



D5 AA  
FARGO

# D5-NEWSLETTER

District 5 Alcoholics Anonymous

## DISTRICT 5 SEEKING ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS FROM LOCAL AA MEMBERS!

A special thank you to our new Editor Jim S for his hard work in getting together this newsletter. It takes a lot of coordination, time and effort to make something like this happen. Next time you see him give him a big thanks.

District 5 has started a newsletter that's seeking written content from local AA members. You can contribute by submitting a one-page typed article on whatever AA topic you would like. Before you submit an article, Jim asks that you send him a text message first so that he knows to look for your article submission in his email.

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## ACCEPTANCE WAS THE ANSWER

Acceptance is a cornerstone principle of our program. When I first stepped foot into the rooms of AA, I had no idea how un-accepting of life I truly was! I was prey to misery and depression if things didn't go my way. Not because I was selfish (although I was), but because it was truly the best way for things to be! I regarded my views and designs for my life as the only acceptable outcome of events- as you could imagine, this failed spectacularly. Acceptance is articulated beautifully in the Big Book and in this context, means embracing life on life's terms, acknowledging reality without resistance, and understanding that peace comes from within rather than from external circumstances. One of the most quoted passages from the Big Book is found in the chapter "Acceptance Was the Answer". It reads: "And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment." This short statement drives home the point that much of my suffering lies not in the external situation but in the internal struggle to change what is beyond my control.

AA teaches us that true acceptance is about surrender. Surrendering does not imply giving up but rather letting go of the illusion of control over others and the world. When I can acknowledge this powerlessness over alcohol and admit that life has become unmanageable, only then can I open the door to genuine transformation. This change in mindset is what allows my focus to shift from external blame to internal change, and that, my friends, is the way to serenity and peace.

2024 District 5 Alkathon		
Meeting Start Time	Tuesday - Christmas Eve	Wednesday - Christmas Day
7:00am	Fargo AA	Fargo AA
8:00am		
9:00am	401 Group	Gathering Group
10:00am		
11:00am	Crossroads	NPG
12:00pm		
1:00pm	Fargo AA	Fargo AA
2:00pm		
3:00pm	Hope South	Hope North
4:00pm		
5:00pm	Fargo Wednesday Group	West Fargo Monday Night Big Book
6:00pm		
6:45pm	BYOBB	Tuesday Women's Happy Hour
8:00pm	Fargo AA	Fargo AA
9:00pm		
10:00pm	4th Street Group	Saturday Morning Big Book
11:00pm		

Acceptance also fosters humility and th By accepting that we cannot manage life alone, we are driven to a connection with a Higher Power (however we choose to define it). This connection allows me to cultivate acceptance through prayer, meditation, and the support of my fellows, recognizing that I am on a lifelong journey that relies on a daily reprieve based on my spiritual condition.

In practice, acceptance in my life means striving to live in the present and embracing people, situations, and myself without judgment. It does not mean passivity or ignoring problems but rather approaching life's challenges with a sense of calm and understanding that not everything can or should be controlled. It also allows me to focus on what I can change—myself, my attitudes, and my actions—while letting go of resentment, fear, and the need to control outcomes. It was freedom I was seeking when I walked through the doors of AA. It is freedom I get if I surrender my will and along with God's guidance, accept life on life's terms.

### What is our message?

For many twenty-four hours now I have been asking myself, "what is our message?"The first half of the twelfth step tells us that we are to "try to carry this message to alcoholics", but what is this message that we are supposed to carry? In

## FARGO AA THANKSGIVING

SDSOS Clubhouse invites YOU to join us for meetings and fellowship on Thursday, November 28, Thanksgiving Day

7 AM,      9 AM,      11 AM,  
1PM,      3PM,      5:30 PM,      8 PM

Bring pie or another favorite dessert or snack to share. Food, fellowship and celebrate sober holiday.



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how it works we read that, "Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now." So perhaps the best way I can put this idea on paper is to share the second two parts of my story, since they comprise the message that was carried to me and the message that today I try to carry to others.

