



# Conscious Contact

## Information and Inspiration From District 10, NIA

Vol. 10 No. 11

Dec/Jan 2012-13

- Written and supported by the District 10 NIA fellowship
- Available in color online in PDF format, print version in B&W at meetings
- Contributions from any alcoholic are welcome. See the last page for details.
- Next meeting date: January 27th

Next deadline: Jan. 23, 2013

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“I am responsible . . .  
When anyone, anywhere, reaches  
out for help, I want the hand of AA  
always to be there. And for that: I  
am responsible.”

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[www.district10nia.org](http://www.district10nia.org)

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Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, NIA, District 10 or the Conscious Contact volunteers.

## The Storm Precedes Beauty

“Believe more deeply. Hold your face up to the Light, even though for the moment you do not see.” (As Bill Sees It, p.3; Letter, 1950)

How easy it is to believe and have faith when we are not experiencing pain. I have found that belief and faith must be ever-present when we are experiencing pain, because it is through pain that God is shifting our inner-workings and molding us into more of what He wants us to be, which is more like Him. I have spent the great majority of my life (and still do) so stuck on me. What will make *me* happy? What will make *me* feel better? What can others do for *me*? I am slowly shifting into the questions that God wants to answer. What can I do for others? How can I be of service? How can I carry the message to the newcomer and still suffering alcoholic? The idea that I must let go of the selfish questions and begin seeking the answers of selfless service always eluded me. How can I grow if I'm not working on *me*? I thought that I needed to be focused on me, my recovery, and my growth 24-7 in order to recover and grow. I needed to obsess on my defects until they were no longer defects. But I have found that focusing on my defects and obsessing on how to change them only feeds them. It is through doing what I have balked at that I can recover and grow. I have recently been facing many challenges in my emotional sobriety and my relationship with my Higher Power. Through that obsession, I lost all desire to be of service to others. I woke up and found myself sinking back into that pain that, in the past, kept me from recovery, sanity, and serenity. Through this, I began doubting my understanding of my Higher Power. It was a time “I did not see.” When I find myself in this position, I know the first thing to do is “hold my face to the Light.” Through pain, I now know that God is knocking on my door and He is trying to get my attention. He is asking me to let Him in and to trust that He has a plan for me. I had this experience recently, and I found that God is calling on me to do something that will remove my constant focus on me. This is a time for service. I used to believe that doing service work to “get out of myself” meant that I was ignoring what was going on inside me. I now know that it is not true. There is a time for focus, and outside those times are opportunities to turn my focus somewhere else so I do not send myself into a tail spin of fear, worry, and anxiety. I let myself get there, and it is a painful place to be alone. There are times that my focus is called to attend to that pain, but those are times that I do not have to do it alone. All the times that I try to go at it alone, I end up in more pain than I was before. It is a form of service to allow people in. People are there because they want to help. Denying them that service is denying the things that will help them grow. Through the pain I have been experiencing, through disappointment and feelings of abandonment, I have chosen to shut people out of my life. I have chosen not to invest in relationships because it involves risk of that pain. Through that denial, I have denied the chance for others to do service, and I am not doing my part that opens that door. It is also a form of service to share these pains, because growth from that pain also shows others the hope that a Higher Power, openness and willingness can bring. It is demonstrated that Pain precedes Beauty. It shows that, if we are experiencing pain, it will be followed by beauty. That is the beauty of growth and an awakening into a whole new perspective. I am grateful for times of pain, because without pain there would not be joy, and without the ugly mess of darkness we would not be able to recognize beauty.

-Aimee M.

### Steps Twelve & One

*“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”*

*“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”*

### Traditions Twelve & One

*“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”*

*“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”*

### THE AA WAY OF LIFE

Hello. I am Robin and I am an alcoholic and an addict. Not knowing, I was already practicing the 1<sup>st</sup> step of Alcoholics Anonymous years before I came into this program. I was aware that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable. I just did not know where to go for help and how to stop.

When I did get sober, I truly believe that “a power greater than myself” brought me to this place. Since then, my compulsion to drink or use has left me. I also know that the gift of sobriety is very precious and so I must be diligent in order to protect it. I cannot take my sobriety for granted and so I must work hard and continue to listen to my AA friends. I must use all the tools in my toolbox so that my recovery continues to progress.

I am a person who asks a lot of questions. I also (most of the time) need proof as to why things happen. Don't just tell me that it happened, tell me why it happened. Then, I became a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are introduced to the “How It Works” in the Big Book and someone reads it at almost all AA meetings. We know that by following AA's principles we will have a pretty good chance of staying sober. “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” This is the proof I have as to why and how we stay sober.

AA and sobriety is, first and foremost, about not taking that first drink. However, it's not the only thing. I have found that the staying sober part is pretty easy. The rest of the work we must do is harder. “Practicing these principles in all of our affairs.” Just as we learn from AA, sobriety is one day at a time; we can also learn that growth in ourselves can be one day at a time too. We are all in this together in the AA way of life.

Robin B.

