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September 2013

- 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: Sept. 22, 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."

Northern Illinois Area 20
District 10, P. O. Box 854
Libertyville, IL 60048

www.district10nia.org

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 the Conscious Con-
tact volunteers.

Conscious Contact

Information and Inspiration From District 10, NIA

First Step Meeting / Twelve-Step Work

I have had the privilege to be in many First Step meetings over the years, and feel I can share some insight and tips which might help for a good beginning meeting.

A lot of times a first timer's meeting is a walk on, who just shows up at a meeting, God knows how. Back in the day, the potential member would call the Central Office, or the answering service and they would get a hold of someone to do a Twelve Step call and bring him or her to a first meeting to be indoctrinated to A. A. Sometimes people use the internet and get the info of where and when an A.A. Meeting is and arrive. Others come after being in treatment centers, hospitals, or jail. Sometimes a person is coming back after a slip and has to be reindoctrinated. If the newcomer brings a friend or relatives and they are non-alcoholic but are there for support, *kindly* tell them that for about an hour or so, that you will be having a special meeting for the newcomer and it would be more helpful for them to wait somewhere until the meeting is over.

Remember how fearful and desperate we were as newcomers. We knew we needed help and yet were afraid to get it. It is their first meeting and they are usually pretty badly beat up emotionally, physically or both. They know how to drink but don't know how to stop. No one ever came into AA to get beat up, we were beat up plenty when we got here. We just want to sincerely share that the newcomer can get well by following the A. A. program.

The chairperson should put the newcomer at ease, explaining that he or she will be given a special meeting and depending on group policy or size will either split the meeting into two groups (one smaller) or stay as a whole to deliver the first step. . If a smaller meeting is decided, the chairperson should select a leader and ask for volunteers for the smaller group, usually 4 or 5 is a good number. It helps greatly if this leader picks at least one newly sober AA member (6 months or less) to attend. At my first meeting one guy had five years sober and the other had five months and I certainly related more to the guy with 5 months as he was nearer to the disease in my mind than the fellow with 5 years. Later on, I found they both were important for the message to be passed.

It should be explained to the newcomer that everyone attending this meeting was once a newcomer too, and sat in a chair for their first meeting and survived. And what the group is about to do, which is to explain in a general way what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now. Tell the newcomer he or she will be listening to each member going around the table and he or she will be the last to comment. Kindly tell him or her to listen and try not to interrupt the members (this is called crosstalk). Also, to try and hold any questions he or she might have until the end of the meeting.

Continued next page

Step Nine

*"Made direct amends
to such people wher-
ever possible, except
when to do so would
injure them or oth-
ers."*

Tradition Nine

*"A.A. as such, ought never
be organized; but we may
create service boards or
committees directly re-
sponsible to those they
serve."*

If the newcomer has been drinking, depending on his condition it may be that the first step is to be postponed. When getting the group together to deliver the sobriety message, give the newcomer a beginner's kit, a directory, and literature (the Big Book). Have the group members introduce themselves. Tell the newcomer he or she does not have to say they are alcoholic. Prepare a sheet of paper for the group members to list their phone numbers and pass it around. Give the list to the new prospect and to call if he or she feels like taking a drink. Stress the importance of calling *before* the first drink, not after. Relate that we will go to hell to save a drunk but won't follow him or her into a gin mill. Explain that we do not quit drinking for the rest of our lives but only stop drinking one day at a time, achieving permanent sobriety on a temporary basis.

Next, it is wise to read a few pages from the Big Book, Chapter Three, "More about Alcoholism" pages 30, 31 and the first paragraph on page 32. These two plus pages take about 5 minutes to read and explain the *First Step* is and describes what a *real* alcoholic is, (a person who has lost the ability to control and enjoy his drinking). Then it is mentioned that the medical community has not yet found a cure and explains some of the methods we tried to curtail our drinking, (taking a drink, not taking a drink, taking a trip, not taking a trip, switching from Scotch to Brandy etc.).

Then, recommend to the prospect when he or she gets home to read the letter entitled, "The Doctor's Opinion" at the beginning of the Big Book, which explains Alcoholism as a two-fold illness, the obsession of the mind, followed by a compulsion of the body once an alcoholic drink is taken. The rest of the Big Book is written in response to this letter.

Explain the tools that we in A.A. use to keep us sober. The four S's are a good example of these tools...

- 1) *Slogans*: offer common sense directions, i.e... *Easy does it, One day at a time, Live and let live, But for the grace of God, Think, think, think First things first.*"
- 2) *Steps*: A way out of darkness: a guideline to walk through tough times and a path to serenity in our daily life.
- 3) *Sponsorship*: Someone who will share his/her experience, strength and hope on the spiritual road to recovery.
- 4) *Service*: An opportunity to give back that which has been so freely given.

Now, each of the group members will take a turn to *briefly* explain what it was like before A. A., what happened, and what it is like now. The members will explain the importance of meetings and such. After all of the First-step group members have shared, the newcomer can talk if he or she wants to.

Again, it should be explained that at this time the beginner does not have to state that he or she is an alcoholic and this choice does not have to be made right away. Any questions he or she might have at the should be answered to the best of the group's ability and he or she can make a comment if he or she wants as to how alcohol has affected his or her life up to this time.

I am sure that the readers of this article will have some of their own ideas to add for instruction. The best supplement for this article is to read step 12 in the Big Book, Chapter 7, "Working with Others."

Another paradox; the reward *good* Two Stepping --- Giving a First step by doing the Twelve-step work of carrying the message.

Tim S. Antioch, IL.

