

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 26 NO 2



Does It Get Better? *Sobriety Check-ins brought to you by thesmallbow.com.*

All anonymous writers below are credited collectively as "The Small Bow Family Orchestra"

WRITER 1 I've been experiencing the nesting doll effect of addiction. Strip one away and another appears in its place. When I meditate and let things get quiet, I recognize it's all the same void. It points back to the same place. "Recover" has a few meanings. The ones that stick with me include "return" and "get back." In September, I realized the black hole spinning at my center is part and parcel. Not something to hide or fix, just a bit of my blueprint. I can't unsee it. Can't ignore the flickers of light around its edge. They say the antidote to addiction is connection and I'm starting to see it. I go to meetings, share what's true, and listen to other people do the same. Each hour spent, each story exchanged is encouragement to do things differently. When I feel the need to tend to the void urgently, I'm getting better at pausing and asking, what's the rush? Finding your footing (while occasionally still falling) takes time.

WRITER 2 It finally took blood work and a liver scan to make me realize that I had no choice. Even though in 2025 alcohol took me to the hospital twice, once with a concussion and once with an alcohol induced anxiety attack. My blood alcohol both times was unheard of to my fiancé who was a highway patrol cop and he's seen it all. Finally in September of this year I went for a routine bloodwork, and the reality set in. I either do it now or it will take me within a few years. The second person I told was my 13-year-old. "Hey guess what?" She looked at me with eyes wide open. "Mommy is sober." She smiled and said, "That's great Mommy, I hate it when you drink, your eyes get glossy and you forget things."

It broke my heart. Two days later while she was at her dad's house, I made my usual evening phone call to say good night and she asked me, "Hey Mommy, are you still sober?" This matters. This is not just my journey. It's hers. I can't erase the messed up things I did when I was drunk in front of her. Luckily she didn't see a lot. Anyway, this is day 13!

WRITER 3 I've been meaning to quit drinking for more than 30 years and finally got around to it last month, someday could be today type thing. I've quit before, but it was only to prove that I could and then fell right back into it with renewed confidence and fervor. I've also been to AA. First as a child, then once in my 20's where I felt instantly overwhelmed by the outreach and kindness. A woman gave me a Big Book. I tried again in my 40's. That time, as I approached the Alano Club a kind person asked if I was looking for the ACA meeting? I wasn't, but I checked it out because I had no idea what they were talking about and "No" has always seemed like a lot to communicate. A friend once told me that with AA, you can never go back to drinking without a lot of shame and guilt. That stuck. It was enough for me to resist those rooms for my whole adult life, "Not if it's going to ruin drinking. Rude." Until now, because I don't want to go back to drinking and those rooms are full of the most honest and open and aware people I've ever heard. *continued on page 2*

IN THIS ISSUE

- Events. 2
- 3rd Step, Tradition, & Concept . 2
- Meeting Spotlights 3
- Treatment Meetings 3
- Conscious Clips. 3
- The Student of the Pause . . . 3
- D10 Updates. 4
- Contacts & Info. 4

continued from page 1

WRITER 4 So, my divorce was finalized on August 7 and sometime in the middle of September I realized I'm the happiest I've been in decades. It's not that my marriage was always miserable, it's just that I spent so much of the first half of it living in survival/drinking mode, and the second half in recovery/what-am-I-doing-here mode that everything was fraught all of the time. I remember when I was first getting sober, I had no idea what was coming next in life. No idea how I'd make it to one month, then six months, then a year. And someone suggested taking it one day/one hour/one minute at a time — such an old saw in recovery circles, but the first time I heard it in a recovery context it blew my mind. So I really had no idea how getting divorced/post-divorce life would go, but I was down for trying it one day at a time. I came to accept that there was a pretty good chance I'd be alone forever, which was my biggest fear. Once I realized I'd be just fine alone, it made all of the rest so much easier. I also had to accept that I'd probably be significantly poorer on my own than I'd be with two salaries, and I'm OK with that as well. So now I'm back in school, training for a new career, and I just started dating this really amazing person. It's too early to judge whether either the career change or the boy will work out long term, but I'm feeling super optimistic about both. And am kind of singing my way through my days and sleeping like a champ. I'm glad these updates are anonymous, but I wish I could point to some of my old ones to show you all how much of a bummer I've been in the recent past. This happiness is so new, and I'm enjoying every second of it. I feel like I'm back to some really good, earlier version of myself.

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Tradition 3: The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Concept 3: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. — the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives — with a traditional "Right of Decision."

Events:

MARCH 13-15TH
Northern Illinois Area 20
Spring Conference -
Faith Without Works Is Dead
HYATT REGENCY SCHAUMBURG
 1800 East Golf Road, Schaumburg, IL
 Registration \$35.00
 Banquet Dinner \$60.00
 Booking: <https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/2026-NIA20-Spring-Conference.pdf>



REGISTRATION



HOTEL

SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH
NIA 20 Spring Assembly
hosted by NIA 20 past delegates
HYATT REGENCY SCHAUMBURG
MAHOGANY ROOM
 1800 East Golf Road, Schaumburg, IL
 Registration & Continental Breakfast . . . 8:00 a.m.
 Meeting 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 Breakout sessions during lunch
REGISTRATION NOT REQUIRED
FOR THE ASSEMBLY ONLY;
BOX LUNCHORDER DEADLINE 2/20

GSRs are expected to attend!



