

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 25 NO 4



The Spirit of the Rooms A Not-So-Gentle Reminder to Keep It Respectful

The following article was submitted by a member of our Alcoholics Anonymous community who, let's just say, is fed up. Some of the shenanigans going on in meetings are making it hard for newcomers, chairs, and members to stay focused on our primary purpose: staying sober and helping others do the same. The opinions, suggestions, and tone expressed in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the newsletter editorial team, our district, or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. We share this submission in the spirit of fostering open dialogue, unity, and recovery. As always, we encourage all members to practice principles before personalities and to approach our fellowship with a spirit of love, tolerance, and—when appropriate—a healthy dose of Rule 62 humor!

ARRIVE ON TIME (OR AT LEAST TRY, PEOPLE!)

Life happens, and sometimes you're late. But if tardiness is your thing (no judgment), please, for the love of Bill and Bob, don't make a grand entrance by slamming doors or doing the latecomer shuffle. Slip in quietly, find a seat, and pretend you've been there the whole time.

PUT THE PHONE DOWN (SERIOUSLY, STOP IT!)

Stop playing on your phone. If you're at a meeting, leave it alone—stash it in your pocket or bag and be present. Otherwise, step outside and quit distracting everyone else with your scrolling or tapping. If you're on Zoom, don't text or multitask—a virtual meeting is still a meeting.

SIT DOWN AND ZIP IT (ESPECIALLY DURING READINGS!)

Readings are sacred, folks. This isn't the time to perfect your coffee-stirring symphony or drag your chair across the floor like you're auditioning for "Stomp." Settle in, be still, and let's honor the words that keep us sober.

MINIMIZE THE UP-AND-DOWN CHAOS

Need coffee? Snacks? A bathroom break? Awesome—do it before the meeting starts. If you absolutely can't, wait for a natural break (like after the lead) and move like a ninja—quietly, people! Every time you get up, you're stealing focus from the speaker.

KEEP SHARES SHORT AND SWEET (ESPECIALLY IN BIG GROUPS!)

We love hearing your experience, strength, and hope, but if there are 30 people in the room, you don't get 10 minutes to ramble. Aim for 3 minutes or less—unless you're giving the lead, then you get a hall pass. Time management is a life skill, folks!

NO CROSS-TALK, PERIOD

This isn't a debate club. When someone shares, listen—don't interrupt, don't "fix," and definitely don't turn it into a therapy session. Our Traditions are there for a reason, and this one keeps the room safe for everyone.

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MISSED THE LEAD? MAYBE JUST LISTEN

If you stroll in after the main share, consider soaking up the wisdom instead of jumping in blind. Unless you've got 10+ years of sobriety and some serious pearls to drop, let the folks who heard the topic carry the torch.

NEWBIES, TAKE IT EASY (BUT SPEAK IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING!)

If you're new, your job is to listen, learn, and soak it all up like a sponge. But if you're white-knuckling it and might drink, please share—just keep it to 3 minutes max. We've got your back, but we're not here for your life story (yet).

SAVE THE JUICY STUFF FOR YOUR SPONSOR

Meetings are not the place to air your dirty laundry, especially in mixed groups. Use some common sense—super personal stuff, like your wild bedroom escapades, belongs in private talks with your sponsor, not on the meeting mic.

STICK TO THE TOPIC (PLEASE!)

Share your own experience, strength, and hope on the meeting's topic. If you don't have anything relevant to say, it's okay to pass. Silence is golden, and listening is learning.

STEPS ARE PERSONAL—SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW

When it comes to the Steps, talk about the ones you're actually working on, not the ones you've only read about in the Big Book. We're here for real experience.

DON'T BE THAT GUY (OR GAL)

Whispering, vaping, snapping gum, or shouting dramatic lines like "What an order! I can't go through with it!" during readings? This isn't about stealing the spotlight—it's about respecting Bill, Bob, and all of us who didn't sign up for your one-person show.

THIS ISN'T TINDER—FOCUS ON RECOVERY

A.A. is not a dating app, people. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help others achieve sobriety, not to find your next Friday night date. Keep it recovery-focused.

EMBRACE RULE 62 (BUT DON'T BE A JERK ABOUT IT)

Rule 62 says, "Don't take yourself too damn seriously!" and we love a good laugh. But there's a difference between lighthearted fun and being a disruptive clown. Respect is the key—let's have fun without stepping on toes (or ears).

