



Conscious Contact

Information and Inspiration from District 10, NIA

Vol. 18, No. 3
March 2019

- Next District Meeting Sunday, Mar. 24th
- Submit content for the next issue no later than March. 15th

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**

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.

PRETTY PICTURE

It’s March, the third month of the year which corresponds with step three. Spring is around the corner, but so is my next drink; that is why I pay particular attention to this step!

At 63 years young, children raised and moved on from the house, it’s just my wife and I now. Life has become like this sort of mosaic. It is this medley assortment of ambiguous ups and downs gathering throughout the years. Certainly, no resemblance to a Rembrandt painting, but by days end nevertheless, a pleasing portrait usually emerges. This was not always so, though. Alcohol changed everything. The pretty “suburban life” picture, soon began to morph into a visual rendering of a grotesque Andy Warhol abstract. Ugly and inexplicably unlivable.

When I finally did enter my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, I began staring at the 12 step scroll hanging from the wall. “*Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*” The pragmatism of the third step struck me with such ferocious force, I looked once

more at the one word in that statement – “*God,*” “Oh yeah Him” I jokingly thought.

One day I started to corporatize and get out of my own way believing perhaps for the first time ever that there could actually be another way to live. This was the day the first piece of that mosaic was fitted in to place. Why? Why? Because step one was painfully obvious. Step two, equally obvious because my power had become as useless as I was to anyone around me! Step 3 though, slowly worked on me. I **came to** this meeting! I then **came to** in that meeting, and eventually I **came to** believe in that meeting. I believed He could run things better than I. Besides, I was just plain tired of gearing up everyday for yet another sure-bet failure! But God... He just never occurred to me in my diseased thinking.

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Love = time

A sober husband learning to show love with a sponge, a little dish soap and lots of patience

At one of my meetings, a member once quoted an old-timer: “How do you spell love? You spell it t-i-m-e.”

When we were drinking, we AAs may have claimed to love many things, including our families, but if you look at how we chose to spend our time, the truth of the matter was plain to everyone. Everyone but ourselves, that is. After Step Nine, the Big Book says that “we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.”

One good reason for me to keep that door open is to compare what I’m doing now with what I did then. So what am I doing now? How do I spend my time? Is it on the people I say I love?

As it happens, I and the speaker at the meeting that day were among the lucky ones whose first wives are still our only wives. Why had our wives stayed with us all those years? What kept them hoping, day after day, year after year, that we alcoholics would stop behaving like overgrown children and become the spouses we promised we’d be?

Who knows why? But one thing I do know is that I took full advantage of my wife’s loyalty when I was drinking. I stayed at work after hours when, with a little focus on the task at hand, I could have easily left on time.

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<u>Step Three</u>	<u>Tradition Three</u>
<p>“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood Him.</i>”</p>	<p>“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”</p>

PRETTY PICTURE — Continued

from pg. 1

How could someone lose track of God? Leave it to the selfish alcoholic! I was so absorbed in everyone else's successes and my complete failures that I had forgotten about God. I mean flat-out forgotten of His existence altogether. The only time I could even let Him enter my thoughts was when I perceived that life ripped me off! And for the incredibly infrequent times of accomplishment; well, naturally *I* made those happen.

The third step may not have been easy to realize at the time, but it is easier to implement today with a clean sober, and grateful mindset. I simply wake-up, hit my knees, and thank him for another chance to be better than yesterday. Back in the day as an active alcoholic, *today* was always the *tomorrow*. I thought about *yesterday*! With that kind of thinking process, its easy to see how I can lose sight of God. I thought I had to do it all; that my decisions were the do all, end all of my life. What a terrific burden to carry around!

Today I read my meditation books first, so He gets in my head before I do. He is today, my "spiritual Uber driver" I simply get in, and He takes me where He knows I need to go! If the opposite happens for whatever reason and I get in my head first, then the day will most certainly not be a *Pretty Picture*!

— In Grateful service, Matt S.

HELLO DISTRICT 10 FROM YOUR AREA TREATMENT CHAIR!