LUNCH

SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST
42nd Annual
Tri-County Spring Conference -
From Desperation to Inspiration
GREAT LAKES CHURCH
 7600 75th Street, Suite 320, Kenosha, WI
 Registration 8:00 a.m.
 A.A. Speaker 9:00 a.m. (Colleen M.)
 Al-Anon Speaker 9:30 a.m. (Deb T.)
 Panels 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (hourly)
 Alkathon 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (hourly)
 Chili Lunch \$2.00
 Banquet (pre-registration required \$35.00
 Banquet Speaker Mary B.
www.tri-countyconference.com

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH
Spring Breakfast - D10 & D12
PARKWAY BANQUETS
 657 Railroad Avenue, Round Lake Beach, IL
 Time 8:00 a.m.
 See Events Alt. Chair Brian M. for tickets (pg. 4)

DETOX FACILITY GATEWAY FOUNDATION IN LAKE VILLA
 Admission hours:
 Mon-Fri . . . 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
 Sat. 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
FOR BED AVAILABILITY
847-356-8205 X.3391

SUNDAY, APRIL 19TH

Women's Annual Serenitea

ANTIOCH TOWNSHIP CENTER

1275 Main Street, Antioch, IL

Fellowship 1:00 p.m.

Open Speaker 2:00 p.m.

Tickets \$10.00

Drinks, sweet treats and raffle door prizes

Questions/Purchase tickets, please TEXT:

Steph R. 224-688-9419

Stephanie F. 224-577-5558

Meeting Spotlights:

Men's Step Discussion

ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL

Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.

Open Speaker Meeting

ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL

Doors 5:30 p.m.

Speaker 6:00 p.m.

March 14th Lynne A.

March 28th Chris T.

Treatment Meetings:

Gateway - Lake Villa - Fridays

Men . . . 7:00-8:00 p.m. (MUST be on list to attend)

Women 7:00-8:00 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

Conscious Clips

"Our high and privileged calling is to do the will of God in the power of God for the glory of God."

- J.I. Packer

"A prayer is a plea that God will get what He wants from me."

- Julie

The Student of the Pause

I've walked a thousand miles in the light, I've watched the promises sprout up around me, And all but forgotten the madness of the long-dead drink's fight. God has stood as my eternal guard through it all, I chair the meetings and walk others through our lifesaving text, I'm there to answer when the newcomer calls— Knowing well that it takes at least two for what happens next.

I've had the awakening—the shift of soul, I've allowed God to polish up the defects. But deep beneath, lie layers of control— A hidden shadow waiting for its effects.

I thought that old resentment was a ghost— A memory buried in a shallow bed, But it was just a quiet, sleeping host, Until it rose and reared its sinful head.

The peace I cultivated slipped away, My impulse broke, I did not pause to pray. I spoke the words I can't take back today, And watched the wreckage settle in the gray.

It's terrifying to see the one who tried to kill me years ago, still lives within, Still filled with venom, coiled and waiting for the win.

The mess is made, a product of my hand, And now: the consequences will come. I cannot "fix" this or take a stand, I must sit still within this heavy air. I'll leave the mess to God in quiet prayer, And face the parts of me that fear their death, Surrendering the ego that I bear, With every heavy, humble, shaking breath.

Through the worry and the dread— The sharp anxiety of what I've done, Have driven me to seek the Spirit's thread, And find the Grace I thought I'd already won.

And beg for deeper tending to my rough spots, The work remains, the plan is not yet coined, And wait for the dots to be joined. I've see madness through a sister's eyes, And felt the weight of my self-inflicted pain.

I pray for those who felt my sudden storm, For mercy on the ones I put in harm. Keep them protected, keep them safe and sane, Far from the reach of my reactive arm.

I'm still not perfect—just a soul in mend, A student of the pause I failed to take. I'm starting on another twenty-four without end, Still sober—and maybe, even, half awake.

By Anonymous

HOW MANY POTATOES DOES IT TAKE TO KILL AN IRISHMAN?



Publicize an Upcoming District Event:

district10nia.org/publicize-an-upcoming-district-10-event/

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

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Upcoming District Meeting: Sunday, March 22nd

St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL
5:30 p.m. Traditions MTG 6:00 p.m. Hybrid MTG

Submissions due: Friday, March 13th

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.

NEW D10 ZOOM MEETING

ID861 1954 7045
PWDISTRICT10

D10 Updates

There are eight (8) 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.

D10 contributions from 12/2/25 to 1/16/26:
\$1,434.28 + Pink Can \$215.00

GSR Committee will be hosting another GSR School in April or May – stay tuned for more info!

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/

Coming in April...

We will be doing a series on sponsorship and are asking for sponsees and sponsors to consider submitting a response to one of the below questions to be included in the April newsletter. Feedback will be published in a future issue.

- *What is a sponsor's role?*
- *Why did you pick your sponsor?*
- *Whether you are sponsee, sponsor, or both, how has sponsorship impacted your sobriety?*

NEW P.O. Box for Area 20 7th Tradition Contributions:

Payable to:
NIA Ltd.
P.O. Box 95174
Palatine, IL 60095

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.