When I arrived at the doors of AA I was broken. How could it be any other way? This was the end result of the, "what it was like." I was scared and confused and trying to look like I had any idea of what it was like to be an actual human being amongst fellow humans. How clear that look is to me on the faces of the newcomers I see today. What must I have looked like to those people back then? What must I still look like today to those that came before me? (I relish the opportunity to find out.) How fortunate was I that they saw me in that state and immediately took me in. I had arrived. I did not understand it at the time, but I was surrounded by understanding individuals that were willing to love me and teach me until I was ready to love myself again, and eventually pass on to others what would be so freely given to me. I quickly learned that no matter where I roamed I could find other alcoholics that were willing to trudge this path alongside me. The message carried to me at that moment was one of unity, it was that I did not ever have to be alone again.

My newfound friends soon put me to work. Was this some sort of trick?! I needed help, not tasks to perform. They asked me to set up chairs. They told me to stand by the door and shake hands. Within weeks they had me chairing meetings. Very quickly I began to feel like one of them. Not only that, but at times I began to feel good. And for brief moments the hideous idea of that first drink was absent from my mind. I began to understand that when I stopped thinking about myself and started thinking about the welfare of others I was relieved of the bondage of self. The Big Book tells us that, "Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs." This idea was starting to take shape in my life. The message that was

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7:00am	Fargo AA	Fargo AA
8:00am		
9:00am	401 Group	Gathering Group
10:00am		
11:00am	Crossroads	NPG
12:00pm		
1:00pm	Fargo AA	Fargo AA
2:00pm		
3:00pm	Brown Bag Group	Hope North
4:00pm		
5:00pm	Fargo Wednesday Group	West Fargo Monday Night Big Book
6:00pm		
6:45pm	BYOBB	Tuesday Women's Happy Hour
8:00pm	Fargo AA	Fargo AA
9:00pm		
10:00pm	4th Steet Group	Living Sober
11:00pm		

carried to me was one of service, it was that through selfless acts I could be set free.

While all of this was happening the man that told me he would be my sponsor took me through the steps. We talked about what it was like and he explained that, "I was a victim of the delusion that I could wrest happiness and satisfaction from the world if only I managed well." He made it plain to me that my own powerlessness and selfishness were the roots of my problem. And he told me that if I was willing to turn my will and my life over to the care of God I could be restored to sanity. We knelt together and said a prayer that would forever change my life. He had me make an inventory and taught me to look for damaged or unsalable goods, and to get rid of them promptly and without regret. Together we made a list of the people I had harmed and he taught me to make amends. As a result of taking these steps I had a spiritual experience and stood in the sunlight of the spirit for the first time. I also learned that if I did not continue to do these steps this spark would be, "blotted out by worldly clamors, mostly those within myself." And I have continued to work these steps ever since. The message carried to me was one of

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recovery, that I could be reborn.

Unity, service, and recovery is the message that I carry. It is this and so much more. It is a message of hope, that I will never have to drink again. And it is one I hope you will find, find and carry to others.

Sincerely, N

## **THE FIX**

**EARLY ON IN SOBRIETY, I FOUND MANY WHO WANTED TO HELP BY OFFERING SUGGESTIONS.**

**WHO DOESN'T LIKE A SUGGESTION ONCE IN A WHILE?**

**ALTHOUGH I HEARD THE SUGGESTIONS AND KNEW THEY WERE OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH, I PROBABLY WASN'T GOING TO IMPLEMENT THEM.**

**IT WASN'T THAT I IMMEDIATELY THOUGHT I KNEW BETTER. I THINK, DEEP DOWN, I WANTED TO EXPERIENCE THE RESULT OF DOING WHAT I WANTED TO DO RATHER THAN DO SOMETHING SUGGESTED. THIS ACTION OR NON-ACTION OFTEN DOES NOT END WELL. THEN AGAIN, I WAS THE ONLY ONE I COULD BLAME FOR THE FAILURE AND/OR TAKE CREDIT FOR THE POSITIVES.**

**ENOUGH OF THAT.**

**WHAT I REALLY FOUND MORE THAN ANYTHING WAS I WANTED SOMEONE TO LISTEN WELL AND NOT OFFER SUGGESTIONS PERIOD. THE MINUTE SOMEONE SAYS, "YOU SHOULD", I'M OUT.**

**SO, LISTENING WELL TO EACH OTHER CAN BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. THE LISTENER GETS TO PRACTICE PATIENCE AND THE OTHER GAINS TRUST.**