SUPPORT THE SEVENTH TRADITION (YES, EVEN ON ZOOM!) –

Whether you're in person or virtual, contribute to the basket. A.A. doesn't run on hugs and good intentions alone—we need your contributions to keep the lights on and the coffee brewing.

THE AUTHOR CONCLUDES:

Come on, folks, this stuff isn't rocket science, but it is important. Let's set a good example for newcomers, support our chairs, and keep our meetings a place of healing, not chaos. We're not a glum lot, but we're also not a circus—let's find that sweet spot in between!

- Anonymous

Step 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Tradition 5

Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Concept 5

Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Reminder About Ordering A.A. Literature

SOME MEMBERS ARE STILL ORDERING A.A. LITERATURE FROM THIRD-PARTY SELLERS SUCH AS AMAZON. PLEASE AVOID DOING THIS.

We strongly encourage everyone order directly from aa.org. When you purchase literature through A.A.'s official website, a greater portion of the funds go directly to support our General Service Office (GSO) and the work of the fellowship. When third-party vendors are used, it diverts much-needed contributions away from A.A. and sometimes benefits businesses that are not affiliated with or contributing to our mission.

A.A. relies heavily on literature sales to help fund services that carry the message, so this is an important and simple way we can all contribute. Please continue to share this message with your groups and fellow members—it's a small act that makes a big difference.

I Have Peace. One Day at a Time

All addictive behaviors or habits are powerful destructive obsessions for me. I can become addicted to anything.

I disconnect.

Escape.

I am consumed by the external.

All hail the physical world.

Fight or flight activated.

Past. Future. Time.

Depression. Anxiety. Thinking.

Alcohol, co-dependency, worry, fear, denial.

Resentment, judgement, self-pity.

Other people, places, things.

Someone else's behavior, actions, feelings.

My behavior and my thinking.

Reinforce my disease.

A powerful destructive obsession....

and no more.

I spiral.

I become sicker.

EGO takes over.

I fix.

I manage.

I control.

Gratitude fades. Darkness wins.

Fear runs the show.

I move away from acceptance.

I am powerless without self-awareness.

It's an incredibly dangerous place for me to be.

I have given up peace.

Peace keeps me sober.

Through the grace of my divine healer, A.A.
and outside help...

I am lifted up into the light.

I am reminded that I am a spiritual being.

Connection.

Universal Spirit.

Being.

Grace.

Breathe.

Gratitude.

I am human.

I am not alone.

I have a new design for living.

I can choose to live in the solution.

I have a "prescription."

Poison turns to medicine.

I can move into acceptance.

I am powerless with self-awareness.

It's a safe place for me to be.

I have peace.

Peace keeps me sober.

One Day at a time.

- Anonymous

Gateway Foundation in Lake Villa now has a

Detox Facility

FOR BED AVAILABILITY
(847) 356-8205 X. 3391

ADMISSION HOURS:
MON-FRI 8:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.
SAT 8:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Heard something powerful at your last meeting?

If a share hit home and could lift others too,
nudge that member to send it our way!

OUR NEWSLETTER THRIVES ON
THE STRENGTH OF YOUR STORIES.

newsletter@district10nia.org

Sobriety's Early Gifts:

Revelations That Guided Me

I STOPPED DRINKING AND DRUGGING AT THE AGE OF 25. I WAS FINALLY SICK AND TIRED OF BEING SICK AND TIRED. I WAS A YOUNG U.S. NAVY SAILOR WITH THE ABILITY TO HAVE A PROMISING CAREER.

I THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF MY LIFE; THAT I WOULD NEVER HAVE FUN AGAIN. I WAS JUST OUT OF TREATMENT (FOURTH TIME) AND ON A NATURAL HIGH THAT COULD IN NO WAY SUSTAIN ITSELF.

I NEEDED RELIEF AND WAS RUNNING THROUGH MY HEAD WHAT BASIC THINGS I HAD LEARNED DURING THOSE EIGHT WEEKS OF INPATIENT TREATMENT THAT COULD SAVE ME FROM DROWNING — SAVE ME FROM DRINKING OR USING.

THESE THREE EXPERIENCES (AND MANY MORE, I MIGHT ADD) WERE KEYS TO MY SUCCESS.

