

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 24 NO 10



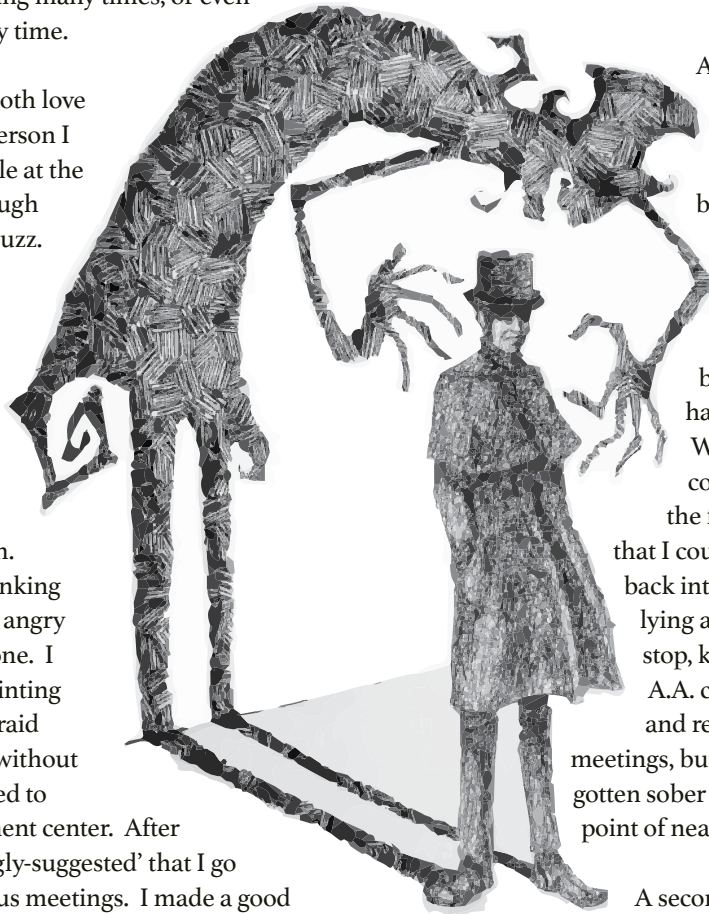
Making My Way Back

By Kurt S.

A few months after the birth of our first child in 1988, I found myself in turmoil. My personality was split between getting my next drink and wanting desperately to be a father. I knew I couldn't do both and I could not imagine my life without alcohol. I had tried to stop drinking many times, or even cut back, but failed every time.

I was trying to provide both love and attention to a tiny person I was responsible for, while at the same time drinking enough to maintain a constant buzz. My life was completely unmanageable and I blamed everyone else for all the stress I felt. One day, I came home to find a group of my family members in my living room who had arranged an intervention. Although I knew my drinking was out of control, I was angry and lashed out at everyone. I resented them all for pointing out the obvious, truly afraid that I could not survive without alcohol, but finally agreed to enter a thirty-day treatment center. After thirty days, it was 'strongly-suggested' that I go to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I made a good friend in treatment and we searched out meetings until we found one where we felt at home. Church basements. For once in my life, I followed direction, went to ninety meetings in ninety days, got a sponsor and the cloud over my life began to lift. Most importantly, I began to imagine my life without alcohol. I dove into the program, joined a men's group, built friendships and

sponsored guys. My home life improved immensely, our family grew and I became the father that I had always wanted to be to three beautiful daughters. I could not have done this without A.A. and my gratitude for those years will never cease.



After about seventeen years, the baffling and powerful message that one day I could drink again began to drift into my mind. My meeting attendance waned. Meetings became stale and new guys would call me out on my sobriety. Resentments grew. I had more important things to do. My daughters were grown and didn't need me so much. I began to listen to the bullshit I was telling myself. My program had suffered and I was once again powerless. While on vacation, I ordered a 'virgin' pina colada, but was handed a loaded one. After the first taste, I drank it down, proving to myself that I could drink. This started a twelve-year spiral back into the depths of daily drinking, blackouts, lying and killer hangovers. On my own, I couldn't stop, knowing all along that A.A. is the answer. A.A. could keep me sober. I was full of shame and remorse, knowing I needed to go back to meetings, but unable to face my failures to the guys I had gotten sober with. Pride kept me from going back –to the point of nearly killing myself.

A second miracle happened. I made a call to A.A. and crawled back into meetings. I was welcomed by the Fellowship and made to feel at home. No judgement, just: 'we're glad you're here'. I shouldn't have ever expected otherwise.

Thank you, Serenity House.

