

Jan. 20, 2008

Alcoholics Anonymous in Southern Idaho

Compiled from the research of Joe C., the writings of Ol' Swede E. and the Area 18 Archives.

In the spring of 1947 a woman in Rigby, Idaho read the article by Jack Alexander in the Saturday Evening Post about Alcoholics Anonymous. It gave her hope for the concerns she had about Carl, her husband, and the problem he had with alcohol.

She wrote to Alcoholics Anonymous in New York asking for help. They in turn contacted the group in Los Angeles. It turned out that a member named Harry, had just moved to Idaho Falls, a mere fifteen miles from Rigby. Harry contacted Carl and Carl decided he wanted what AA had to offer so they met at Harry's house and formed the first group in Idaho on May 20th, 1947. Soon they placed an ad in the local paper and in July their third member, Larry, joined. By late August their 4th and 5th members, George and Swede, joined the group. The meeting moved to Larry's' house on Tuesdays, and again moved to the City Building.

Early in September the Idaho Falls group was asked to join a group from Ogden, Utah for a meeting in Pocatello, Idaho. The first meeting of the Pocatello Group was conducted by members from the Ogden Group on September 7, 1947.

On January 8, 1948 the first meeting in St. Anthony was held. An AA member from Salt Lake City had moved to St. Anthony where he gathered a handful of drunks and explained the wonders of AA to them. They started traveling 45 miles to Idaho Falls to attend that meeting prior to beginning their own group.

Twin Falls started October 1947, Wallace (Studio Group) in 1951, Sandpoint in 1953, Weiser in 1953 until 1954 and again in 1962, Salmon and Soda Springs in 1957.

There may have been a group started in Boise during 1945 by two members but it didn't last.

Wanny M. was the first Area 18 Delegate to the General Service Conference in 1952. He was part of Panel #2 and Idaho was recognized as Area 18 of Alcoholics Anonymous.