo. All of these were delusions of grandeur and eventually, I had enough. On my last night out drinking, I didn't even want to go out. Friends were blowing up my phone and I wanted to spend a quiet Friday night at home. But that mental obsession kicked in and all I could think about was what I would be missing. It's like a mental jail. I couldn't get away from the obsession. The mind wouldn't stop and I had zero control or choice. I was pulled to the drink. I was also resenting a coworker that night because she gave me some negative feedback at work that day. So I had a nice resentment I was stewing about, which made a drink seem even more appealing. I spent my last night out drinking AT somebody. And all I did was hurt myself in the end. The next morning, I woke up with a nice case of alcohol poisoning and decided I was done. It wasn't my worst night out, but it was my last. My sobriety date is February 28, 2010. I went to an AA meeting that Monday on a business trip to Denver, Colorado. And I went every day on that week long trip and kept coming back.

What was your first meeting like?

I went to my first meeting when I was about 27 or 28 in Los Angeles. It was a huge meeting, maybe 50 - 75 people. And I don't remember anything from the meeting. I recall the beginning and the end. I blocked out the middle. At the beginning, we went around the room and introduced ourselves and when it was my turn, I was terrified to be 'visible.' I said 'My name is Heather and I'm an alcoholic.' Not because I believed it, but because I didn't want to stand out. After the meeting, I went up to the 'person in charge' (aka, the

man chairing the meeting). I told him I was new and asked if they had any information or anything. He didn't seem to know what to do with me, looked around, and said he was sorry he didn't think they had anything. I felt very awkward, said goodbye, and didn't come back for eight or nine years. I sometimes wonder if things would have been different if I had been introduced to another sober woman. But, it took what it took and I had to live those remaining eight years to truly be ready to surrender. However, there are two things about my first meeting I take with me today: 1) Always, always introduce myself to a newcomer and exchange phone numbers and 2) Have a meeting schedule to give her. If it's a guy, I'll make sure to introduce him to another man if no one has gone up to him. I call or text new women the next day. How many of you were so excited to call up a complete stranger when you were new to AA and feeling miserable? I at least try to open the door and make it a tiny bit easier.

What was the most memorable thing someone did or said to you and your first years of sobriety?

Wow, so many things. My first sponsor said to me that I'm not for everyone, and everyone is not for me. That is so true. I don't have to like everyone, but I can love them, have compassion, and be respectful in all interactions. And on the flip side, I don't have to worry what people think of me or try to 'people please' all the time. Those behaviors are selfish and self-centered and motives are not pure.

Second is something my dad has said to me growing up, and since he's sober, I include it. He always says

don't let someone use your mind rent free. As an alcoholic, my mind is obsessive. And letting someone take up real estate affects my emotional sobriety. Resentments cannot linger. So I pray to God to remove any mental obsessions I have spinning in my brain and often, I pray for the other person.

Why have you stayed and why do you keep coming back?

I stay because I am sober and I don't want to give that up. I keep coming back because I am sober and I don't want to give that up. I pulled back from the program when I had about two or three years. And life became unmanageable, my problems piled up, I was having trouble with relationships, I couldn't make a living. I didn't drink...yet. One day I woke up to a panic attack at 4AM and I called my dad. The first thing he said was to go to a meeting. And I did. I threw myself back into the program, reconnected with my higher power, and got a sponsee. Within six months all of those problems had resolved themselves and life became peaceful again. That never would have happened if I didn't get back to AA. I have a great life today and I owe it all to my higher power and Alcoholics Anonymous. I love helping other women with their sobriety, I love the fellowship, and I am so grateful, even when life is difficult and challenges come my way.

What does Hope mean to you?

There's a light at the end of the tunnel. No matter how bad things are today, with God's help, things will always work out as they are supposed to. And I don't

ever have to drink again.

What does fear mean to you?

Fear is normal. Sometimes it motivates me, other times it paralyzes me. But if I stay in fear, obsess over it, and my character defects come out, I am disconnected from my higher power.

Have you had a spiritual awakening? Tell me about it.