**OVER THE YEARS I FIND I DON'T WANT TO BE FIXED. I JUST WANT SOMEONE TO GENUINELY LISTEN.**

**DAN M.**

**When I came to AA**, I didn't know if I was an alcoholic, which was funny because I was in an AA meeting telling someone I wasn't sure if I was because I hadn't physically drank in several months. I started drinking when I was age 11. I was a troublesome child who acted out and started doing bad things, I know now because of fear and pain and being lost, but at the time I thought it was cool and it made me feel ok. I had finally found something I was good at! I wasn't good at anything else, but drinking I was, and I felt confident when I did it. From age 11 to 24 my life revolved around drinking, though I didn't realize it. My thoughts were always on when I was going to drink next and who was going to be there, what we were going to. I didn't care about school or my family and never had any goals. I didn't value personal relationships because I didn't know how and I was very selfish. I was the happiest when I could drink how I wanted to with people who wanted to do what I wanted to do. I had a child young, and my priority was still drinking. I felt a lot of guilt during my drinking and when I was newly sober about this, until I realized that I was an alcoholic and no human power, not even my child, could keep me sober. I didn't have a choice to not drink, and I didn't know how to live a different way. I had to go to treatment when I was 16 and after that went to AA in my hometown, but was never serious about stopping, so AA in sobriety was new to me. When I was 24, I got tuberculosis and after treating that, I knew I was going to drink but I no longer wanted to, so I called a number for AA and asked if I could go to a closed meeting. I didn't understand what open and closed meant and thought I couldn't go because I hadn't drank in a few months. I ended up going but like this story starts, I still didn't know if I was an alcoholic. I don't remember it taking long for me to figure it out. I found a sponsor and we started reading the Big Book and I heard people share, and I realized that I wasn't alone and there were other people who felt like me and drank like me, and they were sober and laughing and kind. The kindness meant so much to me. I remember the day of the week I realized I was an alcoholic. It was a Thursday, I didn't go to the meeting, and I had a clear thought about my life. I thought from age 11 to 24, your life revolved around alcohol and if you wrote down your life on paper, it's not that impressive. It was then for me that I realized I was an alcoholic. I'm so grateful for that moment and that it happened so early in my journey, because I could start moving forward from that point. My experience has been that once I realized that to myself, it didn't matter what others thought or if they disagreed. I knew to myself I was. I've been on this journey for over 12 years and every day I am so grateful...to be alive, to have the friends I do, to have God in my life, and to be able to find joy every day.

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## Do The Action and Let God Do the Rest

- Holly M

When I first came into the program, I heard people say, "Suit up and show up," "Get out of the driver seat," and "Do the next right thing." To me this means I do the actions and let God do the rest. It is of course easier said than done.

I first sobered up when I was 20 years old and practiced this to the best of my ability. When I hit 5-7 years of sobriety I started to take control back more and more. I resisted being fully honest to myself and the people around me. I had relapsed at 7 years and had seen what my pride can do when it was in control. Outwardly my life seemed okay. I was working 64 hours a week at a good job, attending nursing school full time and was active in AA. It is important to note I was not emotionally or mentally always present in meetings at that time. Emotionally and spiritually, I was struggling and did not want to live like this.

I found myself humbled and willing to be honest and try this "Give it to God" thing again. I started to be honest with my sponsor and friends in AA. I did another 4th and 5th step. I started to find peace again. I began each day with the thought "I give the day to my higher power whether I understand my higher power or not. I'll just try it for today." The day would not go so bad, and I would do it again and then again.

After a year of sobriety, I looked back and saw what can happen when I practice letting go and focus on doing the next right action. I had found not only serenity and peace in my life but also a purpose outside of AA.

I graduated from nursing school during that first year. I had wanted to work in the hospital and never a nursing home. I applied for an inpatient position at a local hospital and did not get it. A fellow student nurse got it instead. I was disappointed and felt the rejection. I did the next right action and sent out other applications including to a nursing home I had visited as a student. I got the job at the nursing home the day I applied. The first day on the job I knew I was in the right place. I loved the residents and was in my element. This is a perfect example of getting out of my own way and letting God direct me.

I worked in that job for almost 8 years and learned so much. At the end of my time working there I started to feel restless and felt a push to go somewhere else. I discussed this feeling with my sponsor and prayed about it. I did the next right action and sent out applications. I got a job at a clinic (I was never going to work in a clinic) and have been there for ten years. I have had three different bosses during this time, and each have said this is such a great fit for you.

I had let go and let my higher power direct me where to go. I am excited to see where else God will lead me.

