

Monthly Reprieve

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RACINE AREA CENTRAL OFFICE'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

3701 Durand Avenue #225 Racine, WI 53403 (262) 554-6611 Hotline: (262) 554-7788 raconewsletter@gmail.com

Store is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am—5:00 pm. Saturdays 9:00 am—2:00 pm; Closed Sundays

Giving Back - the Ultimate Holiday “Gift”

As we embark on the holiday season, and the twelfth month of the year, what better time to take a look at Step 12 and the importance of “giving back”? Step 12 asks us to carry this life-saving solution to those still suffering and to act with compassion and empathy in our day-to-day actions.

It is the pinnacle of a dozen steps which were assembled to better our lives. Live that at one point were lost, helpless and hopeless. If it weren't for others that came before us, that so freely shared the message of recovery, where would we be today?

Surely each and every one of you in recovery remember some of the early A.A.'s that devoted their time and energy to spreading the word. Answering those late-night calls when your mind wouldn't stop racing, picking you up and taking you to a meeting just so you felt a

little less “alone”, sharing a cup of coffee and having a conversation that ultimately became much more than a simple “chat”.

We've all been impacted, one way or another, but folks who have so selflessly took the time to help us see the truth—that we no longer needed to suffer to the bondage of our alcoholism.

The unprecedented success of this program has been *built* on one alcoholic carrying the life-altering message of recovery to the newcomer. The service that others before us have practiced is what has helped many an alcoholic stay sober for another 24 hours.

With that fact, it is imperative that we take on the responsibility of sharing what we've learned to the newcomer—the still suffering alcoholic who feels alone and sees no hope. Some may say this is a ‘selfish program’, but that couldn't

be further from the truth. It is selfless in its purest form. Putting others before ourselves allows us to be better sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, friends, employees and so on. We must “give” in order to receive.

So this holiday season, take some time to reflect on where you once were and all those that helped you on your path to recovery. Share your gratitude and love to them—but more importantly: give back! Get involved in service and help those that will surely someday use *your* message to inspire and save others. It's the least we can do and the greatest gift of all.

Wishing everyone a happy holiday season and another sober 24!

Twelfth Promise

“We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves”



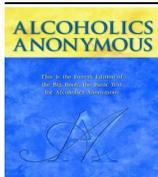
December Focus

Step Twelve

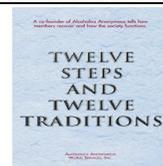
“Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and practice these principles in all our affairs”

Twelfth Tradition

“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities”



Our Stories



(Never) Alone for the Holidays By: Ally B. (Grapevine 2013)

When I was new in sobriety, the holidays downright scared me. I didn't even know if my family was willing to speak to me. I couldn't afford anything—not even Christmas cards. Plus all my new AA friends were flying home for the holidays. I was miles away from the ones I loved. Now came the pressure to stay sober.

Could I make it through the holiday season and stave off the horrid memories of selfishly ruining family get-togethers in the past? I began having total recall from last year's Thanksgiving, when I was so drunk I overdosed in the living room in front of my mom and uncle. They had to rush me to the hospital. The guilt and shame began creeping up as November reared its ugly head. My first Thanksgiving came before my first Fourth Step, and I was a walking character defect.

My sponsor began to calm me down. She taught me about self-care and the things

I could do to prepare myself for the busy holiday season. I took my sponsor's advice and doubled up on my meetings. Every night I increased my prayer time by five minutes, and in the morning I did the same with my meditation. I knew my mother was feeling depressed, so I called her once a week starting in November and tried to cheer her up as best I could.

On Thanksgiving, a local clubhouse was having meet-



ings around the clock with tons of food and fellowship. So I went and checked it out. What I found was an outpouring of love and acceptance, a complete gift on a beautiful holiday. All of us drunks gave thanks together; I found the warmest family I could ever wish for.

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas I got plenty of rest, went to as many meetings as I could, and took care of my spiritual condition. I checked in with my sponsor often and got involved in service. On Christmas day I headed over to the clubhouse to help serve food and clean up. I even chaired a marathon AA meeting that ended at midnight.

The rewards of doing service for others, connecting to God and taking care of myself paid off. My heart was full, and although I missed my family back home, I found more than I ever bargained for. By the time the New Year came, I felt like I had earned my place in AA. I was right where I was supposed to be. I have never forgotten my first sober holiday season.



Christmas: Past and Present

By: Tom G.

