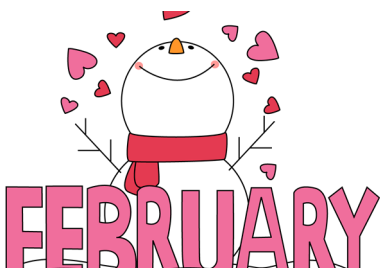


Conscious Contact

Information and Inspiration from District 10, NIA



Vol. 17, No. 2

February 2018

- Next District Meeting: Sunday, Feb. 25
- Submit content for the next issue no later than Feb. 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

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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

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

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.

Remember: Nothing Changes, If Nothing Changes

How many of these annoying little sayings do we have, anyway? When I first started coming to A.A. meetings, based upon my supreme knowledge and outstanding character, I considered these to be just useless rhetoric. Of course, I was wrong.

My 20th year of sobriety was filled with more change than I would have liked.

First, the treatment center that I went to discontinued its day program, which meant that the Bridge Group I had attended every Friday since I was one week sober was no longer going on. That left a huge hole in my weekly agenda. Every Friday at 11:30 a.m. I had been able to be with people in their first 30 days of sobriety. Many wonderful moments happened, and many long-term relationships began there. I'm sad because this experience of



A.A. members providing support and assistance for the newly sober alcoholics in treatment does not seem to be considered very important anymore, as treatment programs have changed.

Second, my home group of 20 years had to vacate our meeting place. Again, life-changing events happened for me in that musty old basement and I didn't want to

leave there! One of my first spiritual experiences happened to me there, even before I sobered up. I will forever be indebted to Ken D. for seeing that I was not done with drinking, and letting me know that when I was ready, the group would be there for me. And they were there for me when I finally conceded to my

(Continued on page 3)

The One Constant In Strife: It's Always Been Me!

From time to time, I ask myself, "What would I do without the program of Alcoholics Anonymous? The obvious answer is, I'd be locked up, liquored up, or covered up, dead. The last of the three scared me into the doors of A.A. back in 2006.

Even with adequate time sober using the Twelve Steps, and certainly enough to know better, I find myself renegeing the verbal contract I had with God when I took Step Three. It makes me wonder if Bill and Bob shouldn't have included some extra language right after

"...as we understood Him"—"and leave it there!" But these were wise old birds, as they probably knew through their own willful experiences that alcoholics could mess up a free lunch, given the chance.

Looking back, it has always been me. Whenever there was trouble; anytime there was a disturbance in my peace of mind, there I stood, the one and only constant. I spoke at a meeting about this very subject, and af-

(Continued on page 2)

Step Two

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Tradition Two

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Taking Prescription Drugs in Sobriety For Pain—My Experience

During a recent Big Book meeting, we read “Doctor Bob’s Nightmare.” Some of the comments centered around Dr. Bob’s (mis)use of sedatives, which led me to recount my recent experience using prescription drugs in sobriety.

I’ve been sober for more than 32 years, and have undergone surgery and arthroscopy, that included physicians prescribing narcotics/opioids for pain in the recovery period. Now let me be clear: I believe that recovering alcoholics must be extremely honest and open about any use of prescribed medication. Also, I disagree with strident A.A. members who seem to think that no recovering member of A.A. can EVER take prescription medicine. Search for the word “drugs” on www.aa.org and find a great article on this topic.

As a former sponsor said long ago (years before he died), “What do you think you should do if you have surgery...tell the doctors to skip the anesthesia and pain medication when they cut you open because you are an alcoholic? We need to be responsible about taking medicine, but we take it when it is appropriate.”

This is how I recently safeguarded my sobriety when I was prescribed opioids (hydrocodone) for a recent knee arthroscopy:

1. I made sure that the physician and his assistants were well aware of my addictive personality and alcoholism. I did that when completing the pre-surgical information sheet, and during conversations with the staff in pre-surgical examinations.
2. I told my sponsor that I would be prescribed the opioids.
3. I shared this in my comments at A.A. meetings.

After the procedure, I picked up the prescription and was a little freaked out that they prescribed me 40 pills! If they had mentioned that, I would have told them to limit it to 5-7 pills.



I was home from the arthroscopy by about 3 p.m., and took the first hydrocodone at 7 p.m. as the initial pain medicine and anesthesia wore off. At about 5 a.m. the next morning, I woke up in pain, and took the second hydrocodone.

That evening, I went to my first physical therapy session. I made the mistake of telling the physical therapist that I felt great and wasn’t bothered by the way he twisted and turned my knee. An hour later, after some exercises, I limped out of Athletico looking like someone twice my age (I’m 59). When I got home with a throbbing knee, I took the third hydrocodone. It was the final one I took.

I attended a noon A.A. meeting the next day, using ibuprofen for pain, and told them that I didn’t think that I would need any other hydrocodone pills for pain.

I waited a few days to make sure that I didn’t have any complications from the procedure or subsequent physical therapy. Once I knew that I was well on the way toward recovery, I brought the remaining 37 hydrocodone pills to a police station that has a prescription pill drop-off container.

To recap, my advice based on experience and www.aa.org is:

- a. Be sure that treating physicians and staff are fully aware of your recovery and addictive personality.
- b. Tell your sponsor that you will be given a prescription.
- c. Tell your home group and other meetings you attend.
- d. Take the medicine when needed, but not longer than that.
- e. Properly dispose of any remaining pills to avoid temptation.

