

Conscious Contact

Information and Inspiration from District 10, NIA

Step Four Will Open the Door to a New Life

I have had a number of years sober in the program, enough to have done more than one Fourth Step. At first, dragging those skeletons of the 50-year-old adolescent I was, when I first reluctantly stumbled into my first beginner's meeting, seemed not only daunting, but pointless.

"When are you guys gonna start talking about how you learned to drink normally?" I sat there thinking. "What, we have to stop altogether, and the Fourth Step will open the door to a better life?" What was this stuff? I thought.

But God knew more about what I needed than I did, and fortunately, I came back to enough meetings to see the benefit of clearing out that "mental closet," and inventorying it for the worthless baggage it was, while learning a "whole new" way of thinking!

It never occurred to me that having one foot in the past, and one foot in the future, had me squatting on the present! Learning to



think another way; to have a different more positive perspective gave actual color to life, which was truly vibrant, peering out through the eyes of a "sober mind." A stark contrast to the meaningless drunken gray seen through the "blood shot," ungrateful eyes of the alcoholic.

My first Fourth Step cracked the door open, and each subsequent one thereafter, opened it further to the point where I understood that I would have sold myself well short, if at that first

meeting, they had taught me a way to drink safely.

Thank God for the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, where learning not to drink is just the door prize! The real gift is a whole new life full of unimaginable blessings that "rocket us into the "new dimension" of life, promised in the Big Book. Thank You, A.A.!

In grateful sobriety — Matt S.

Step & Tradition Four: Inventory and Autonomy

Step Four

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Tradition Four

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

The A.A. book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* states the following about Step Four: "Creation gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. [Yet] these instincts, so necessary for our existence, often far exceed their proper functions."

Step Four is our way to discover how our instincts and desires have warped us, so that we can move toward correcting them.

Like lancing an infected wound, the step may cause short-term pain for longer-term healing. We must face our past fearlessly, trusting that our Higher Power will help and guide us—if we ask.

Tradition Four, according to the "Twelve and Twelve," allows each A.A. group autonomy in decision-making, so long as the decision doesn't affect other groups or A.A. as a whole.

As the "Twelve and Twelve" states, "We saw that the group, exactly like the individual, must eventually conform to whatever tested principles would guarantee survival. [Every] group had the right to be wrong."

This tradition resulted from years of learning what can enhance or hinder an A.A. group. Autonomy for the group, with accountability to other groups and A.A. as a whole.—Tom K.



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April 2017

- Next District Meeting: April 23
- Submit content for the next issue no later than April 15

Any member of AA may contribute content for this newsletter. Page 4 includes information on how to submit content for publication.

In this issue

Page 2: Archives Uncovered

Page 3: Selected AA events

Page 4: District contacts and how to submit content for this newsletter



"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."

Northern Illinois Area 20

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www.aa-nia.org

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Answering Service

847-362-1811

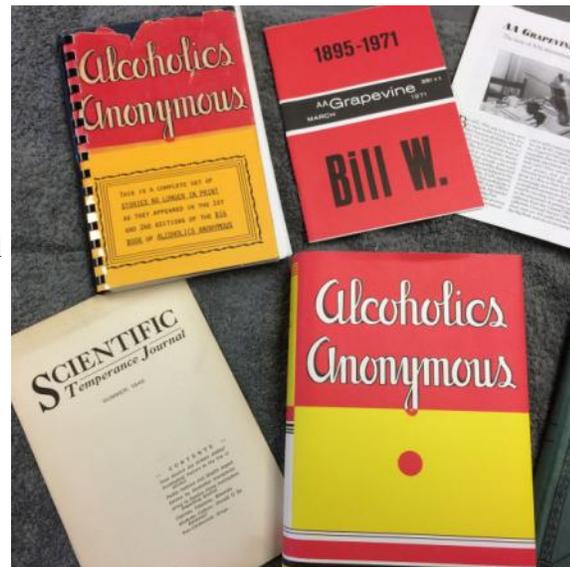
Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, NIA, District 10 or other Conscious Contact volunteers.

How Was I Supposed to Know That ‘Archives’ Is a Lot More Than Just Collecting Some Old Stuff From the District, and Making Sure It Gets Put Into Storage...