My last drink was on March 18, 2012. It capped six months of daily blackout drinking, and more than 10 years of increasingly heavy and destructive addiction to alcohol. I then completed two and half months of outpatient rehab and underwent surgery to repair the arm I had damaged from multiple drunken falls. I was also asked not to return to the job I had held for 10 years, nor to contact any of my former coworkers. The arm injury and the loss of the job and coworkers were casualties of my drinking. I was told my liver was also damaged, but that it was mostly recoverable if I never touched a drop of alcohol again.

I attended at least one, sometimes two, AA meetings almost every day, except for the day of my surgery. With the help of a loving but firm sponsor, I worked my way through the first three Steps. By the time Thanksgiving came, I was well into admitting the exact nature of my wrongs. I had mended a lot of the damage I'd inflicted on my family, and I made living amends by being present, sober, accountable and loving.

Despite my progress in the program, I was really anxious about Christmas—and still full of self-pity. Not only would I have to cope with the usual holiday drama, but I'd have to do so without alcohol. And also without my mother, who had just lost her own battle with addiction.

It was AA—my home group and the clubhouse where my home group met, as well as my sponsor and new AA friends—that made all the difference. All this and prayer helped me accept all these feelings that flooded me: There was the grief I felt seeing my mother's empty stocking and hear-

ing silence where her laughter used to ring; the anxiety caused by the needling of my brother-in-law; the exasperation of being tucked between my bickering niece and nephew at dinner; and the flash of disappointment when I realized I wasn't getting that eBook reader after all.

To help me get over my nearly terminal case of self-centeredness and self-pity, I engaged as best I could in service to others. Even though I have to observe a strictly gluten-free diet, I baked and brought in breakfast cookies and muffins—gluten free, of course—to brighten up our 7:30 a.m. meetings. Everyone devoured the goodies, and I felt good about this little bit of service, especially because many newcomers came in off the street and they didn't have much else to eat.

I contributed to the holiday party the AA groups were putting on for the children of members who otherwise would have faced a rather sparse Christmas or Hanukkah. It also felt good to share what little money I still had so a child would have a little holiday joy.

I chaired several meetings during December, including my home group's Christmas Eve morning meeting, which required me to really listen to others and to pay attention to everyone in the room so that those who needed to share, especially newcomers like me, wouldn't be overlooked. Hearing members share about their struggles to repair the damage from drunken holidays past and their anxieties about relapsing, really helped me feel grateful that my Higher Power had removed my obsession to drink, and that with his love and mercy, I still had my family and another chance at life.

Then, when the usual family tensions arose and I started feeling anxious, sad and afraid on Christmas Eve, I had a place to go: our holiday alca-thon at the clubhouse—24 hours of AA meetings, every hour, on the hour. I went to two meetings on Christmas Eve after the family dinner, and when I couldn't sleep in the pre-dawn of Christmas morning, I went back for three more! There was something so calming about six sober drunks clustered together in a sea of chairs at 4:30 on Christmas morning, sharing about the gifts we had been given this past year. Instead of mourning my losses, or feeling sorry for myself, I was giving thanks for the gift of sobriety.

A few more people came to the 5 a.m. meeting, where we talked about the power of the Serenity Prayer during stressful times. And then when 6 a.m. arrived, so did about 60 or so alcoholics and their loved ones, for a really joyous meeting. I never expected to be sitting in an AA meeting watching Christmas morning dawn, and yet, there I was. I couldn't imagine being anywhere more perfect or more beautiful.

Not only did I survive the holidays, the holidays became even more precious to me. My self-pity dissipated and my heart swelled with gratitude and love. As I counted all the gifts I got this year, I marveled that not one of them came in a gift box or a gift bag, or in a bottle or a glass.



Events and Service Notes

District 17 Corrections

For those looking to jumpstart their involvement in service work, District 17 is in need of help in carrying the message to those in the Corrections system. There are many positions that fall under the heading of Corrections service work—Corrections Correspondence Service, Pre-release Contact Program, and AA meetings on the inside, to name a few. For those interested in getting involved—please contact Steve N. (Area 75 District 17 Corrections Committee Chair) at **(262) 939-9676** or nova221sgn@wi.rr.com.

RACO Steering Committee Meetings

The Racine Area Central Office's 'Steering Committee' meets on the first Saturday of every month at RACO. The steering committee invites anyone who may be interested in Area 75 and District 17 events and happenings.

The Steering Committee also currently has a few open positions available (which can be seen on Page 6 of the this edition of The Reprieve). Check it out!

If you or someone you know might be interested in sitting-in on a Committee meeting or possibly filling an open position, please join us for a monthly meeting or email raconewsletter@gmail.com for information on available positions and position requirements.