I definitely had one as I worked the steps for the first time. But the most powerful one was in year two or three when I stepped back from the program. When things got really bad and I was in enough pain I reached back out for help. I had a business that I was in over my head on, I was about to lose my condo, I was having trouble with work relationships. I remember one day thinking I may need to go to a residential place for anxiety. I was having panic attacks, insomnia, I was an emotional wreck. It's a miracle I didn't drink. Once I started going to meetings again, got a sponsee, dove into a daily 10th and 11th-step practice, things slowly started to get better. Within six months I sold my business, sold my condo for a profit, and had a great job that moved me out to Indiana to be near my parents. I could never have written that outcome. I attribute that 100% to my higher power. There is no way self-will did that. Self-will was driving everything into the ground.

What was your hardest amends?

My amends weren't particularly difficult, but I did have

an amends to make to a taxi driver for jumping out of his car while drunk and running off without paying for our fare. I didn't think I'd ever remember him or see him again, but my sponsor said pray anyway. I never did find him. So I made a living amends and over the years I've paid for parking meters for strangers

Tell me about how you work steps 10 and 11?

I am better at working 10 and 11 somedays, and other days I'm not. A few routines I've done that have really helped me are to start the day with a five minute meditation while coffee is brewing, read the Saint Francis Prayer, and read from page 417 in the Big Book, Acceptance is the Answer. I did that every morning for a while. I would love to get back to that habit. I have done the 30-day challenge where I read step 10 in the 12 and 12 everyday for 30 days and if I miss a day, I have to start over. That's a good one to do with sponsees.

What is the best advice you would give to a newcomer?

Get a sponsor, get a meeting commitment, show up early at meetings to talk to women, and jump into the steps. That's what worked for me and I took all of those actions in the first two weeks of coming to AA and have continued to do so for the last ten years.



All submissions are posted in their unaltered state and in no way reflect the opinion of The Sheets of Sobriety Committee Members.

The Sheets of Sobriety reserves the right to edit spelling errors and major typos, but will do so in an extremely limited fashion in an effort to maintain the author's original work. Due to these limited edits, The SOS does not guarantee that posts will be free from errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. The SOS will not exclude any submission unless group conscious determines a submission to be overtly offensive or unrelated to Alcoholism.

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"Every Crisis Yields Opportunity - Even a Pandemic"

If I know one thing to be true, it's that getting sober is the hardest thing I've ever done. But it is also one of the most precious things to me, and the thing in my life that I am the most proud of. I've heard it over and over again, that this is a program to stay sober under any and all conditions, but I wasn't sure that I was ready for a test that looked like a worldwide pandemic and month long quarantine.

Even before all this chaos happened, I was doing my very best to

live the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous every day. The quarantine changed pretty much everything about my life, and so I had to make some colossal changes to how I was working the Steps too. I hugely relied on the unity of the fellowship; of a deep connection to other alcoholics to stay sober, and the absence of that during the quarantine has been immensely challenging.

Finding ways to be of service to God and my fellow man and women also became more difficult. I've longed for the magic that happens in the room during a meeting.

So I got creative with how I could work the steps to the best of my ability and still keep others safe. I've had a lot of time on my hands to get real damn honest with myself about some things. I've prayed and meditated every day, if not multiple times a day, trying to stay close to my Higher Power no matter what. I try to be quick to admit when I've done something wrong, especially having acted or spoken out of fear. I have called more human beings (both in recovery and not) than I probably ever have. I've worked harder to be kind to others, so that where others might have fear, I can bring love. More than anything, I have leaned into faith as hard as I can. I've stayed sober believing that no matter what is going on in my life and in the world, there is some Higher Design that I have no control of. I just let it be, and do whatever is in front of me to be done. The rest will unfold as it needs to.

Honestly, one of the trickiest things about the quarantine is that sometimes it feels like I'm back in early sobriety. All my character defects are magnified, I am full of fear and largely alone. I'm really just gritting my teeth and bearing it, telling myself that this won't last forever, and all I have to do is hold on a little longer and stay sober today.

There's a lot of fear going around. Everyone is hurting, and everyone is scared. The best thing I can do right now for my sobriety is to love myself a little extra hard, stay close to my Higher Power, and do whatever I can do be of service to others, even if it's just a phone call. Because what might seem to me like just a phone call could be another person's lifeline. It certainly has

been difficult, but I choose sobriety every moment of every day.
Even the hard ones.

~ MC~

12-STEPS: FIRST AN EVENT—THEN A PROCESS

I view the first nine steps as primarily a short-lived **event** that teaches how to begin the lifelong **process** of the living last three steps.

