



Conscious Contact

Information and Inspiration from District 10, NIA

Vol. 17, No. 5
May 2018

- Next District Meeting: Sunday, May 27
- Submit content for the next issue no later than May 15

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

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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."

Northern Illinois Area 20

District 10, P. O. Box 854

Libertyville, IL 60048

www.district10nia.org

www.aa-nia.org

www.aa.org

www.aagrapevine.org

Answering Service

847-362-1811

'Do Not Take My God Away'—Tolerance in A.A.

NOTE: Last month, we published an article regarding whether reciting The Lord's Prayer in A.A. meetings is intolerant or insensitive to members who are not Christian. We invited your thoughts and received the two articles that we include on this page.

In the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, there are a whole bunch of references to God: Second Step, Third Step and many more along the way. "We Agnostics" is replete with the word God. Therefore, I think it is not for me to not talk about God. We are asked to stress the spiritual feature freely in the chapter, "Working With Others."

When I came into A.A., I thought I was an atheist; I did not understand agnosticism in the least. At that first meeting they said, for those who care to join us, we will close with the Lord's Prayer. I was going to say the words, but not mean them at all. By the end of that prayer, I meant them. You see, something happened...it continues to happen today.

In talking with others, I am reminded that I was told in the beginning to go to a lot of

meetings. Find ones you like. Our book also mentions to not apologize for God. And I won't. I have closed meetings with the Serenity Prayer, Lord's Prayer, readings from our Big Book. A few silent moments. And of course the Responsibility Statement. At our recent Spring Assembly Conference, we closed each speaker session in a different way: Readings, Lord's Prayer, Responsibility Statement.

Finally, I mentioned that I thought when I came to AA that I was an atheist. I am not today. I was wrong and when I realized how wrong I was, it was a devastating smack to my ego. My conception of a power greater than myself has grown and changed over my time of sobriety. Along the way, I had to discard some long-held conceptions.

Do not remove God from A.A.; instead, let them come to their own conception of a power greater than themselves. Whatever is decided is fine and workable within the structure of our Twelve Steps. But do not take my God away—it may kill me.—Kevin A.

Each A.A. Group Can Decide How to Run Meetings

As I see it, we are not ignoring the A.A. Preamble if the Lord's Prayer, or any other prayer, is said during the meeting—nor are we aligning A.A. with outside organizations. On the surface, affiliations with outside organizations can/are made all the time by those who don't understand A.A.—in fact, I remember thinking that the clubs were A.A.!

The Preamble is talking about the organization of A.A. as a whole, and individual groups make up the whole of A.A. Because of the traditions, individual groups can do as they choose, as long as they do not harm A.A. In fact, page 87 of Alcoholics Anonymous states that individuals should make use of "many helpful books" when considering prayer and meditation. "Be quick to see

where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer," the Big Book states.

Thus, it is a particular group's decision how to run their meeting, and if something that a group does is offensive to someone, that person does not have to participate in the prayer or go to that meeting. Additionally the offended person COULD use the spiritual axiom thing! Every meeting has its own personality and the group can be asked to change through the group conscious process.

As long as the message of A.A. is the foundation of the meeting, all else are outside issues.

Of course a long discussion could easily be had regarding this subject, so to "keep it simple," this is how I see it.—Mark H.

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."

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.

Another's Sobriety Does Not Come From My Power, But God's Power



I've been at meetings where part of the opening criteria was the chairperson asking the group "by the show of hands, who here is willing to sponsor?" Usually, most hands go up. And why wouldn't they? After all, our responsibility statement says, "Whenever anyone reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A to be there, and for that I am responsible."

The key, as we have seen throughout the program becomes about that one decisive word "Willingness." Without it, we couldn't have walked into our first meeting, could we? We must have the willingness to want to stop drinking, which is the foundation, and the prelude to our subsequent deliverance from our addiction. But the "conviction" of said willingness, is an entirely different thing. Willingness is one of "those" words, that gets thrown around a lot, usually with good intention. But as

this alcoholic has found out, I'm not always as ready as I think I am—especially when it comes to giving all of myself, on behalf of another alcoholic!

Commitment, readiness, preparedness. These are just a few similes of the word willingness, but as I humbly found out through many a failed attempt, they are exceedingly important, particularly when sponsoring someone. How's my commitment? Am I committed at all times? Or my readiness, am I steadfast ready for whatever comes my way? And what about preparedness, am I prepared to give the right advise? To properly prepare myself with spiritual conviction? Or does ego, camouflaged as willingness, rush to the scene, impersonating concern, but cloaked in righteousness?

The later has been true for this alcoholic, more than once. But once again, the "sledgehammer" of adversity, combined with the ego deflation of humility, are the privilege of those of us who think they own the power of sobriety. Through God's grace, He has taught me more about myself and my "hidden" faults, by using the men I sponsor as beacons of light, pulling me from the dark dungeons of self-righteousness.

I learned, however painfully, that sometimes "willingness" means, I am ok to put that cotton in my own mouth, and just listen.

Funny, when I was new to the program, old-timers would say "take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth!" Wise words indeed...even for a sponsor with some accumulated time in the program! I learned, however painfully, that sometimes "willingness" means, I am ok to put that cotton in my own mouth, and just listen. Lately, when I've done this, I have come away more enlightened, and my "sober bank account" has just received another deposit! And if I do offer something of my experience, I can realize that God will do with it as He sees fit! Instead of beating my sponcee over the head with my "great" wisdom, I can be content knowing that I am that "hand of A.A," ready and willing to grasp the hand of the still suffering. But now knowing that this is where all my "responsibility" ends, and God's begins! The very same gift of sobriety bestowed upon me, can be theirs, but by God's power alone. "No human power could relieve us of our alcoholism." Hmm, seems I've read that somewhere! —Gratefully in sobriety, Matt S.