We look forward to seeing you at the next Committee meeting!

Detox Help Needed

Volunteers are needed for detox meetings throughout the area. Detox meetings are a great way to carry your message to the newcomer, who often needs to hear a message of hope.

Requirements to become a volunteer are six months to attend with others and one year to attend solo.

Meetings are held Sunday-Friday at 8pm and Saturday & Sunday mornings at 9:30am.

Detox meetings are held at St. Lukes on Wisconsin Ave. and 14th St. For further information, please contact Roxann D.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Fridays in December

Young at Heart
 "New Young Peoples Meeting"
 The Benjamin House
 6:00pm

Sunday, December 13th

Wrapping/Prep for Xmas Party
 The Grove Club
 5pm-7pm

Saturday, December 19th

Grove Club X-mas Party
 12:00—3:00pm

Thursday, December 31st

Grove Club New Years Party
 The Grove Club
 Dance starts at 8pm

Know of any upcoming events?

Email -

raconewsletter@gmail.com



Racine Area Central Office FINANCIALS

Donation Detail	Nov
Anonymous donations	10.79
Benjamin House Sunday 8AM AA/Alanon	27.45
Benjamin House Sunday 10:00 a.m. Dwnstrs	15.25
Benjamin House, Monday 6p.m., 12x12	18.00
Benjamin House Wednesday 6PM ISM'S	17.00
Benjamin House (no specific mtg)	6.00
Benjamin House Wednesday 7:30 p.m.	50.00
Benjamin House Thursday 1 PM AA/Alanon	7.00
Benjamin House Saturday 7AM Cellar Dwellers	10.00
Benjamin House Saturday 10 a.m. How It Works	17.45
Fox River Group - Waterford	50.00
Grove Inc	75.06
Pleasant Prairie/Good Shep. 12x12	72.50
Racine Transitional Care	50.00
Salem Big Book, Fri. 8:00 p.m. UnitedMeth	60.00
We Agnostics Sunday 9 am	15.00

The Seventh Tradition states:

**Every A. A. group ought to be fully
self-supporting,
declining outside contributions...**



Help is Everywhere

District/Club Information

District 17		Racine, Wisconsin
Racine Alano Club 1140 Douglas Ave. Racine, WI 53404 (262) 634-9902	The Grove Club 1037 Grove Ave. Racine, WI 53405 (262) 634-9656	Benjamin House 4848 Highway H Franksville, WI 53126 (262) 886-9611
Benjamin House Website: http://www.benjaminhouseracine.org/		
District 7		Kenosha, Wisconsin
Kenosha Alano Club 630 56 th St. Kenosha, WI 53140 (262) 654-8246	Outcasts 1310 63 rd St. Kenosha, WI 53144	Southport Lighthouse Recovery Club 8017 Sheridan Rd. Kenosha, WI 53143 (262) 653-9800
Kenosha Alano Club Website: http://kenoshaalanoclub.org		
District 36		Burlington 12 x 12 Club
West Racine/Kenosha County		724 N. Pine St. Burlington, WI
District 6		Walworth County Alano Club
Eastern Walworth County		611 E. Walworth St. Delavan, WI 53115 (262) 740-1888
District 12		Eastern Lake County, Illinois
Alano Club of Waukegan 2419 Washington St. Waukegan, IL 60085 (847) 662-9640	Zion-Benton Alano Club 228 Sheridan Rd. Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096 (847) 746-9842	
Alano Club of Waukegan Website: http://alanoclubwaukegan.com/		
Waukegan Hotline: (847) 623-9660		
District 10		Antioch Recovery Club
Western Lake County		311 E Depot St.; Suite C Antioch, IL 60002 (847) 838-1882
Antioch Recovery Club: http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/		
Antioch Hotline: (847) 395-5988		

Alcoholics Anonymous is not affiliated with any club or other outside enterprise

Racine Area Central Office Officers/Steering Committee

Chairperson	Roxann D.
Co-Chairperson	VACANT
Secretary	Courtney K.
Co-Secretary	VACANT
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	Jessica N.
Staffing Coordinator	John B.
Co-Staffing Coordinator	Bruce P.
Newsletter	Kevin B.
Co-Newsletter	VACANT
Hotline Chairperson	Mark S.
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Jon K.
Literature Chairperson	Rachel M.
Co-Literature Chair	Deb K.
Procurement	Steve K.
Webmaster	Courtney L.
Co-Webmaster	Brian K.
Advisor	Darrel S.

3701 Durand Avenue #225B

Racine, WI 53403

(262) 554-6611

24-Hour Hotline: (262) 554-7788

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