We have a big vote coming up at NIA 20 Assembly March 23 2019 in Elgin; I would like as many people that can be there to come so we can hear the voice of the majority. The assembly starts at 9am. The vote is regarding the Area 20 Treatment chair to be able to buy books for suffering alcoholics that are in treatment centers throughout NIA 20 area.



The background is long and drawn out but here are the basics: the treatment chair at the area was asked in 2018 to help out two treatment committees in two different districts. They needed books because they did not have funds to keep up. I was not allocated funds to be able to help and my green can fund was very low. After much debate and me listening to other alcoholics at the last committee meeting, I met with two other persons to create this motion to present at the assembly in March. This motion will allow for some funds to be available to the area Treatment chair annually to purchase books, since the district treatment chair is in need of conference approved literature to hand out to new alcoholics. This will allow them to have the Big-Book in print or other conference approved literature available when needed.

I would like the GSRs to show up to tell the area what they think and what their meeting groups want. The delegate likes to say, "If you do not tell me what to say at the general service conference, then I have to use my thinking, but I would rather use your thinking," and I agree.

This motion hits many points of interest and opinions but the only one that matters is the opinions of the persons voting. Come vote.

— Area 20 Treatment Chair, John K.

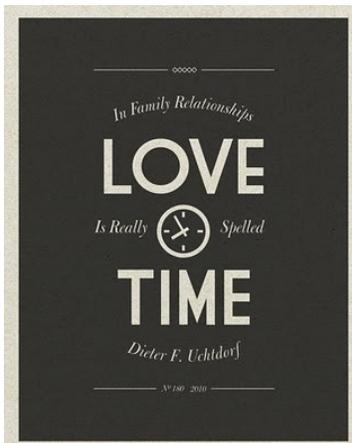
Love = time — Continued from pg. 1

Then I stayed out late, didn't call, forgot appointments, avoided her family's get-togethers and often let her function as a single parent.

When I got sober, I was willing to change. But since I didn't particularly like myself, it was hard to comprehend that she liked me and wanted me around as much as she did. And fortunately for me, she still does. I was also out of practice with this whole spending-time-at-home thing.

Still, if expressing love meant spending time, then it wasn't going to be so different from carving out time for AA activities. Take prayer and meditation. None of us, it seems, come to those activities handily. But we're advised to make a start, a little progress being better than nothing, and to "fake it 'til you make it." Is spending time with the family so different?

I did the easy stuff first. If it involved using tools, then I could get into it. Only my new tools were the vacuum cleaner, the washer and dryer, the sponge and dish soap. I cleaned the bathroom, gave her rides, helped out with her projects, including rearranging the furniture for what seemed like the umpteenth time (while I muttered the Serenity Prayer). Even though my listening skills are poor, I made the effort to at least get through breakfast without checking my phone every minute.



Now I'm working on the more difficult things, such as taking walks together with her, avoiding arguments and finding fault. I even sometimes sit there together with her, trying to "be in the moment." Whew. That's not easy for this AA.

Of course, being an alcoholic, I want this new focus to be on my terms. I want extra credit for what I'm doing. I'm putting in effort here, folks, and I want to be properly recognized for my selfless sacrifice.

Is there a Nobel Prize for not only loading the dishwasher, running the dishwasher, and then, amazingly, putting the dishes back on the shelves? If there is, then I deserve that prize. And what about the way I do not find fault with my children or spouse, sometimes for a whole hour? Shouldn't everyone be talking about how I now operate on the highest spiritual plane? Not just a higher plane, the highest, most exalted plane of spiritual growth?

Sigh. Hopefully, continuing to work the Steps will help with all of that insanity. And I guess that means spending time on the Steps at home. What I do now becomes the past that I neither want to regret nor want to shut the door on. So today I'll spend more time on what matters, on the people I love. I'll spell l-o-v-e as t-i-m-e.

