

Intergroup Bulletin

The monthly online bulletin of the Sioux Falls Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

Visit our website for blog articles, meeting schedules, and an events calendar! www.siouxfallsaa.org

June 1, 2008

siouxfallsaa.org

Please print and distribute for your AA group!

The Art of Sponsorship

The Web Committee is pleased to post an article on sponsorship by Artie, for our May blog.

*By Artie, West Palm Beach, FL
(but always a New Yorker!)*

Although not a resident of Akron or the Midwest, I subscribe to your Intergroup newsletter. (Ed: thanks Artie!) Thank you for your Intergroup News. My name is Artie and I'm an alcoholic. My sobriety date is 7/14/76, and prior to retiring and moving to South Florida over seven years ago, I was from Long Island, NY and NYC. My home group in New York was the Sunrise Group, Jones Beach group.

The man who Twelve Stepped me and became my sponsor was a construction superintendent and a tough Irishman. Nassau County, Long Island, didn't have rehabs or treatment centers in 1976. There was Freeport Alcohol Hospital for a seven day detox. They used to fly men in from Iceland for seven days.

My sponsor, John, said to me, "If you want what we have, do what we do, and if you do what you did, you'll get what you got. Don't drink and go to meetings." He told me that the first 164 pages of the Big Book was a design for living, but I wasn't capable of understanding that then, so I was to read the stories and try to identify. He took me on 40 or 50 Twelfth Step calls that first year. We didn't get them after they sobered up. We helped them sober up, he kept it simple, just what I needed. Ninety percent of meetings in New York were in church basements. My sponsor said we don't save souls, but we do save a few rear ends. He said that if I had a dime's worth of AA, to give a nickel away and down the road, I would get a quarter's worth back. He shared only what he had experienced, not his opinions. He never gave me

a bum steer. He died doing the limbo at an AA dance at K of C hall, 16 years ago in his 30th year of sobriety.

As for my sponsoring, I sponsor much the same as John sponsored me. I had six pigeons in New York over the years. They still call me every week to keep in touch: Three cops, two priests and a regular guy. I've only had one guy I took from a Twelfth Step call to the present. He's 86 years old, and very active in AA. He lives in Pennsylvania now and is very active in AA there.

I don't push my pigeons into the Big Book or Steps. I try to get them to feel the Fellowship of AA first, the way it was given to me. (Yes, I said pigeons.) I was a pigeon, my sponsor was a pigeon, and his sponsor was a pigeon. I let them know that if they want to be a sponcee, find another sponsor. Here in Florida I sponsor five guys whose sobriety range from two years to thirty years.

After John died I asked Ron to be my sponsor. He's coming up on 47 years of sobriety. I call him everyday and he's become a great friend. He was the founder of the Sunrise Group, Jones Beach. Today, those who go to treatment get a lot of knowledge, but unless they turn knowledge into spirit this program won't stay with them. I feel that the experts in the disease of alcoholism are not MD's, PhD's, counselors, or treatment centers; the experts in the disease of alcoholism are in the rooms of AA.

*Lots of meetings.....Lots of chances
Few meetings, No meetings.....No chances*

-Artie

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Upcoming Events:

June 6-8: AA's 73rd Birthday, Founders Day, Akron, Ohio

June 8: 6:30PM Serenity Seekers Birthday, Eastside Lutheran

June 14: 12:00PM Annual Volleyball Fundraiser and Picnic, Riverdale Park

June 20-22: DeSmet AA Group Campout, Lake Henry @ Paul's Landing

Service Opportunities!

July 6: 5:00PM, Intergroup Elections! Westside

Committees:

June 21: 5:30PM, Web Committee, Caribou

July 6: 4:00PM, Bylaws Committee, Westside

July 6: 6:00PM, District 5, Westside