## A LAZY ALCOHOLIC'S LIFE HACK: CHOOSING A HOMEGROUP

I AM FUNDAMENTALLY LAZY. THEY DESCRIBE ME PERFECTLY IN THE 12 X 12, "WITH GENUINE ALARM AT THE PROSPECT OF WORK, WE STAY LAZY" (P. 49). I WANT THINGS TO MAGICALLY COME TO ME—HAPPINESS, RELATIONSHIPS, A CAREER, A CLEAN HOUSE, ETC. WHAT IF I WORK HARD BUT STILL FAIL, OR THINGS DON'T TURN OUT HOW I WANT? I'D RATHER NOT BOTHER. I COULD PROCRASTINATE TO DEATH (LITERALLY), SO I HAD TO LEARN WAYS TO MAKE THE PROSPECT OF RECOVERY WORK LESS ALARMING.

MY FIRST HOMEGROUP DRILLED IN OUR HEADS THAT YOU ONLY MISS YOUR HOMEGROUP IF YOU'RE DEAD. I TOOK IT TO HEART AND CAME BACK EVERY WEEK—MOSTLY BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO. LIFE GRADUALLY BECAME EASIER AS I HAD REGULAR

CONTACT WITH OTHER ALCOHOLICS. MEETINGS TURNED INTO SOMETHING I JUST DID, NOT SOMETHING I CHOSE TO DO EACH WEEK. IT WENT FROM OPTIONAL TO AN AUTOMATIC PART OF MY ROUTINE, LIKE TAKING A SHOWER OR BRUSHING MY TEETH.

DESPITE MY LAZINESS, I DO SOME THINGS WITHOUT A FUSS. I DON'T PONDER IF MY TEETH FEEL LIKE THEY NEED BRUSHING OR WHICH BRAND OF TOOTHPASTE TO USE—I BRUSH WITHOUT THINKING USING COLGATE. IT'S SIMPLY AUTOMATIC. I ATTEND MEETINGS LIKE THAT. I SELECTED A HOMEGROUP AND I GO WEEKLY. I DON'T NEED TO WASTE TIME OR EFFORT DECIDING WHETHER I FEEL LIKE I NEED A MEETING EACH THURSDAY. REGARDLESS OF HOW I FEEL, I ALWAYS NEED MEETINGS. →

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I'VE CHANGED HOMEGROUPS SEVERAL TIMES IN SOBRIETY. MY ORIGINAL HOMEGROUP STARTED AT 8PM WITH FELLOWSHIP AFTERWARDS. THAT GOT TOO LATE FOR THIS OLD LADY, SO I FOUND AN EARLIER ONE. CURRENTLY, I'M A MEMBER OF A WOMEN'S GROUP. I REGULARLY ATTEND OTHER MEETINGS AS WELL, BUT MY HOMEGROUP IS NOT OPTIONAL. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF I USE COLGATE OR CREST AS LONG AS I USE TOOTHPASTE, AND IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH MEETING I JOIN, AS LONG AS I HAVE A HOMEGROUP.

I SCHEDULE MY LIFE AROUND MY HOMEGROUP, ALTHOUGH I'VE BECOME SLIGHTLY LESS MILITANT. I STAY HOME IF I'M SICK, AND SOMETIMES I'M OUT OF TOWN. BUT IF I MISS MY MEETING, PEOPLE NOTICE.

IF CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE, I MIGHT NEED TO SWITCH HOMEGROUPS AGAIN. BUT I WILL ALWAYS HAVE ONE, AND I WON'T STOP GOING TO MY CURRENT HOMEGROUP UNTIL I FIND A NEW ONE. I FORMED THE HABIT, AND DON'T WANT TO RISK LOSING IT. I'VE HEARD PEOPLE WHO CAME BACK TO AA AFTER 'FLOATING OUT THE TOP.' MY ALCOHOLIC BRAIN COULD CONCOCT INFINITE REASONS TO SKIP AND GET SICK AGAIN. IT'S TOO COLD (OR HOT OR NICE), I OUTGREW AA, SOMEONE IS IRRITATING ME, I HAVE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO, ETC. BUT I ONLY HAVE A DAILY REPRIEVE, SO I TREAT MEETINGS LIKE BRUSHING MY TEETH.

LIFE IS EASIER WHEN THE ESSENTIALS OF MY RECOVERY ARE AUTOMATIC. I'M GRATEFUL THEY DRILLED HOMEGROUP ATTENDANCE INTO MY THICK HEAD. IT TAKES SOME WORK, BUT THE PROSPECT IS MUCH LESS ALARMING IF I DON'T HAVE TO BOTHER WITH THE DECISION-MAKING PART OF IT.