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Safeguarding the Solution through Unity and Action

At a somewhat recent district business meeting, we were informed that the development of new pamphlets and corrections to others were in the works. Our trusted servants in Area 20 have voted to move ahead with this. I found myself wondering if this decision accurately represents the majority opinion in District 10, and therefore Area 20 and A.A. as a whole. Our DCM votes based on the opinions brought to her from our groups via our GSRs. Given that only 30% of District 10 groups have GSRs, 70% of our members and groups are not casting votes that GSRs can carry to our district. How many more districts across the country find themselves in a similar situation?

While there are many items our groups are missing opportunities to weigh in on, I'd like to talk about changes and additions to our literature that draw attention to our differences. When I first came into this program, I considered myself to be different. I drank less than others. I drank more than others. I drank for different reasons than others (or so I thought). I didn't get a D.U.I. I didn't drink every morning. I was a 30-something woman in a room of – mostly – older men. I didn't believe in God. My illness took me places it didn't take others. The list goes on. I had feelings about these differences – feelings I voiced to the recovered alcoholics around me. They didn't feed into any of it. Instead, they used those moments as opportunities to steer me to what they did have an opinion on, what we did have in common: my mind told me I had to take the first drink, and once I did, I couldn't stop. Identifying with this was the only thing I had to understand in order to move forward. I didn't need people to call attention to my differences or sign onto my outside issues. I needed them to show me my problem and provide me a solution. The solution they provided me was found in the text Alcoholics Anonymous and involved doing a lot of things I didn't feel like doing. I did them anyway.

We are well on our way to having a pamphlet for every box one could put themselves into – the Marine in A.A., the Hispanic woman in A.A., the professional in A.A., the elderly person in A.A., the young person in A.A., etc. This list, too, goes on. This is exclusive, not inclusive. The only distinction need be that a person identifies as one with a desire to stop drinking. This is the single qualification that unites members regardless of age, race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, etc. These are outside issues. The existence of such pamphlets contradicts the spirit, content and sentiment of the original text of Alcoholics Anonymous in which the authors highlighted our similarities.

The stories following the first 164 pages is the proper place to highlight a person's ability to recover *in spite* of their differences. These stories serve to echo the authors' original statement that any willing person can recover regardless of their differences, and provide hope to those that see their differences as an obstacle.

It is true that a “desire to stop drinking” will give you entry to the fellowship but it won't give you sobriety. The problem has been removed from those that have had the willingness to take purposeful action – action that has provided them access to a Higher Power that has solved their drink problem. This solution lies within the text of Alcoholics Anonymous and is supported by those that are willing to give of their time to guide the still suffering alcoholic. If one sees the absence of a pamphlet - or any verbiage within the first 164 pages - as an obstacle, the problem is not Alcoholics Anonymous, rather our inability to surrender. We need members to continue to smash home what our founders articulated ad nauseam; that our recovery “Is dependent upon his relationship with God.” In creating boxes that call out our differences, we are drawing attention to the very thing our founders strived to make a non-issue.

Taking the steps has changed me and continues to do so. One of the most significant changes is the widening of the gap between how I feel and how I act. I can easily use a tradition to support my feelings on a matter, however the buck stops when I ask myself if any traditions would have to be broken to support my position. If my opinions conflict with the traditions, I know I'm off-base. This program has taught me that I can still take the right action. In this case, for me, the right action is prayer. *God, please allow our literature to change me instead of the other way around.*

It has been my experience that most will accept a majority opinion. I fall into this camp. I would, however, like to see the “majority opinion” include the majority of District 10's groups. We all want to be heard at home, work and in the community – why not A.A.? Our voice feeds into the larger body of A.A. It is our duty and responsibility to weigh in on matters that impact A.A. as a whole. If the decisions made at the General Service Conference don't appear to match the current conscience of the fellowship locally, I hope that you will seriously consider becoming your group's next GSR, or encourage members to stand for the position.

-Katie D.

ARE YOU UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU'LL BE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE 2025 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA DUE TO A DUI OR FELONY?

Good news! Canada allows for select restrictions to be lifted if you meet certain criteria. Visit the below link and pay special attention to #11 for more information. Be sure to start the process sooner rather than later as the turnaround for decisions may take time. We hope to see you there in July 2025! WWW.AA.ORG/INTERNATIONAL-CONVENTION-2025-FAQS



Looking for light service work?

Become an Answering Service volunteer! Contact information for Committee members can be found on page 4.

Events

OCTOBER 4-6TH

Conscious Contact Retreat

ARRIVAL: 10/4 5:30-7:00 P.M. (PIZZA AT 6:30 P.M.)

