



# SOBER TIMES

May 2025

News from around District 26, Area 32

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The purpose of the District 26 Unity Council is to educate AA Groups and the public on AA principles and to promote harmony among AA groups through the practice of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. We are a fellowship of alcoholics from different groups within the district that encourages participation and service.

## Responsibility Statement

I am responsible when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that: I am responsible.

## Schedule of Events

**May 17<sup>th</sup>** – District 26 Unity Council Meeting. Coffee, donuts and fellowship at 9:30 AM. Meeting at 10 AM. Houghton Lake Alano Club. 2410 North Markey Road, Houghton Lake.

**May 29<sup>th</sup>** – Grace on the Base Open Speaker and Potluck Dinner. Doors open at 5 PM. Food at 5:30 (Grilling hotdogs and hamburgers) Bring a dish to pass. Speaker Bev D. of Hale at 6 PM. Grace Community Church, 6012 North Skeel Avenue, Oscoda.

**May 31<sup>st</sup>** – Summer Kick Off with the Saturday Night Serenity Group. Doors open at 6 for snacks and fellowship. (Bring a snack to share). Open speaker, Rachel B. of Alpena at 7 PM. Alcona County EMS building, 2600 Michigan 72, Harrisville.

**June 1<sup>st</sup>** – CMIA Area 32 Assembly hosted by District 24. 8:30 AM for fellowship and coffee. Meeting 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Lunch provided. Wesleyan Woods, 4320 Caine Rd., Vassar. Zoom ID: 97092094118 Password: AREA32

**June 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>** – Founders Day Celebration in Akron, Ohio. Information and registration at <https://foundersday.org>

**June 21<sup>st</sup>** – Back to Basics Workshop. 9 AM to 3 PM at the Roscommon VFW Hall, 219 Terrace Dr., Roscommon. Lunch and materials provided. RSVP online at [dist26aa.org](http://dist26aa.org) or to Nick T. at 810-730-3829. To attend by Zoom the ID is 394 501 0116.

**July 3-6<sup>th</sup>** – 2025 A.A. International Convention, Vancouver, BC, Canada. [www.AA.org/International-Convention](http://www.AA.org/International-Convention)

**July 26<sup>th</sup>** – New Life Group Cook Out and Speaker Meeting. 3PM Games and Fellowship. Cookout at 3:45 (bring a dish to pass). Speaker Angelo F. at 4:30. Group Conscience at 5:30. The West Branch Fresh Start Club. 236 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, West Branch.

**August 8<sup>th</sup>** – New Life Zoom Group 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Picnic. South Higgins Lake State Park. 12 noon to 5 PM with an open discussion meeting at 2 PM. Bring a dish to pass.

## Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

## Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Long form – 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.

## Concept Five

Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.



## Heard at a Meeting

There’s more here than meets the eye.

Like bananas, stick with the bunch so you don’t get peeled.

Not my shit, not my shovel.

Part of the adventure of my life is – I DON’T know all that I may become.

Serenity may be the presence of peace or the absence of chaos.

As a cure for worrying, work is better than whiskey.

When willingness and action come together God’s grace erupts.

A picture of a fire looks like a fire, but it can’t burn. Theory and practice are two different things.

## **Stronger Together**

### **These Groups Could Use Your Support**

**Clare;** Third Step Group;  
Tuesday 8 PM Big Book,  
Friday 8 PM closed discussion meeting and  
Saturday Noon Open Meeting;  
United Methodist Church, 105 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Clare.

**East Tawas;** Tuesday 7 PM, Discovery Group. Holy Family Catholic Church, 516 West Lincoln Street, East Tawas.

**East Tawas;** Friday 7 PM, Living Sober. Christ Episcopal Church, 202 West Westover Street, East Tawas.

**Harrisville;** Saturday 7 PM, Saturday Night Serenity. Alcona County EMS, 2600 Michigan 72, Harrisville.

**Houghton Lake;** Wednesday Noon at The Northern Center, 7784 Stone School Rd., Houghton Lake.

**Mikado;** Sunday 7 PM, Message in Mikado. Mikado Community of Christ, 3155 East Mikado Rd., Mikado.

**Oscoda;** Thursday 12 Noon Big Book, Church of Christ, 5726 Cedar Lake Rd., Oscoda.

**Oscoda;** Thursday 6 PM Big Book Meeting, Grace Community Church, 6012 N. Skeel Avenue, Oscoda. Last Thursday is an open speaker meeting and potluck.