LAURA S.

**For the longest time** I never saw my drinking as a problem. But at the end I had lost complete control and I was miserable and desperate. I tried all kinds of things to get sober. I was reading self help books, seeing doctors, therapists and psychiatrists, and started medications. I was doing different online programs. I did try out some online AA meetings, but at this point there was no way I was going to go to an in-person meeting because of my fear of people and the whole "God thing." I had grown up Lutheran but as my drinking career progressed my relationship with God moved further and further away and I didn't know what I believed anymore. Nothing was working for me and my drinking progressed to the point of drinking at work and I lost my nursing license. I went to treatment and even during treatment I was struggling with the mental obsessions and continued to drink. I knew one of the only things I had left to try was going to an AA meeting. One of the first meetings I went to the main speaker was telling my story. She was also a nurse who had gone through a very similar situation and now had her nursing license back.

I didn't think there was anyone else out there like me or who had been through what I went through. For the first time I had hope. I knew that I had to keep coming back and start taking their suggestions. I got a sponsor and started doing the work.

One of the components of my alcoholism is a spiritual malady. Through working the Steps, I learned that alcohol isn't my real problem. I am the problem. Alcohol was just my solution to that problem. I am spiritually sick. My feelings of restlessness, irritability, and discontent stem from my character defects. I have a lot of selfishness and fear especially that I need to continue to work on. And the steps help me do that.

And working through the first few steps I learned what it meant to find my own Higher Power. I didn't realize it didn't have to be a specific religion or someone else's conception of God. I learned how to find and develop my own relationship with a God of my understanding. I was even exploring other religions and almost got baptized by a religion I would normally completely close off and slam the door in their face. But through just being open and willing I was able to take those things that made sense to me and felt right in my heart to continue to develop and grow a relationship with my Higher Power. And through Him I am able to work on and overcome

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some of my character defects and to find usefulness in life and to be of service to others, which helps me find peace.

During the first couple years of sobriety I was actively working the steps, but over the last year I started to get a little complacent and wasn't being as active in my program and in keeping a connection with my Higher Power. I quit taking on as many commitments and service work and sponsoring women. And I realized I was starting to feel restless, irritable and discontent. The book warns us, "It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

I need to continue working this program to replace alcohol which was once the only thing I knew of that could provide me ease and comfort. So, I started by just trying to pray more. And then God has helped to guide me on where I need to be by giving me opportunities to be of service. I still have the problem of wanting to run the show, be in control and I think I know what is best. But my best thinking got me into AA. I have to try and remind myself of this and I've been trying to get back into the habit of saying the third step prayer at least daily again to try and turn my will over to God. It turns out he usually has a better plan for me than I had for myself.

And I find when I'm able to do these things I can find moments of peace and serenity. A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to write a letter to the Board of Nursing after three years of probation requesting reinstatement of my full nursing license. At their board meeting they voted to reinstate my license. I had been a little nervous because I didn't know how I was going to feel without being held accountable to anyone anymore. But the day after they reinstated my license I went to one of my regular meetings and I was filled with a sense of freedom and peace. I'm doing this for me and because I like the life I have now. I have two jobs that I love and over the past year I was promoted at work into a position that is my dream job. I have so many blessings in my life because of AA and my Higher Power. I love reading the ninth step promises because they are so true. They tell us that "we will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves" and that the promises "will always materialize if we work for them."

## Service Sunday

### Institutions Committee

3rd Sunday of the Month  
at 2:00pm  
SDSOS Clubhouse  
(2nd Floor)

### Public Information / CPC Committee

3rd Sunday of the Month  
at 2:00pm  
SDSOS Clubhouse  
(2nd Floor)

If you are looking to be of service there are plenty of opportunities at District, so come join us on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 2pm for committee meetings and 3pm for the district meeting at the SDSOS club house or contact the District chair, Fred W. at [district5@aanorthdakota.org](mailto:district5@aanorthdakota.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

.....  
**RULE 62 RENDEZVOUS**  
**JANUARY 17/18/19**  
**BAYMONT INN**  
**BISMARCK, ND**

.....  
**WINTER THAW**  
**FEBRUARY 22ND**  
**OLIVET LUTHERAN**  
**CHURCH**  
**FARGO, ND**  
.....

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