A Soul Is Found and Saved

Always looking for an escape
in a bag or with a pill
hating my own weakness
not believing in God's will.
Still time and again
on my knees to Him I came
broken spirit, silent tears
so full of desperation and shame.
Shutting out my family and friends
yet they loved me even so
I had given up on myself
but none of them had ever let me go.
The life I thought I was living
was not a life at all
though I constantly prayed
I still continued to fall.
A knock on my door
brought the sense back into my head
my sister and my brother-in-law there
to bring me back from the land of the dead.
As I sit and count the days
44 glorious ones as of now
that fog has been lifted from my soul
and all I can think is just WOW!
Then off to church with my Uncle
I opened my heart and bowed my head to pray
an awakening shook me to my core as I realized
God gave me another day!
So I stand happy, strong, and free
not living a life so depraved
thanks be unto God, family and friends
this lost soul has been found and saved!—Julie J.

Events

April 27, 2018 4-8 P.M.	Bridge House Spaghetti Dinner Adults \$10, Children \$5 (12 and under) Spaghetti with homemade sauce, garlic bread, salad and dessert	Bridge House 3016 Grand Ave. Waukegan, IL 60085 Cristina S. Alex S.
April 29, 2018 5:30 p.m. Doors open 7 p.m. Speaker	Three Legacies Group Open Meeting & Pot Luck Speaker Nicole E. from Cary, IL Please bring a dish to pass	Faith Community United Church of Christ 2023 Rt. 176 Crystal Lake, IL Angie
May 12, 2018 8 a.m. Registration 9 a.m. Opening	NIA Spring Committee Meeting Lunch TBA, Spanish interpreter	Lord of Life Church 40W605 Rt. 38 Elburn, IL 60119
May 12, 2018 5 p.m. Doors open 7 p.m. Speaker	29th Annual McHenry Soberfest Fundraiser & Dance Raffles, Food, Dance and Plenty of Fun! \$5, all tickets purchased prior to the event will be eligible to win one of two conference registrations.	McHenry Township Hall 3703 N. Richmond Rd. Johnsburg, IL 60051 Dale H. Michael B. info@soberfest.org
May 19, 2018 5:15 p.m. Doors Open 6 p.m. Speaker	The Monthly Social Food and entertainment, \$5 donation suggested <i>Park at Martin School, 24750 W. Dering Lan, Lake Villa</i> <i>Shuttle bus provided from 6-9:30 p.m.</i>	Gateway Lake Villa 25480 W. Cedar Crest Lane, Lake Villa, IL 60046
May 27, 2018 5:30 p.m. Traditions 6 p.m. GSR meeting	District 10 GSR Meeting	St. Gilberts Church 301 W. Belvidere Rd. (Rt. 120) Grayslake, IL 60030 East Parking Lot
June 2, 2018 5 p.m. Doors Open 5:30 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. Speaker	Winners and Beginners 2018 Anniversary Party Speaker: Lauren S. from Chicago A free, open adult event Bring a dish to pass	Messiah Lutheran Church 25225 W. Ivanhoe Rd. Wauconda, IL
June 22-14, 2018	18th Annual Midwest Motorcycle Alcoholics Anonymous Convention A.A. and Al-Anon Speakers, Alcathon, pulled pork dinner, motorcycle rodeo, organized runs, hospitality area, merchandise and food vendors. Pre-registration \$40	Winnebago Fairgrounds 500 West First Street Pecatonica, IL 61063 www.MMAAC.org Mike O. Russ I.

Send event information to Mark H.

All other news items should be submitted using the instructions printed at the top of page 4

Words of Wisdom from the A.A. Grapevine & A.A. Literature

“I’m not so quick to judge others. If I’m critical of you, it’s often because I’m trying to ignore that quality in myself.”—Renton, Washington, October 1987, “Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall,” *Step By Step*



Answering Service (Feb. 19 – March 19 Statistics)		Chair: Dave J.	Alternate: Victoria H.
Total Calls	32	Meeting Info	16
Spanish	1	General Info	4
Solicitor	1	Treatment Facility Info	0
Hang-up	4	Halfway House Info	0
Will call back	0	Al-Anon	0
		Website	0

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.

District 10: PO Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048**Northern Illinois Area:** NIA 20, Ltd., PO Box 524, Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0524**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.

If the word, “OPEN,” appears after a District position, we are looking for someone to volunteer to serve. Learn more about each position and the volunteer commitment at an upcoming District meeting, or by contacting a District committee member.

Position	Chair	Phone	Email	Alternate	Phone	Email
DCM	Bob P.			Kevin A.		
Secretary	Steve B.			Janet J.		
Treasurer	Cori S.			Cindy W.		
Accessibilities	Rachel B.			OPEN		
Answering Service	Dave J.			Victoria H		
Archives	Rick S.			Steve R.		
Bridging the Gap	Mike B.			Josh R.		
Corrections	Larry L.			OPEN		
C.P.C.	Dee E.			Terri G.		
Directory	Dana T.			Andy H.		
Events	Mike K.			Carolyn G.		
Grapevine	Brandon B.			Angelina K.		
GSR Contact	Kim T.			Earl N.		
Literature	Gaza D.			OPEN		
Newsletter	Tom K.			Mark H.		
Public Info.	Michael L.			Peter S.		
Treatment	Carl S.			Dave H.		
Website	Dawn O.			Charles K.		