The event: Steps One, Two and Three are simply admitting: I can't; God can; then asking for help. This is a prerequisite! Step Four begins "**at once**" (p. 64) which may take a week or so of writing to attain honest information to allow a sponsor to show how to "face and be rid of" selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear—this sponsor-help procedure often takes only an hour or so. (PP 64-71)

Step Five begins "**at first opportunity**" (p. 74) which can start about five minutes after finalizing Step Four with a sponsor. This may take only an hour or so but may vary. Step Six begins **then**, not later. (p. 76) and Step Seven begins "**when ready.**" (p. 76)

Steps Six and Seven are often completed in a rather short period. Most of the Eighth Step "harms to others" has been **already listed** from Step four and Step Nine begins "**Now.**" (p. 76) Of course, Step Nine may last for an indefinite period as continued in Step Ten.

The Process: I view the above, Steps One through Nine, as a learning **event** that has a beginning and an end. Once this learning has taken place it is time to put what has been learned into action by following the clear-cut directions of Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve for a lifetime. (PP 84-103) Of course, "*learning*" continues as we go along.

I view the important difference between an **event** and a **process** is the former has a timeline, of sorts, but the latter is non-ending.
First, we learn how to do it—then we do it.

~Bob S.~



Women in Alcoholics Anonymous

- The first woman to get sober in A.A. history was Florence R. of New York City, New York, in 1937. She subsequently drank and committed suicide in 1939. Florence authored “A Feminine Victory” featured in the 1st Edition of the Big Book. Originally, the Big Book was titled “One Hundred Men” and subsequently discarded after Florence membership.
- Sylvia Kauffmann, from Chicago Illinois got sober in Akron Ohio and shortly after relapsed after returning to Chicago. She is the author of “Keys to the Kingdom.” Sylvia K. was the first women to obtain and sustain long term sobriety in A.A. history. She remained sober for thirty years, from September 13, 1939 to her death in 1969. Her story is featured in the Pioneers of A.A. section of the Big Book: 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Editions.
- Marty Mann (1904 – 1980) was known as “The First Lady of A.A.” She co-founded the Grapevine and was A.A.’s first international speaker. Bill W. was her sponsor. Marty Mann wrote a primer on alcoholism and made sure there were hospital beds for A.A.s. She created the (now) widely known adage that alcoholism is a disease and that alcoholics are “sick” people, helping to break the stigma of alcoholism. After several attempts

to get sober Marty sustained long term sobriety from 1940 until her relapse in 1960. She again sobered up and stayed until her death in 1980. There was a biography written on Marty Mann in 2005, authored by Sally & David Brown. Marty M. authored "After Twenty-Nine Years" in November 1999 Grapevine. Her story "Women Suffer Too" is featured in the Pioneers of A.A. section of the Big Book: 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Editions.

- Sybil C. was the first woman to get sober, west of Mississippi.

Sybil was from Los Angeles and became the first executive secretary for A.A. in California. She was the first woman known to have continuous long-term sobriety from March 21, 1941 until her death in April of 1998. That equates to 57 years of continuous sobriety! In 1985, she was honored at the International A.A. Convention in Montreal. At that time, she held the longest length of female sobriety in A.A.'s history. Sybil C. authored "Learning to Fly" in February 1992 Grapevine.

- Irma Livoni was the first and only woman to be kicked out of A.A. on December 5, 1941. After Irma Livoni join A.A. she was sponsored by Sybil C. Although Irma made substantial strides in housing and turning her life around, a handful of members from the Los Angeles group took upon themselves to write a letter stating their dissatisfaction. The group terminated her membership with advisement that her only recourse of action was to meet the expectations required. Only by the end of 1941 were there 2 or 3 meetings in California. Having nowhere to turn, Irma never returned to A.A. and she succumbed to an alcoholic death.

Bill W. became aware of the situation through early writing correspondence with Sybil. Many A.A.'s believe that Irma's experience helped build a foundation for Tradition Three in the 12 x12 which identifies that "to take away any alcoholic's full chance was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence, and often to condemn him to endless misery. Who dare to be judge, jury and executioner of his own sick brother?" (p.141). This story was adapted from an original account of a conversation between Matt and Sybil C. The first edition of The Twelve Steps and Twelve

Traditions was published in 1953.