1. DO NOT SET YOURSELF UP FOR FAILURE.

I was the king of setting myself up to fail. I would actually run to chaos because it offered me a rush in an otherwise dull, boring life. One thing I was taught was that "a drug is a drug is a drug." I liked all different drugs. To me, it was like a kid in a candy store. If it could cause an altered state, it was for me to try. This included things (toxins) others would not normally think to ingest—trust me! Over-the-counter medications and prescription medications were something I needed to be aware of, and this one example proved it to me. I was back at my room (a floating barracks) on a pier in San Francisco, California. The ship was getting a much-needed overhaul. Just a day or two out of treatment, and what do I find in the medicine cabinet? A full bottle of NyQuil. I picked up the bottle and read the label to confirm what I already knew: 25% alcohol by volume. I placed it back in the cabinet and went back to what I was doing. Moments later, I picked up the bottle and cracked it open. I inhaled, and the sensory cues (olfactory bulb*) triggered such strong emotions and memories that I had to take it a step further. I couldn't. I would have thrown the days of sobriety out the window. Yeah, but no one would know but me. The answer: put the bottle under the blanket on the bed. Then it will no longer be in the medicine cabinet. Yes, that was it! That bottle was back in my hands within minutes, open and ready to be ingested. Down the drain it went. For a brief moment, clarity snuck in and saved me from an impending relapse. Yes, a relapse. My intention was not to treat something that ailed me (well, something ailed me, but it had nothing to do with a cold) but to use it to get intoxicated. This would have led to me going to the nearest bar or liquor store and on another bender. This taught me that I need to treat all drugs as potential drugs of addiction and to let my doctors know that I am an addicted person who happens to be in recovery.

2. A MEETING IS WHERE YOU MAKE IT.

I was taking my first flight to visit friends in Laredo, Texas — my first sober flight. The question I was pondering was, "What are you going to do to make it through that flight without using?" I had part of the problem solved; I didn't purchase pre-game cocaine. One down, one to go. My flight was on Southwest Airlines. At the time (1989-1990), Southwest had a number of seats that faced each other. How awkward is that, especially for someone like me at that time who required some form of a substance to feel at ease? My thoughts were that no one would ever know that I drank 39,000 feet in the air; just one wouldn't hurt. Right? As the flight attendant approached to take my order, my palms began to sweat, and out of my mouth, I said the words I had planned all along: "Can you please pass over the intercom that any friends of Bill W. please see me here at my seat?" My belief was that I was going to have to explain myself; that I was going to have to admit aloud, with others in earshot, that I was an alcoholic. SCARY. Her response to me brought instant relief. She said she would but asked if she could finish serving the drinks first, to which I agreed. The waiting followed with fear that she would forget or that no one would show up. Right across from me was this middle-aged woman drinking a Budweiser, and others across the aisle were having a good ole time with their drinks. This was my kind of setting, and that was the problem. Then it came: "Would any friends of Bill W. please see the man in seat 12C." Within seconds, several people had shown up, and they sat down in the unoccupied seats. I clearly remember one gentleman came with a Big Book in hand. We sat there amongst the masses and had our own meeting. I did not have to drink 39,000 feet in the air where no one would know. I would have known. This experience showed me the power of the A.A. community and the desire to stay sober. It is there if you want it. I have since been to A.A. meetings all over the world, and the primary purpose remains the same — to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