DEPART: 10/6 @ 10:00 A.M.

Who: A.A. members (age 18+)

SIENA RETREAT CENTER

5637 ERIE STREET, RACINE, WI 53402

www.sienaretreatcenter.org

Cost \$305.00 (includes meals & lodging).

Attendance limited to 50 people & full payment is required to be registered. Bring a snack, drinks to share & warm/comfy clothing.

To register, send name, e-mail & phone number along with payment to one of the following:

Zelle 630-450-2074

Venmo..... Tom-W-8

Mail check payable to Siena Retreat Center

c/o MJD, 29201 N. Fairfield Rd., Mundelein, IL 60060

*****NO REFUNDS AFTER SEPTEMBER*****

OCTOBER 20TH

2024 Fall Breakfast – hosted by D10

PARKWAY BANQUETS SALON

657 RAILROAD AVENUE, ROUND LAKE

Coffee 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Speaker Mark H.

50/50 Raffle. \$25.00

Tickets. Cindy C. 224-234-0051

NOVEMBER 9TH

8:00 TO 3:30 P.M.

2024 Big Book Conference *hosted by NIA 20*

FIRST COVENANT CHURCH

316 WOOD ROAD, ROCKFORD, IL

Doors: 8:00 a.m. Conference: 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Cost \$15.00 cash or card

Lunch \$15.00

Registration aa-nia.org/bigbookconference

Spanish Interpretation available

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

1:00 - 5:00 P.M.

Freedom from Bondage - Women's Speakathon

WAUKEGAN ALANO CLUB

2419 WASHINGTON STREET,
WAUKEGAN, IL

NOVEMBER 22ND TO 24TH

McHenry's Soberfest "We Will Be Amazed"

THE GRAND GENEVA RESORT

7036 GRAND GENEVA WAY, LAKE GENEVA, WI

Registration www.soberfest.org

Speakers, panels, banquet, Alcathon, Alateen,

Al-Anon, dance & more

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

5:30 P.M.

Service Structure Presentation & Dinner

ST. GILBERTS CHURCH, GRAYSLAKE, IL

All are welcome!

2ND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH @ 7 P.M. VIA ZOOM

Virtual Corrections Workshop

hosted by Area 20

Meeting ID 823 2846 9162

Passcode 061035

3RD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Meeting ID 970 0499 1067

Passcode 639187

Contact dcm@aa-nia-dist11.org with any questions

Treatment Meetings

Gateway – Lake Villa – Fridays

Men @ 7:00-8:00 p.m. Women @ 7:00-8:30 p.m.

ATP – Waukegan – Co-ed

Mondays & Fridays @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Saturdays @ 10:00 a.m.

WRS – Vernon Hills – Women

Thursdays @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Treatment Monthly Workshop

3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 P.M.

ID: 994 296 7947 Password: redbook (all lowercase)

Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair, Kevin A.