-- Peter H., Buffalo, New York

Events

Feb 10th to March 17th Every Sunday at noon	Young = Room To Grow LAKEYPAA needs YOU! [Yes, you!] What's LAKEYPAA? LAKEYPAA is the Lake County Young People in AA and we are bidding for ISCYPAA COME FIND OUT!	Serenity House 1103 W Park Avenue Liberty, IL. 60048
March 10th 2 a.m.	SPRING FORWARD Daylight Savings	North America [Unless you are Mountain Time or under a bridge]
MARCH 22-24, 2019 \$25 at the door Register / Book Rooms: www.iscypaa.org	ISCYPAA 2019 ISCYPAA in annual AA conference held in IL. Any and all are invited and is organized primarily by young, recovering alcoholics.	Hyatt Regency in Schaumburg 3301800 E Golf Rd Schaumburg, IL 60173
MARCH 23, 2019 8 a.m.—4 p.m. Lunch Cost: Yes	NIA 20 Spring Assembly Hosted by District 22 8 a.m. Registration & Coffee 9 a.m. Lunch and Continental Breakfast to be served <i>Ask your GSR to vote!</i>	Westridge Community Church 3300 Encounter Lane Elgin, IL 60124 Dan S., Joe B.
April 7th, 2019 8 a.m.—11:30 a.m. Ticket Price: \$18.00 for one or a SPECIAL two for \$36.00	District 10 & 12 Spring Breakfast 8 a.m. Fellowship & Coffee 9 a.m. Buffet starts 10 a.m. Speaker Colleen M.	Bonnie Brook Golf Course 2800 N. Lewis Ave. Waukegan, IL. 60087 Kristina K, Ralph R.



ICYPAA

61st ICYPAA will be held in Boston from August 22 to 25, 2019

www.icypaa.org for registration

The International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA) was founded for the purpose of providing a setting for an annual celebration of sobriety among young people in AA.



CELEBRATING GRAPVINE's 75th ANNIVERSARY

<https://grapevine.espstores.com/subscriptions>

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

“We absolutely insist on enjoying life.”— pg. 132, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., 2001.

“From the moment I pulled open the doors to my very first meeting, I felt something different, something good was going to happen. Those doors, which at the time I believed to be the heaviest ever made, allowed me to walk into a new way of life.”— “Attitude Adjustment,” New York, New York, January 2006, Beginner’s book: *Getting and Staying Sober in AA*.

“There is only one key, and it is called willingness.” — pg. 34, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., 2014.



Answering Service (Jan. 28, 2019 – Feb. 18, 2019 Statistics)				Chair: Victoria H.	Alternate: Sarah F.
Total Calls	54	Meeting Info	14	General Info	2
Spanish	0	12-Step	26	Treatment Facility Info	0
Solicitor	0	Wrong Number	1	Halfway House Info	0
Hang-up	5	Other Districts	5	Al-Anon	1
Will call back	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**2018-19 District 10 Officers (Confidential—this information is for A. A. use only.)**

Every member of AA is welcome at District 10 meetings.

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

The next District 10 meeting of 2019 will be on Mar. 24, 2019. For more details, go to www.district10nia.org.

We are always looking to give volunteers opportunities to serve! Come learn more about each District position and/or other volunteer openings at an upcoming District meeting, or by contacting a District committee member.

Position	Chair	Phone	Email	Alternate	Phone	Email
DCM	Kevin A.	-	-	Michael L.	-	-
Secretary	Tom K.	-	-	Mary M.	-	-
Treasurer	Janet J.	-	-	Jeff B	-	-
Accessibilities	Rachel B.	-	-	David H.	-	-
Answering Service	Victoria H.	-	-	Sarah F.	-	-
Archives	Steve R.	-	-	Peter S.	-	-
Bridging the Gap	Carl S.	-	-	Cori S.	-	-
Corrections	Mark H.	-	-	Larry L.	-	-
C.P.C.	Terri G.	-	-	Mike B.	-	-
Directory	Kim C.	-	-	Sherry H.	-	-
Events	Andrea M.	-	-	Brandon B.	-	-
Grapevine	Judd H.	-	-	Amy S.	-	-
GSR Contact	Earl N.	-	-	Dana T.	-	-
Literature	Kim T.	-	-	Robin B.	-	-
Newsletter	Alex E.	-	-	Tad L.	-	-
Public Info.	Angelina K.	-	-	Bernadette L.	-	-
Treatment	Tony P.	-	-	Christina H.	-	-
Website	Charles K.	-	-	Sporty Rob S.	-	-