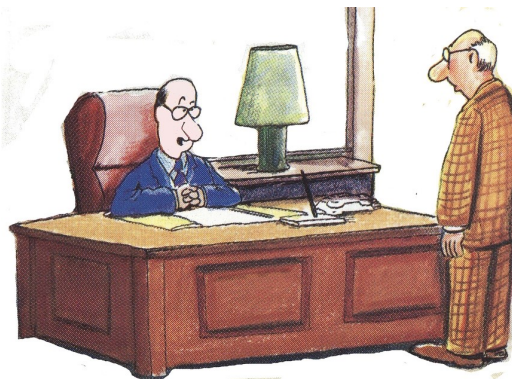
—Tom K.

It’s Always Been Me (Continued from page 1)

terword I received a coin from the chairperson. The inscription on back of this gratitude coin read: “To practice these principles, not to be better than my brother, but to recognize the real enemy is still me.” Coincidence? I think not!

When my inner expectations don’t match my outer reality, I become that guy again. The guy who was always trying to control the world around me, manipulate any situation to my “imagined” control. This often occurred without much success, I might add. The heart of my problem is the problem with my heart! There are times I’m just not “all in.” This “illusion” of control dupes me every time I lose sight of the fact I am an alcoholic, and need to practice these steps daily, even minute-by-minute sometimes.

When I don’t, my program “check engine” light comes on, which is this unprocessed, out-of-nowhere irritability telling me



“There’s not enough blame to go around.
There’s only enough for you.”

in the direction he was steering. Angry that mom was going right, while he was steering left, the “illusion” of control was too much for his little mind to process. He soon began banging his hands on the steering wheel in adamant displeasure.

Sounds like a guy I know the other day driving to work! Indeed, what would I do without the program?

—Gratefully, Matt S.

to “Get to a meeting right away, and tell on yourself.”

If I’m paying attention to God’s signs, which are usually all around us, I can get a clue as to what my behavior looks like. One such sign was in the grocery store the other day. A woman was pushing her cart which was mocked up to look like a race car, complete with dashboard and steering wheel. On-board was her racecar driving toddler, steering the wheel back and forth. Suddenly he became agitated, realizing that the cart wasn’t going

Nothing Changes Until... (Continued from page 1)

innermost self that I was alcoholic and needed help. On a positive note, my Sunday Night Men’s 8 p.m. group has found a larger and cleaner basement to “dwell” in at St. Bede Church in Ingleside!

Last, and without a doubt the hardest change this year, was that a man I sponsored for seven years died of cancer in November. Dennis called me every morning at 9:15 a.m., 365 days a year, and he always started the call with “Good morning, and what a fine morning it is!” We were able to have some of the most mean-

ingful talks I have ever had as he faced his final days of physical life on Earth. His spirit, like those of many others who have gone since I’ve been sober, will continue to be a part of me, until we meet again.

So, things change, and I change. I can’t wait to see what the rest of this year has in store. “Serenity comes when I accept the mixture that real life is.”—Rick S. (Concrete Rick)

Events

Feb. 2-4, 2018	Men’s Action Retreat Friday Dinner 6-7 pm. First session 8 pm. \$125 per person	Villa Desiderata 3015 Bay View Lane, McHenry, IL 60050 Dan S., Michael A.
Feb. 4, 2018	Super Bowl Party at Round Lake Area Alano Club Doors open at 1 p.m. Fun Fellowship and a great time! Bring a dish to pass	Round Lake Area Alano Club 37023 N. Rt 83, (Lake Villa), IL 60046
Feb. 9-11, 2018	44th Annual East Central Region Conference of Delegates Past and Present	Embassy Suites by Hilton Indianapolis North 3912 Vincennes Road Indianapolis, IN 46268 317-872-7700 Charlotte C., Cathi C.
Feb. 11, 2018 6 p.m. Appetizers and deserts 7:30 Speaker	The Foxhall Group of Alcoholics Anonymous Celebrates Its 8th Anniversary with an Open Meeting Speaker: Joe L., Edmund, OK	Wesley United Methodist Church (basement) 21 E. Franklin, Naperville, IL 60540
Feb. 16-18, 2018	ISCYPAA “The Effect Was Electric” Conference	Wyndham Springfield City Centre 700 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701 www.iscypaa.org
Feb. 17, 2018 6 p.m. Doors open. 7 p.m. Speakers	7th Annual DuPage County Open Three Speakers, 1–5 yrs., 6–19 yrs., 20+ yrs.	Parkview Community Church 764 St. Charles Rd. Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 Jen H.
March 10, 2018 8 a.m. Registration 9 a.m. Kickoff	Tri-County Spring Conference	UAW Union Hall 3615 Washington St. Kenosha, WI 53144
March 23–25, 2018 Hotel Registration: 847-605-1234	Northern Illinois Area 20 2018 Spring Conference & Assembly “People Who Normally Would Not Mix” A.A. and Al-Anon Speakers. Panels and an Alcathon	Hyatt Regency Schaumburg 1800 E. Golf Road Schaumburg, IL 60173 John P., John C.
March 31, 2018	See You Next Tuesday 12x12 Spring Bowling Event Scotch doubles, \$10 single, \$15 couple. After the RLAAC Open meeting.	Lakes Bowl 601 Railroad Ave. Round Lake, IL Patrick F.

Words of Wisdom from the AA Grapevine

“If the day comes that I do drink again, it will not be because I had no alternative. It will be because I had an alternative, provided by a loving God, but was unwilling to use it.”

—Anonymous, Syracuse, N.Y. *“Lock Me Up, Please,”* October 1994 AA Grapevine

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:** 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, contact information is deleted from this online version of the newsletter.

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.			OPEN		
Treasurer	Cori S.			Cindy W.		
Accessibilities	OPEN			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.			Mike W.		
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.		