This past November, when the District was holding elections for Committee Chair positions for the coming year, “Concrete Rick” S. volunteered to take the position of Archives Committee Chair. At the same time, they were of course looking for someone to fill the position of Archives Alternate. I liked Rick. He had been a friend for a long time, and I had enjoyed working with him when he chaired the CPC committee. So I figured what the heck, and volunteered to be the Archives Alternate. At the time, I thought “how hard can this be”? Archives doesn’t really do that much. They just collect a lot of old stuff from the District and put it into storage. I can do that. And anyway, it’s Rick’s problem. I’m just there so he won’t have to feel so alone. Boy was I in for a rude awakening.

The first thing Rick wanted to do was go through the storage locker and see what was there. I can tell you this, there is a LOT of stuff there. District 10 GSR meeting minutes and copies of the Conscious Contact, and budget requests and paid bills...and a lot more...dating all the way back to the early 1980s. More than 35 years-worth! In going through all this with Rick, it occurred to us that we were now the custodians and guardians of a great deal of our A.A. “history” and were obligated not only to preserve these materials, but to add to them during our tenure. It looked like this might turn out to be a bigger job than we thought. In a very real sense, we were now part of the process of “carrying the message” of Alcoholics Anonymous to members of the fellowship who would come after us. Who knows, maybe 35 years from now someone will want to look back and see what we were doing in District 10 way back in 2017, and for that: we are responsible.

In addition, Rick wanted to “update” the Archives Display for District 10 that we would be making available to be viewed by the fellowship at various AA venues, including the Spring and Fall Breakfasts, McHenry Soberfest, and perhaps other events that would like to have this kind of display available. To that end, we started collecting materials from storage that would represent AA and District 10 in a truly interesting way. There was no shortage of materials to work with, including old “Grapevines”(some dating back to 1951), a meeting “ledger book” that shows income and expenses for one of our Avon Township groups from 1987 to 1998, a copy of an article written in 1946 in the *Scientific Temperance Journal* about this “new group” calling themselves Alcoholics Anonymous, and of course a lot more. If you want to see the new “updated” Archives Display, it will be at the Spring Breakfast being held at Bonnie Brook Golf Course on April 9. We hope you will make it a point to stop by.



Pictured above are some of the interesting items recently uncovered by the District 10 Archives Committee Chair, “Concrete Rick” S. and Alternate Committee Chair Steve R.

They have created a display to show at various A.A.-related events.

Tidbit from a Past National A.A. Archives Workshop

“At the 2012 [National A.A. Archives] Workshop in Cocoa Beach, FL, General Service Office archivist Michelle [Mirza (nonalcoholic)] met a district archivist who showed her letters between an editor named Janet Blair (a nonalcoholic) and Hank P., Bill W.’s business partner at Honor Dealers in Newark, NJ.

Blair was an early editor of at least the first sections of the Big Book; her work earned her a letter of thanks from Bill himself, as well as a signed First Edition.”

— Box 4-5-9, Spring 2017

You can help to make the District’s Archive collection even more meaningful. We are always on the lookout for contributions of AA artifacts from the past, from folks like you. Maybe you have some really old “Grapevines,” or long-ago flyers promoting AA events in the area, maybe even an old copy of the original “Big Book” that’s just laying around gathering dust. Whatever you have that you would like to contribute, we would welcome your help...and your generosity.

I know I speak for Rick when I say that if this job of being a part of the Archives Committee is more than we expected, it is more in every way; it is more fun, it is more interesting, it is more challenging and it is more rewarding. We are glad we got the opportunity to do it. Now if we could just remember where we are supposed to file the approved minutes from last month’s District Meeting.... —Steve R

