



# Conscious Contact

## Information and Inspiration From District 10, NIA

Vol. 10 No. 7  
August 2012

- 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: August 26th at Serenity House in Libertyville
- Next deadline: Aug. 22, 2012

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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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District 10, P. O. Box 854  
Libertyville, IL 60048

[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.

### "A grateful alcoholic won't drink"

It was 30 years ago yesterday that I got sober. No, I did not say "oooh the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is coming up I think I'll get sober." I had no clue I was an alcoholic. My first step was taken at a retreat house early in the morning with tears streaming down my face. I was in so much emotional pain that I just wanted it to stop. Suicide wasn't an option but I couldn't see any way out of that pain. Alcoholism doesn't run in my family – I'm it...the lone alcoholic. They get off on drinking sparkling apple cider, and that has nothing to do with me. Early on I heard people say they were grateful alcoholics and I thought they were nuts. Who could be grateful to have this disease?

When I was about 6 months sober I was invited to and joined a wanderer's home group. It was mostly men (that wasn't out of the ordinary, back then in most meetings men were in the majority). These men lovingly confronted me when I was paralyzed with fear. They put up with my tears and my weekly updates on my life. They taught me about sober living, and they taught me about gratitude.

One of the senior members of the group, Bill E. always said "A grateful alcoholic won't drink". He said that so many times it became like a mantra. He traveled in his business. When I went away to college his last business trip was to the town where I attended school. We had dinner when he was in town. He talked about being grateful. I told him he always said that and I asked him what he meant. He said that you cannot have a desire to drink when you are grateful. It isn't possible. He said that it wasn't just writing a list but an attitude, a belief system. That was when I started to really look at gratitude. My sponsors had me write gratitude lists, but this was different.

It was, like everything in this program, a journey. At first it was just the lists, and struggling to find the good in the world and myself. Slowly, it evolved and changed. The lists are still part of it. Today I participate in an online gratitude list most days. No matter what happens I find something to be grateful for. I am grateful every morning that I not only wake up, but I wake up sober. I am grateful for my home, the creature comforts, for my friends and family and, when life gets tough, I remember all the gifts of this program. Even on the bad days (and I have my share, believe me), I am able to find the silver lining.

When people ask me how I've stayed sober this long I always say by the Grace of G-d and with the help of a lot of people in these rooms. But underneath it all, it's all about my higher power and the gratitude, always the gratitude.

Cathy B

### *Step Eight*

*"Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."*

### *Tradition Eight*

*"Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers."*

## “I Can’t Understand”

Another member close to me with significant time in the program, relapsed the other day. By God’s grace, he’s back safely with our fellowship. I say that because, I’ve seen too many that never make it back to our “salvation” ; the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. Sometimes we hear they’re “around” but not attending meetings. All too many we hear about die.

It’s hard to wrap our minds around the “Why?”. I know for me, it’s that healthy fear that I may not make it back, if I choose to listen to that insidious voice in my head. It’s ability to circumvent our cognitive reasoning, no matter how many years of A.A training we’ve accumulated, is.... “Cunning, Baffling, and Powerful!”

I don’t need to understand. Those words, those three prolific, well conceived words say it all! All the “knowledge” of this program is insufficient to protect me from the first drink. Lets face it, it’s a constant battle on a daily basis, to shun that voice from my thoughts. He usually speaks loud, and he usually speaks first in my mind. That’s why when I hear someone say “My first thought is probably the wrong one”, I can relate. He could give me a hundred of the most insane and most stupid reasons to listen to him, and I, spiritually “unprotected” would justify each and every one.

Our strength comes from our “spiritual condition” as it exists at any given moment. You sometimes hear in the rooms, “The disease is getting stronger” - He doesn’t really need to be doing push-ups in the parking lot! He readily possesses the strength to defeat me at any time. It’s up to me to uphold that spiritual condition. I’m the one who needs to be doing push-ups, the spiritual kind, the kind that is the **ONLY** defense against his mental assaults, which, by the way, can occur at any time, and has no predicted pattern!