3. FINDING NEW SOBER FRIENDS IS KEY.

My friend was the bottle. It was always there through the fun times as well as the tough times. It never talked back, and it did not say "no." When I was released from the last stint in treatment, I had returned to my ship in dry dock (no pun intended). In order to leave and enjoy off-duty time, I had to pass the bar Popeye's at the end of the pier. This is where all of my friends would go at the end of the workday. I can recall my name being shouted out to come join as I passed this drinking hole. It bothered me so much that I began to isolate myself and not leave the room at the floating barracks. The crowds of people I socialized with when I entered treatment were the same crowd of people I socialized with when I was discharged from treatment. It was not their addiction, so they really could not truly understand the extent of the problem I was facing, and I should not have expected them to understand. This dilemma was on me and up to me to resolve. If not, I was going to fail. Sure, I was one of those who tried to still hang on to the same crowds and in the same places, yet deep down I knew that it was only a matter of time before I would pick up that drink or drug. I had to find meetings that would meet my needs. Once I established an A.A. home group (a meeting that I regularly attended), I began to develop friends who were like-minded. That group was the 5:30 p.m. Park Street Group of Alameda, California. Going there began to feel like a home to me—somewhere I could go when I was getting itchy or when I just wanted to be around the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. I began to make friends who were different than I had ever experienced before—ones who truly understood the internal pain and suffering and ones who had answers to a new way of living. They taught me how to be a true friend to others in my life. My relationships began to change, and I was no longer looking out for just #1. These experiences have shown me that my life was not over at the age of 25. In fact, my life had just begun, and the cool thing is that I was going to be able to recall the places I have been and the people who had been my friends. Many of those people from that time in my life are still in my life today despite the distance, and for that, I am truly blessed and truly grateful. Today, I am close to age 54, and the fellowship of A.A. is just as strong today as it was in my early sobriety. My home groups (I have two) are just that—home. They know me more than almost anyone in my life does, and that is an important part of my recovery and why I remain sober today.

**Incoming smells are first processed by the olfactory bulb, which starts inside the nose and runs along the bottom of the brain. The olfactory bulb has direct connections to two brain areas that are strongly implicated in emotion and memory: the amygdala and hippocampus.*

- David K

Conscious Clips

"Freedom is not perfect neutrality between all alternatives. Freedom isn't merely the ability to do as we wish. True freedom is an inclination to do right. And the right to do what we ought to do."

– Unknown

"The various stages of one's spiritual life don't come neatly, one after another. Nor is there some hidden device in the soul that sounds an alarm at pivotal moments, as if to proclaim: You are learning something profound here – etch this one in your mind for future reference. Spiritual growth proceeds in fits and starts, the various stages overlap, and there is much regression and backtracking. The pivotal moments seem that way only in retrospect, often after the passage of time has eroded their luster."

– Sohrab Ahmari,

From Fire, by Water: My Journey to the Catholic Faith

"When a person can't find a deep sense of meaning, they distract themselves with pleasure."

– Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

"The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you."

– Werner Heisenberg

If God has all the Power in the world – how much is left?

"None, yet all – it's all God's." – Thomas Aquinas

"Enough for us to choose, because He wills it."

– C.S. Lewis

"Happiness consists of rational activity of the soul done with excellence in accord with virtue."

– Michael Knowles, *Adapted from Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia in the Nicomachean Ethics*

"...but my conscious contact with God is still a baffling and troubled relationship. The God of my understanding is no easy touch, no well-meaning, overindulgent, comfortably bank-rolled Mommy or Daddy. The God I pray to has some expectations and a sense of timing geared to something other than what I think I need and when I need it..."

– Anonymous, *Grapevine, York Harbor, Maine, Apr 1993*

District 10 Updates

There are ten (10) open positions that need to be filled. If you are interested in learning more about a position, please join us at the next D10 meeting.

from 2/23/25 to 3/23/25

D10 Contributions. \$490.00

Pink Can Contributions \$433.39

2025 Summer Picnic will be held on August 16th – more information to follow.

2025 Fall Breakfast will be held October 19th – more information to follow.

La Vina is struggling. Home groups may want to consider donating a subscription to a local church or other organization.

C.P.C. & P.I. committees are hard at work! They've put together packets to be distributed to high schools, libraries and motels in Antioch, Fox Lake & Grayslake.

Know of any upcoming mental health fairs or events? Reach out to the P.I. committee so they can procure a booth – contact information on page 4.

D10 archivists are in the process of digitizing items.

C.P.C. is looking for volunteers to distribute materials – contact information on page 4.

Treatment Committee needs Grapevines and Big Books – contact information on page 4.

Bridging the Gap is looking for volunteers along the North Shore – contact information on page 4.

Literature has newcomers packets can for \$2.00 – contact information on page 4.

Looking for District 10 meeting minutes?

Visit <https://district10nia.org/minutes/>

Looking for delegate and/or Area 20 committee reports, updates and agendas?

Visit aa-nia.org/delegate/ and aa-nia.org/agendas/

Corrections meetings are happening at Lake County Jail. Volunteers needed! Currently have six (6) volunteers between D10 & D12. Monday & Thursday 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Documents are downloadable via the link at: **<https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/>**

Events

SATURDAY, MAY 10TH

Area 20 Spring Committee Meeting
hosted by D61

LORD OF LIFE CHURCH

40W605 IL-38, Elburn, IL 60119

Registration. 8:00 a.m.

