

Liberty, IN 1976

A Brief History of the Whitewater Group of AA Liberty, IN

The first meeting was in July of 1976 in Liberty at St. Anthony's Center, an annex of St. Bridget's Catholic Church. Attending were Keith G., Wayne S., Mary Lou L., Mary Lou C., Willard T., Noble B., and Dave? The meeting was on Tuesday night and lasted until the blizzard of '77. No one could get out for weeks, so the meeting folded after that.

Mary Lou L. cleaned the church so the group could pay the rent. Many times it was just her at the meetings. Mary Lou L. put a notice in the *Liberty Herald* about the meeting. The paper printed her home phone number and listed her as president of AA! The ad ran for two weeks before she realized it. The meeting started again in July of '81, the 1st Tuesday. Four people from Richmond attended, including Genie P. who started the meeting again at Liberty Baptist Church. No one from the old Liberty group was there. Sue R. attended the second meeting, as well as John P., Genie P., Wayne S., Keith G., and two gentlemen from Richmond, names forgotten. The meeting moved back to St. Anthony's after two months. There was no smoking allowed at the Baptist church, and the door had to remain open to the sanctuary. The church people would stand and listen in on the meetings. The meeting stayed at St. Anthony's for two years, through 1983. Then it moved to Phil Kassen's office, Divine Diet Ministries, at 101 N. Fairground St. They were there for 2 years. It was a tiny room, but only 6-8 people would show up. Then one night they had 14 people and no place to put them, so they went back to St. Anthony's in '85 and stayed until '88 until the church "threw the alkies out." The group then moved to 220 E. Sycamore to Ray S.'s house and met in his basement for a while. The meeting later moved to the clothing bank at Willow and Second St. in an old beat-up house. There were 15-20 people at the meetings then, including folks from the state hospital. The group had no money. Sue R. would pay the light bill instead of having to pay rent. She was told she couldn't do that, so Wayne, Floyd and Sue split the rent payments so the group could continue. The group then moved to the new clothing bank at 307 E. Sycamore. There was heat there! That was in 1990. About 6 people were attending the meeting regularly. The state hospital was no longer bringing people because some group members didn't like it, plus there was some problem at the hospital with the drivers. In April of 1996, the Whitewater Group moved back to St. Anthony's. The church offered them more room for the meeting than they currently had, and church politics had changed since the group's last tenure there. Current membership of the Whitewater Group in 1997 is about 8 members.

Written by Christie Joy from an interview with Sue R.