He can only harm me if I let him. What I’ve gathered from the lucky one’s to make it back, they all expressed a lack of spiritual awareness at the very moment of “A Decision” that needed to be made. It was at **THAT** very moment (they all explained) they were powerless to make the right one! I still don’t understand, but it was made clearer one meeting night when someone announced their 10 year anniversary. Another person said “Great Job!”, to which he replied “**YUP, TEN YEARS DOWN, ONE DAY TO GO!!** That about sums up all this alcoholic needs to know!

Matt S.

*Thought for this Issue...*

*“Whenever our pencil falters, we can fortify and cheer ourselves by remembering what A.A. experience in this Step has meant to others. It is the beginning of the end of isolation from our fellows and from God.”*

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg . 82*

## Have You Ever...

Have you ever lived my life? Spent one minute in my shoes? If you haven't, then tell me why you judge me as you do.

Have you ever awakened in the morning wondering if this was your last day on earth? Have you ever left your house unsure if you'd return? Have you ever contemplated suicide, not ready for what this world has in store? Have you ever seen a friend die from drugs he's never tried before? Have you ever seen your Mom get so messed up off all the booze? Have you ever had an unwanted pregnancy forcing you to choose? Have you ever been beaten so black and so blue? Have you ever felt that nobody really loves you? Have you ever had a friend experiment with weed? Have you ever covered guilt by doing a good deed? Have you ever had your childhood just taken from you by someone you thought was true? Have you thought to yourself what am I going to do? Have you ever been terrified to wake up and face the day with addiction in your way? Have you ever felt so lost and so broken in every single way? Have you ever felt in your heart that you just want to die? But then thought it out and gave it another try. Have you lost a child, the center of your whole world? Do you have any idea how it feels to miss your little girl? Have you ever wanted to protect your friends and family everyone in sight? Have you ever felt such pain you cry yourself to sleep at night? Have you ever sat beneath the stars hoping God will hear? Have you ever trusted someone with your darkest fear? Have you thought of all the people you love today? All the people who make you want to change your every way. Have you ever thought that I am just another addict in this society? Have you thought that this is just a tiny little part of me? Have you ever lived my life? Spent one moment in my shoes? If you haven't then please look at all I've been through and please, please don't judge me as you do.....

By: Nicole S. “Nikki”

## The Clipboard

Calendar for 2012— District 10, NIA 20

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

August 4, 2012—Soberfest FunRaiser, McHenry Township Hall, IL

August 24-26, 2012—2012 Illinois State Conference, Springfield, IL

September 13-16, 2012—ISCYPAA (International) - St. Louis, MO

October 6, 2012—A Way Out 12th Anniversary Party—Libertyville Civic Ctr, Libertyville, IL

October 20, 2012—NIA Big Book Conference, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL  
Register before 10/1 = \$15 w/lunch, after 10/1 = \$20 w/lunch

October 28, 2012—District 10 & 12—Fall Breakfast, Milan Banquet Hall, Waukegan, IL \$16



## *Heard At Meetings*

**"I can remain bitter or I can get better!"**

**Anonymous**

*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

A.A. Meeting – OPEN A.A. meeting to be held every Thursday from 6:30pm – 7:30pm at the meditation room inside Condell Hospital in Libertyville, IL. The OPEN format will allow us to reach out to Alcoholics and their family members, as well as the doctors and nurses who attend to them. The meeting needs support and an eventual permanent rotation of chairpersons to keep going. Bring literature, speaker leads, Big Book readings to share with the group. All A.A.-related “burning issues” welcome!

**Support Needed-New Meeting- “Guided Meditation” - Fridays—5:30pm at the Serenity House, 1103 W. Park Ave., Libertyville—call Chuck D. 224-220-6455**

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 contact 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.**

<b>Office</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Alternate</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
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