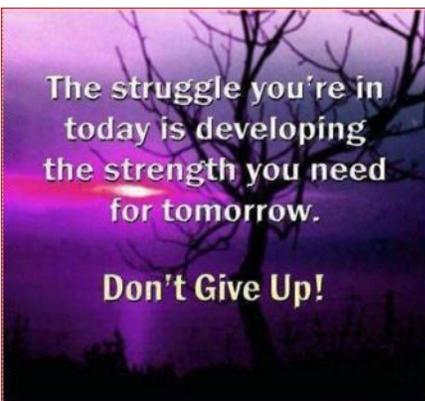
Events

April 7–8, 2017	Men's Spiritual Retreat, All Inclusive	Conference Point Center 300 Conference Point Rd., Williams Bay, WI 53191
April 8, 2017 9 a.m. Registration	Pre-General Service Conference Workshop	Report and Charter Committee Lord of Life Lutheran Church 40 W. 605 IL Rte. 38, Elburn, IL 60119
April 9, 2017 8 a.m. Coffee 9 a.m. Breakfast Speaker to follow	District 10 & 12 Spring Breakfast	Bonnie Brook Golf Course 2800 Lewis Ave., Waukegan, IL 60085
April 23, 2017 1:30 p.m. Social Hour 2:30 p.m. Open Speaker mtg.	Ladies Annual "Sereni-Tea" Tickets \$6	Antioch Township Building 1625 Deep Lake Rd., Lake Villa, IL 60046
April 23–29, 2017	67th General Service Conference	Rye, New York
April 26, 2017 5:30 p.m. Traditions Meeting 6 p.m. GSR Meeting	District 10 General Service Representative (GSR) Meeting	St. Gilbert's Catholic Church 301 E. Belvidere Rd., Grayslake, IL 60030
May 13, 2017 5 p.m. Doors Open 7 p.m. Speaker	28th Annual McHenry Soberfest Fundraiser & Dance Tickets \$5 Raffles, food and dance	McHenry Township Center 3703 N. Richmond Rd., Johnsburg, IL 60051 info@soberfest.org
May 20, 2017 5 p.m. Doors Open 5:30 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. Speaker	Winners and Beginners 2017 Anniversary Free, Open Adult Event Speaker: Tommy B., Hammond, IN	Messiah Lutheran Church 25225 W. Ivanhoe Rd., Wauconda, IL 60084
June 16–18, 2017	17th Annual Midwest Motorcyclists A.A. Convention (MMAAC)	Winnebago County Fairgrounds Pecatonica, IL 61063
Aug. 11–13, 2017	30th Annual Wolf River–Nicolet AA Camping Trip Campsites (up to 6 people) \$22 per night Cabins from \$90 per night Meetings, rafting, hiking, volleyball Saturday night speaker: Susan W., Grayslake, IL	Bear Paw Outdoor Adventure Resort & Campground N3494 Hwy. 55, White Lake, WI 54491 www.bearpawoutdoors.com

If you have an event that you would like us to include, or see something to correct in our listing, please email the Conscious Contact newsletter chair, Tom K. All other news items should be submitted using the instructions printed at the top of page 4.

No More Struggle (A Daily Reflection from A.A. Literature)

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol.—ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, p. 84



“When A.A. found me, I thought I was in for a struggle, and that A.A. might provide the strength I needed to beat alcohol. Victorious in that fight, who knows what other battles I could win. I would need to be strong, though. All my previous experience with life proved that. Today I do not have to struggle or exert my will. If I take those Twelve Steps and let my Higher Power do the real work, my alcohol problem disappears all by itself. My living problems also cease to be struggles. I just have to ask whether acceptance—or change—is required. It is not my will, but His, that needs doing.”

From the book *Daily Reflections*,
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How to Submit Content to the *Conscious Contact* newsletter

1. Go to <http://district10nia.org/>
2. Hover over the “District Services and Committees” menu, and then click on the “Newsletter” submenu
3. Provide your name and either a phone number or email so that we can contact you if we have questions. Then type your content and click the “Submit” button.

Or email your submission to Tom K.

District 10: PO Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048

Northern Illinois Area: PO Box 1056, Yorkville, IL 60560

General Service Office: PO Box 459 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

District 10 answering service: 847-362-1811

2017 District 10 Officers (Confidential—this information is for A. A. use only.)

Every member of AA is welcome at District 10 meetings. The meetings typically are held on the fourth Sunday of every month at St. Gilbert’s Catholic Church, 301 E. Belvidere Rd, Grayslake.

5:30 p.m. Tradition Meeting, followed at 6 p.m. by the District meeting.

For more details, go to www.district10nia.org.

For purposes of anonymity, district officer contact information is omitted in this online version of the newsletter.

Position	Chair	Phone	Email	Alternate	Phone	Email
DCM	Bob P.			Kevin A.		
Secretary	Steve B.			OPEN		
Treasurer	Cori S.			Cindy W.		
Directory	Dana T.			OPEN		
Answering Service	Dave J.			Victoria H		
Treatment	Carl S.			OPEN		
Public Info.	Michael L.			OPEN		
C.P.C.	Dee E.			OPEN		
Bridging the Gap	Mike B.			Josh R.		
Literature	Gaza D.			OPEN		
GSR Contact	Kim T.			Earl N.		
Corrections	Lark W.			Scott E.		
Newsletter	Tom K.			Mark H.		
Archives	Rick S.			Steve R.		
Grapevine	Brandon B.			Matt R.		
Events	Joyce W.			OPEN		
Website	Dawn O.			Charles K.		
Special Needs	David I.			Heidi G.		