- Ethel M. was the first woman to get sober in Akron Ohio. Her sobriety date was May 8, 1941 until her death on April 9, 1963. It is suggested that Ethel M. formed the first women's A.A. group. Her story "From Farm to City" is in the Pioneers of A.A. section of the Big Book: 2nd, and 3rd Editions.
- Esther E. from Houston Texas is credited for starting A.A. in Texas. Her sobriety date was May 16, 1941 until her death June 30, 1960. Her signed "Bill W." big book is on display in the Dallas Central Office. She authored "They Stopped in Time" in the Pioneers of A.A. section of the Big Book: 2nd, and 3rd Editions.
- Helen Wynn, was the first editor of the Grapevine magazine, which is our meeting in print.
- Ruth Hock was Bill W.'s secretary and affectionately known as "Dutch." She served as the national secretary for A.A. from its founding and helped transcribe and write the Big Book. Although she was not an alcoholic, her contributions to A.A. are instrumental in our history. Ruth's housekeeper, Florence R was the first woman to get sober in A.A.
- Sister Mary Ignatia (1889-1966) Born Della Mary Gavin in 1889 in Ireland, Sister Ignatia worked with Dr. Bob to help admit alcoholics into St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, starting in 1939. She surmounted obstacles to personally care for thousands of alcoholics over the next several decades, both in Akron and later at St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland. Beloved by all who were associated with or helped by her, she was commonly referred to as the "Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous."
- The first women's meeting in A.A.'s history was called the Women's Group. The meeting was the fifteenth oldest meeting and began on May 20, 1941.

We hope that you have enjoyed learning about women in the history of A.A.!

Not A Glum Lot SOS Funnies

LAUGH SMILE BE HAPPY

Two men were drinking and driving. And a cop pulled them over. Before the cop approaches the window, the passenger tells the driver, "I've got an idea! Hurry! Take the label off of your beer bottle and stick it on your forehead. Trust me."

So the driver complied. And when the officers approached the window, he shined his flashlight straight at the two men.

"Hello! Have you two been drinking?"

"No sireee, Mr. Officer," the passenger replied with slurred speech, "In fact, we just got out of an AA meeting. As you can see, my friend here is on the patch."

When someone asks if you're a "red or white" wine person



A husband woke up one morning realizing that his wife had slept on the couch again. Finally, he decides to ask her about it, "Honey, why have you been sleeping on the couch?" The wife replies, "Because when you drink you sleep like Jim Parks."

The husband obviously disturbed by this confession he decides to follow his wife for 3 days to figure out who this 'Jim Parks' guy is.

After the 3rd day his wife has yet meet up with this guy.

The husband finally unable to contain his anger, he finally confronts his wife. "I demand you tell me who Jim Parks is!" he says. The wife clearly confused asks, "what are you talking about?" The husband continues to demand, "The other day, you said I slept like Jim Parks. Who is he?"

The wife remembering the conversation replies, "When you drink, you sleep like the way Jim from across the street parks."



Committee Announcements

There will be NO Intergroup Meeting for May

Sheet Of Sobriety (S.O.S.) Committee – Assembles articles and submissions for publication from Indianapolis A.A. Members, Intergroup Committee Chairs, and the Central Office Manager for the monthly newsletter; Sheets Of Sobriety (S.O.S.). Publications provided digitally via email subscription and on the www.indyaa.org, both free of charge.

Always needing stories, funnies, and anything else you want to share!

Sos@indyaa.org

Archives Committee – Collects, categorizes, displays, and protects the historical A.A. documents and memorabilia of Indianapolis Intergroup.

Need help during business hours.

archives@indyaa.org

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TOPIC TIME

Topic Suggestion for June...

What is something new and different you did for your Sobriety recently?

Dads, how has sobriety changed you as a father?

Share your Experience, Strength, and Hope regarding the topic for the June Edition of S.O.S.

Submissions are not limited to the suggested topic and we encourage you to write about any topic as it relates to Alcoholism for any month.

Submissions for June are due by May 25th. Any submissions received after May 25th may be included in the July Edition or subsequent Editions.

Please submit to sos@indyaa.org and title your email "Newsletter Submission".

Please keep all submission around 700 words or less. Include a title for your submission where applicable. If no title is included, we may provide one for you.

If you wish to be published anonymously, DO NOT include your name in your document and please write "post anonymously" in your email submission to SOS.

If you wish for your name or initials to be published, please write it at the end of your submitted document exactly as you would like it published. If no indication of intent has been made, your submission will automatically be posted anonymously.

Please note, only first names, first name and last initial, or initials only, will ever be published. We will never post last names even if you submit them.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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