Meeting start. 9:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

30th Fox Valley Open

LORD OF LIFE CHURCH

40W605 IL-38, Elburn, IL 60119

Doors. 7:00 p.m.

Speakers. 7:30 p.m.

Alex S. D61 (1-5 years)

Hugo S. D64 (6-15 years)

Albert M. D22 (16+ years)

NOVEMBER 14-16TH

2025 Illinois State Conference
hosted by Area 20 & D40

HYATT REGENCY SCHAUMBURG

1800 East Golf Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173

aa-nia-il-dist40.org aa-nia.org

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH

District 10 & 12 GSR School

SERENITY HOUSE

1102 W. Park Avenue, Libertyville, IL

Time 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Zoom ID / PW 336 639 694 / 951691

Learn about what GSR's do, why it matters, how to succeed!

Meeting Spotlights

WEDNESDAYS AT 5:30 P.M. BERGER HALL
Meeting is no longer happening

MONDAYS AT 7:30 P.M. . ROUND LAKE ALANO CLUB
N&W Spanish Speaking Meeting

SATURDAY, 7:30 P.M. . . CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Vernon Hills Open Speaker Meeting

Meeting has low attendance & needs support

Open Speaker Meetings

ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL 60002

MAY 10TH. CINDY C.

Doors / Speaker 5:30 p.m. / 6:00 p.m.

MAY 24TH MATT G.

Doors / Speaker 5:30 p.m. / 6:00 p.m.

Potluck. 7:00 p.m. (bring a dessert or snack!)

Treatment Meetings

Gateway - Lake Villa - Fridays

MEN @ 7:00-8:00 P.M. (MUST BE ON LIST TO ATTEND)

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.

Zoom ID / PW . . 994 296 7947 / redbook (all lowercase)

Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair

Kevin A. bbkevin8@gmail.com, 224-201-8978

There All the Time

I do believe in a loving God that guides us all towards a good life. Just as God leads the squirrel to the good place to bury an acorn, and then back to it when he is hungry, there is a driving force behind life.

I have, I believe, a scientific and skeptical mind. But I have accepted that the laws of nature are the laws of physics. Science cannot prove or disprove the existence of God. But experience proves I have always been driven to a good life and all I needed to do was listen.

When I was selfish and fearful I made bad choices and suffered, but I blamed my pain on others. When I met a group of people who lived by their own principles one day at a time, I found a way out of my self-destructive behavior. Drinking and drugs were not an answer.

Developing a spiritual way of life was the answer to that God-shaped hole in my life. I tried to fill it with alcohol but only one thing can fit.

When I accepted a loving God into my life, I found I had always been guided in the right direction. I just needed to listen. After decades of self-pity, I realized I always had everything I needed as long as I was willing to ask for help. That help is available in A.A. meetings, from my sponsor, but mostly from God doing for me what I could not do for myself.

- Hippie Bill

The Glum Lot

A newcomer asks her sponsor what the Big Book has to say about sex. The sponsor gets her numbers mixed up, and instead of referring the newcomer to page 69, directs her to page 96, where she reads,
"Do not be discouraged if your prospect does not respond at once. Search out another alcoholic and try again. You are sure to find someone desperate enough to accept with eagerness what you offer. We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a man who cannot or will not work with you."

How come if alcohol kills millions of brain cells, it never killed the ones that made me want to drink?

A one-dollar bill runs into a twenty-dollar bill and asks, "Hey, where have you been lately?"

The twenty says, "I was on a cruise ship for a while and hung out in the casinos, then I came back to the States and flew out to L.A., went to a couple of baseball games, out to dinner, took in some of the new movies, that sort of thing. How about you?"

The one-dollar bill said, "Oh, you know, the same old thing –meetings, meetings, meetings."

NEXT DISTRICT MEETING SUNDAY, MAY 25TH

St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL

5:30 p.m. Traditions MTG 6:00 p.m. Hybrid MTG

CONTENT DEADLINE FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

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! Any A.A. may contribute.

WEBSITES

district10nia.org aa.org aa-nia.org 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.

I AM RESPONSIBLE, when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that:

I AM RESPONSIBLE.

NEW District 10 Zoom Meeting

ID362 152 0195
 PWDISTRICT10