**Prescott;** Saturday 8 PM, Skidway Lake Group, Judson Baptist Church, 201 Harrison Road, Prescott.

**Roscommon;** Morning Gratitude, Mondays and Fridays, 7 AM, River Center, 211 N. Main St., Roscommon.

**Roscommon; Women's Meeting;** Serenity Sisters, Mondays at 7 PM, Study Meeting, contact Amy at 989-273-9382 for location and details. Just beginning a study of Back to Basics. This group is open to having female volunteers for a speaker meeting.

**Roscommon;** Thursday 7 PM, HOW Group, Methodist Church, 1515 N. M-18, Roscommon. Also needs open speaker volunteers.

**Sterling;** Sunday 8 PM, Second Chance Group, Wesleyan Church, 365 West Jefferson Street, Sterling.

**Whittemore;** Monday 8 PM 12 & 12, United Methodist Church, 110 North St., Whittemore.

## **The Recovery Matrix**

Do you remember the movie, "The Matrix"?

Neo, the main character was stuck in a world that didn't seem right to him. He felt something was off... something was missing.

Morpheus, the leader of "the resistance" awakens Neo and reveals the truth of his existence. It's raw, it's ugly, yet there is a hope. Neo is taken to a white construct where Morpheus' team can upload any program... Any possible scenario in order to train and recalibrate his mindset.

It takes time, but eventually Neo makes the transition from "learning" to "being" ... He finally knows who he is, and his position over the AI world they created for him and others. No longer trapped, he breaks through in his perceptions and can override the programmed loop of fear and defeat and becomes the first to be transformed from a victim to a champion.

God, as we understand him, awakens us when we recognize something is wrong in our lives. Existing in the delusional world of alcoholism seems like a normal yet ugly way to carry on. We arrive in AA and are struck by the contrasting world of sober living through our comrades' daily demonstration.

Our new companions teach and train us. We write an inventory and see that we need God to help us make the transition to sanity. We finally see the futility of our alcoholic mindset and destructive results. Slowly, as we continue to be taught and trained, we learn and then we "become" ... sane, sound, sober individuals. We are altered, adjusted and realigned into God's original design for us.

-Anonymous

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### **HELP WANTED**

Would you like to see your recovery related story, thoughts or experience in print like the article "Recovery Matrix" above, or the A.A. History piece, "An Unforeseen Divine Appointment" on the next page? Submit your story to me at [HLC71014@gmail.com](mailto:HLC71014@gmail.com) or through the district website at [www.dist26aa.org](http://www.dist26aa.org). I was so excited to get submissions this month so you could all read a recovery insight other than my own! As always, let us know if there is anything your group is doing that you'd like to share with us or if your group needs support, we'd love to help out. Submissions can also be handed to me at a meeting. (Like the Unity Council meeting in Houghton Lake on the 17<sup>th</sup>). Until next month I wish you a happy, joyful, sober spring! – Holly C.

## A.A. History; An Unforeseen Divine Appointment

One of my favorite moments in AA history, specifically Bill's journey, is recorded in the book Pass It On. Bill is 6 years sober in the winter of 1940, and has shouldered the responsibility of writing the Big Book, settling arguments between the fledgling groups, watching Hank (closest confidant in New York) return to the drink, and recognizing there is more to be done in order to ensure AA's survival. Bill's days are filled with trying to pioneer a brand-new movement that will save untold numbers of alcoholics from a fatal ending... while living on the goodwill of others to help provide basic necessities.

He is fatigued, alone, and miserable... sober.

Let the following words take you back in time to a tiny room upstairs where Bill and Lois lived, (Lois had painted the walls white with red trim) in the very first AA clubhouse on 24th street in New York...