bbkevin8@gmail.com, 224-201-8978



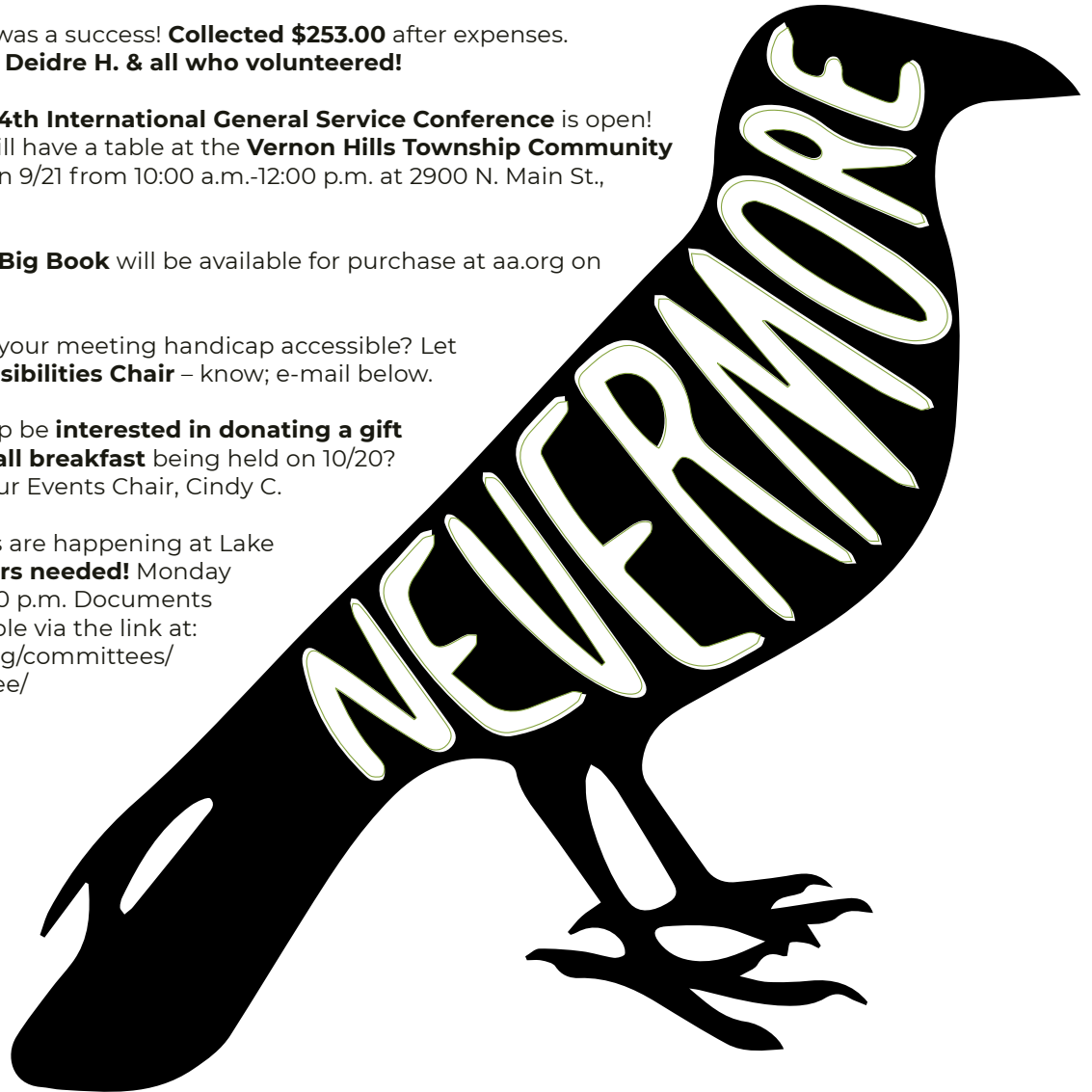
Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Tradition 10: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Concept 10: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

D10 Updates

- There are **ten (10) D10 OPEN committee positions**. Accessibilities is without a Chair or Alternate Chair. **Our Secretary is seeking an Alternate Chair.**
- **D10 meeting contributions 7/26/24-8/23/24: \$690.96**
- Is your meeting or club house **out of directories?** Please reach out to our **Directories Chair, Brian B.**
- Looking for delegate and/or Area 20 committee reports, updates and agendas? **Visit aa-nia.org/delegate/ and aa-nia.org/agendas/**
- **D10 elections** will be held at the **10/27** meeting
- **D10 Summer Picnic** was a success! **Collected \$253.00** after expenses. **Thank you, Cindy C., Deidre H. & all who volunteered!**
- Registration for the **74th International General Service Conference** is open!
- Public Information will have a table at the **Vernon Hills Township Community Mental Health Fair** on 9/21 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at 2900 N. Main St., Buffalo Grove
- The **Plain Language Big Book** will be available for purchase at aa.org on **November 1st.**
- **ATTENTION GSRs:** is your meeting handicap accessible? Let **Roger H. – our Accessibilities Chair** – know; e-mail below.
- Would you/your group be **interested in donating a gift basket for the D10 Fall breakfast** being held on 10/20? Please reach out to our Events Chair, Cindy C.
- Corrections meetings are happening at Lake County Jail. **Volunteers needed!** Monday & Thursday 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Documents are live & downloadable via the link at: <https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/>



CONTENT DEADLINE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18. Any A.A. may contribute. **1.** Go to district10nia.org. **2.** Click "District Services and Committees", then "Newsletter". **3.** Provide name, email or phone, in case of questions. **4.** Type/Paste your content. Click "Select". That's it! **WEBSITES** www.district10nia.org www.aa-nia.org www.aa.org www.aagrapevine.org
DISTRICT 10 P.O. Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048 **NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20** P.O. Box 808, Streamwood, IL 60107
GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE James A. Farley Station, P.O. Box 2407 New York, NY 10163 aa.org/aa-contributions-self-support
 Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions of A.A., NIA, District 10 or Conscious Contact volunteers.

877-893-1212

**DISTRICT 10 ANSWERING SERVICE
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

Next District Meeting

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

5:30 p.m. Traditions Meeting

St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL

6:00 p.m. Hybrid Meeting