A Way Out 13th Anniversary Party

Open AA Meeting
Saturday, October 5, 2013

Libertyville Civic Center
135 W Church Street
Libertyville, IL 60048

Speaker: Otto M., Bentonville, AR

Fellowship, Food & Refreshments 6:00 pm
Speaker 7:30 pm

Free Event - Donations Gratefully Accepted



A Way Out meets on Friday's at 7pm
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church
125 W Church Street
Libertyville, IL 60048

For more information contact Bruce 773-857-3647 or Mike 847-543-9982

**AA Northern Illinois Area 20
2013 Big Book
Conference**

"Rocketed into the Fourth Dimension"

St. Luke's Church
63 Fernwood Rd.
Montgomery, IL 60538

October 26th 2013

Laurie L. - Guest Speaker - Lisle, IL
Laurie is the daughter of Ruth Hock who was AA's first secretary

Surprise Guest Speaker

Four Al-Anon Breakout Sessions Available
Friends and Family of Alcoholics Welcome! Please Register

Hotel Rooms at Reduced Rate are available for \$85.00 a night
(Must book room before 10/01/2013 and mention the Big Book Conference)
Holiday Inn Express & Suites 2055 Wiesbrook Dr. Oswego IL 60543 630-844-4700

For Questions or Volunteer Opportunities Email or Call
BigBook2013@aol.com Michelle H. 630-639-8366 Dan L. 630-913-8888

Please fill out completely. All information is strictly confidential and used only for verification at check-in or if there is a problem with registration, payment, or special needs accommodations.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

☐ \$15 Registration only ☐ \$20 Registration + Lunch Buffet (vegetarian options available)

Please select one: ☐ AA ☐ Al-Anon ☐ Other _____

☐ Special Accommodations ☐ Spanish Interpreter ☐ Sign Language

☐ Other Accommodations _____

Send Registration and Checks Payable To:
2013 Big Book Conference, P.O. Box 612, Montgomery, IL 60538
Mail in Registrations must be received by 10/10/2013
(Please Do Not Mail Cash)

Online Registration available at <http://dist62.aa-nia.org> (Additional \$1.50 fee for online payments)

Thought for this Issue...

In A.A. we aim not only for sobriety—we try again to become citizens of the world that we rejected and of the world that once rejected us.” Bill W.

Volunteers Needed!

Spring Conference Planning Committee will meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month. At the Joy Lutheran Church on Hunt Club Rd. Gurnee, IL. If you would like to help, please attend the next planning committee meeting.

**DISTRICT 10
AA ANSWERING SERVICE
WORKSHOP**

Saturday, October 12, 2013
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Serenity House
1103 W. Park Avenue
Libertyville IL 60048



The facility is handicapped accessible and has plenty of parking.

Discover how our Answering Service works and the role our volunteers play in 12-step calls.

Facilitators:

Robin B. District 10 Ans. Service Chair
Bridget M. District 10 Ans. Service Alt. Chair
and a Panel Discussion

1. What do our answering service workers experience when they get a call?
2. What have our volunteers experienced when they accept a call from our answering service?
3. Why would I want to volunteer?
4. What resources are available to help me?

Refreshments will be served.

Questions/need more information:
Robin B (847) 409-4987
Bridget M (815) 546-5772



“Let me know when you take your inventory. You'll need my help!”

Serenity House Events Libertyville, IL

Last Sunday of each month: Anniversary Salute

Do you know someone that has an anniversary this month or coming up? Get some friends together and “Salute” the person with a little celebration. It could be a sponsee, a sponsor or just a friend. Serenity House will provide the anniversary cake. Start time for the “Salute” is 6:30 pm

The Clipboard

Calendar for 2013— District 10, NIA 20

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



October—5th Way out Anniversary Libertyville Civic Center 6 pm

October 26th— 2013 Big Book Conference Montgomery, IL \$15

October 27th— Fall Breakfast Saddle Ridge in Waukegan tickets \$16

November 22nd-24th—McHenry Soberfest Grand Geneva, Wi. www.soberfest.org

July— 2-5, 2015—AA International Convention Atlanta, Georgia www.aa.org

Heard At Meetings

"A.A. isn't for people who need it, or even for people who want it; it is for people who will work it!"

"I go to meetings to find out what happens to people who don't go to meetings."

"Rarely have we seen a person succeed who 'rigorously' used half measures!"

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 Meeting- "Guided Meditation" - Fridays—5:30pm at the Serenity House, 1103 W. Park Ave., Libertyville—call Chuck D. 224-220-6455

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

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

Monday Night Jail Meetings Need Support—Lake County - 7:30pm—volunteer applications are available through Steve G., Gillian McQ.

Support Needed—Condell Hospital "Survivors Bloom" Thursday evening 6:30 pm Open Discussion Meeting, Speaker 1st Thursday of the Month. Trivia 12 steps, attic, Chase and Sanborn

Articles/stories/heard at meetings/cartoons/humor for future newsletters. Send submissions to D10 newsletter

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>

2013 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>



24th Annual McHenry's Soberfest November 22-24, 2013

Grand Geneva Resort Lake Geneva, WI

AA Conference * Banquet * Dance * Alcathons * Panels * Step Workshop
Literature * Archives * Meditation Room

Al-Anon Speakers

Sarajayne – Milledgeville, GA
Palmer G. – Miami, FL

Alateen Speaker

Gracie E. – Joliet, IL

AA Speakers

Carla R. – Tujunga, CA
Doug R. – Tujunga, CA
Larry T. – Lakewood, CA
Pat Y. – Palm Desert, CA

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY PART OF THE CONFERENCE
Register online at: www.soberfest.org