*For Bill, these were tantalizing days; his hopes would be raised, only to be dashed. They still had no home of their own; he had no job; the Big Book wasn't selling; AA wasn't getting the wide publicity it desperately needed; the Rockefellers hadn't come through; Hank was drinking. Bill was frustrated, impatient, restless, dissatisfied, and depressed. Some even described him as being on a dry drunk- In other words, he had all the symptoms of being drunk except the alcohol.*

*What happened next was unexpected and unforeseen; if Bill had been asked what would have made him feel better, he would hardly have thought to name the gift that came to him, apparently at random.*

*On a cold and rainy night late in 1940, deep in the winter of Bill's discontent, "I was in our little club in New York, the first one ever to open its doors. I was lying upstairs alone, except for old Tom M.-who made the coffee downstairs. Lois was away someplace. I was suffering from an imaginary ulcer attack- I used to have a lot of those. I felt very sorry for myself. It was a rather bitter night, sleeting outside, and old Tom, a very brusque Irishman, came up and said, 'Bill, I hate to bother you, but there is some bum from St. Louis here.'"*

*"Well, it was 10 at night, and I said, 'oh, no, not another one! Well, bring him up.' So I heard a painful progress up the stairs, and I said to myself, 'this one is really in bad shape.' He finally stood in the door of my little bedroom, a terribly crippled figure, coat drawn up around him, leaning on a cane. And he sat down and turned back his collar, and then I saw that he was a clergy man."*

*"He said, 'I'm father Dowling from St. Louis. I belong to the Jesuits' out there, and we've been looking at this book Alcoholics Anonymous.'"*

*Thus began a conversation that lasted for 20 years. Father Dowling, crippled, Jesuit, priest from St. Louis and editor of The Queen's Work, a Catholic publication, said he was fascinated by the parallels he had discovered between the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the exercises of Saint Ignatius, the spiritual discipline*

*of his Jesuit order. When Bill confessed that he knew nothing of the exercises of Saint Ignatius, Father Dowling was delighted, and Bill warmed to him.*

*"We talked about a lot of things, and my spirits kept on rising, and presently I began to realize that this man radiated a grace that filled the room with a sense of presence."...*

*That evening, Father Ed began sharing with Bill an understanding of the spiritual life that then and ever after seemed to speak to Bill's condition. Bill, author of the fifth step, would later characterize that evening as the night he took his fifth step, and also as a "second conversion experience." He unburdened himself of his commissions and omissions, all of which had laid heavily on his mind, and of which he had found, until then, no way to speak. This extraordinary communication, this openness of sharing, was to be vital for Bill. Father Dowling's 'spiritual sponsorship' would endure, grow, and be nourished during a correspondence and a deep friendship that would last for the next two decades. The subjects of this interchange, although interspersed with 'business' matters of the fellowship- Father Ed was one of its staunchest supporters, responsible for founding AA in St. Louis-were almost always the questions Bill continued to ask throughout his life, about faith and no faith, about the church and its role in human affairs.*

*That night, Bill told of his high hopes and plans, and spoke about his anger, despair, and mounting frustrations. The Jesuit listened and quoted Matthew: 'blessed are they who do hunger and thirst.' God's chosen, he pointed out, were always distinguished by their yearnings, their restlessness, their thirst.*

*In pain, Bill asked if there was never to be any satisfaction. The priest almost snapped back: 'Never. Never any.' He continued in a gentler tone, describing as 'divine dissatisfaction' that which would keep Wilson going, always reaching out for unattainable goals, for only by still reaching would he attain what-bidden from him-were God's goals. This acceptance that his dissatisfaction, that his very 'thirst' could be divine was one of Dowling's great gifts to Bill Wilson, and through him to Alcoholics Anonymous.*

Imagine if Bill had said, "Oh no.. not another one!" and then rolled over and missed the opportunity. This was one of the most important "unforeseen divine appointments" in Bill's life. The extraordinary shift in Bill Wilson's perspective over those 20 years of correspondence are evident. Father Dowling, crippled with arthritis, non-alcoholic, makes the journey from St. Louis to New York in winter... acting on his faith that he is supposed to meet with Bill Wilson. Without Father Dowling's friendship and mentorship, I doubt our society would have had the benefit of such masterpieces of vision such as The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, The Grapevine, The 12 concepts Of Service etc.

I like to believe that these two men were a "match made in heaven".

-Anonymous