\*\*This is the last issue of Conscious Contact in my tenure as your Alternate Chair. It's been a delightful 2 years working with your Chair Cindy K. I didn't know that taking on this position would give me the blessing of a wonderful friendship with Cindy. It's been an honor working with you Cindy. I wish the incoming Chair and Alternate Chair the best and hope all of you enjoyed the many issues of our newsletter. I look forward to serving you as the Chair of Answering Service for the coming year.

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Thank you!

My name is Cindy and I'm an alcoholic! How awesome a statement this has become for me. I am truly grateful to be a recovering alcoholic! So proud and honored to be a part of this amazing program that has changed and saved my life.

It's wonderful to have had the privilege of being on this Conscious Contact committee for the last two years. I thank you all for sharing your experience, strength and hope with us and letting us put it in this beloved publication. I thank my dear friend Robin for being my editor extraordinaire! She'll continue to serve the district well as the Answering Service chair.

Thank you again! This is your happy, joyous and free Conscious Contact Chairperson signing off. May God bless you all! Happy Holidays!

Much Love & Peace, Cindy K.

*Thought for this Issue...*

*“Those who look closely soon have the key to this strange paradox. The A.A. member has to conform to the principles of recovery. His life actually depends upon obedience to spiritual principles.”*

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg . 130*

**ANNIVERSARIES!!!**



Dawn H.	12/5—8 Years!
Gillian M.	12/14—22 Years!
Scott B.	12/27—7 Years!
Jason H.	12/29—2 Years!
Cliff K.	1/8—2 Years!
Rick A.	1/11—1 Year!
Travis P.	1/24—3 Years!

**Serenity House  
 Christmas Party  
 Saturday, Dec. 15th  
 1pm—3pm  
 Gifts from Santa for kids up to  
 age 12  
 (please register at Serenity  
 House)  
 Contact Courtney for more  
 Information 847-373-3917**



The Clipboard

Calendar for 2012-13— District 10, NIA 20

See information for these and other events at: <http://www.district10nia.org/Clipboard/events.pdf>



December 8, 2012—NIA Winter Assembly, Joliet, IL

December 25, 2012—Spiritual Kindergarten—Monthly Open Speaker Meeting— Crossroads Church

December 24-25, 2012 & December 31-January 1, 2013—For the holidays the Serenity House in Libertyville will be open from 10am on the 24th to 10pm on the 25th, as well as from 10am on the 31st to 10pm on the 1st for continuous fellowship. Dishes are welcome to pass.

*Heard At Meetings*

**“I now realize that change is not inevitable,  
change is perpetual.”**

**Ron S.**

*Be Part of Conscious Contact*

All alcoholics are welcome to contribute to Conscious Contact. We'd be happy to publish your stories, poems, artwork and cartoons as long as they pertain to recovering from alcoholism. Maximum length is about 600 words. Send your material to:

**newsletter@district10nia.org** or to  
P.O. Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048.

**Help/Support Wanted**

**Support Needed-New Women's Meeting-- "As Bill Sees It" - Father Berger Hall in Round Lake--Sunday nights at 6pm--for info please contact Sandy S 224-338-8221 or Donna L. 847-546-3347**

**Meeting Time Change Notification--Gurnee Community Church--"Here's How" Tuesday night meetings will be held at 7pm instead of 8pm starting October 1st.**

Treatment Center support needed - calling all District 10 groups! Looking to branch out and help in your community? Consider "adopting" a treatment center to support. We currently have almost 2 dozen facilities in District 10 that need the following: speakers for leads, people to drive inpatients to meetings, meeting chairpersons, all A.A. approved literature, cases of Big Books/12&12/Living Sober, general A.A. support. If you and your home group are interested in helping with a treatment facility in District 10, please call Steven B. at 847-769-2812.—**ADDITIONAL help is needed to speak at one of the NICASA groups in Round Lake or Buffalo Grove**

THE GRAPEVINE needs subscribers- only \$28.97 per year—makes a great gift.

**Monday Night Jail Meetings Need Support--Lake County - 7:30pm--volunteer applications are located under "Committees" on the NIA website. Great opportunity for service work. Young people are encouraged to participate. Please call Mark H. at 847-204-8161 for further information.**

**A. A. Contacts**

**District 10 answering service: 847-362-1811**

District 10 Treasurer: P.O. Box 854, Libertyville, Illinois 60048 <http://www.district10nia.org>

NIA Treasurer: NIA Treasurer, NIA Ltd., PO Box 241, Elburn, IL 60119, <http://www.aa-nia.org>

General Service Office: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10164, <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org>

AA Grapevine, Inc.: Box 1980, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, <http://www.aagrapevine.org>

**2011 District 10 Officers (Confidential—this information is for A. A. use only.)**

**Every alcoholic is welcome at District 10 meetings, held on the fourth Sunday each month at St. Gilbert's Catholic Church, 301 E. Belvidere Rd in Grayslake—5:30 Tradition Meeting —6:00pm District meeting. See <http://www.district10nia.org> or call one of these committee members for details.**

