

Monthly Reprieve

Volume 11, Issue 1

January 2015

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

Living Step One - One Day at a Time

By: Adam M.

When I started drinking alcohol and using drugs, I felt great. I fit in with others. I felt like I was invincible and I could talk, dance and meet girls. It seemed that almost overnight, I went from church boy, to life of the party.

The problem was - in my inner most core. I knew from my upbringing that the things I was doing were not in line with God's will for my life. Slowly I drifted away from church events, church on Sundays, reading the bible, and prayer because I felt shameful. I didn't like that. My new life of partying and being a free spirit felt much better.

I don't think I ever stopped believing in God, but I would only seek him in times of trouble. Like a get out jail free card. My drinking and drug use ended up getting me in a lot of trouble with the law and eventually landed me in prison.

I missed out on a huge chunk of my children's lives and hurt my loved ones, something fierce, due to the decisions I made.

Upon my release from prison I vowed to never go back to jail again—although I never stopped using.

Somehow I was able to scale back a bit and put up a good front for my family and friends. At that time I also started a business that took off like wild fire.

Money was pouring in hand over fist and like any good alcoholic, I gave myself all of the credit. Something was still missing though. I couldn't find it in nice cars, or motorcycles or shiny stuff, or women. Needless to say, my drinking increased again.

In a matter of months I went from drinking for fun, to I had to drink to feel good about myself and have fun. This went on for many years and got worse and worse. Friends starting dying, my business started failing, my family life was dwindling rapidly. Of course, I never considered the idea that any of this was my fault. I blamed everybody and everything but me. I even started blaming God for my misfortune. I ended up trying church again for a while. And things sort of turned back to normal, but eventually, I went back to my default setting of using and blaming when things weren't going the way I thought they should.

Resumed on Page 3

Things started to get so bad, that I literally could not look at myself in the mirror. I felt like my family would be better off without me. I didn't want to live anymore, but I couldn't bring myself to commit suicide. It had been a while since I had prayed and I started praying for God to just take me in my sleep.

That wasn't working and made me mad, so I decided to plan an overdose. I had everything I needed and was set out to due myself in, when one drink into it, something unexplained came over me and I just started crying like a baby.

I went home from the dope house I was at and flushed and poured everything I had down the drains. I remember that night vividly, I didn't sleep a wink and I prayed for hours on end. GOD I NEED YOU!!!! HELP ME!!! The next morning, I did something completely out of my character. I got up and went to an AA meeting at the Grove and spilled my guts and asked for help and got a sponsor right away. I jumped right in. I learned very quickly that I was my problem, not

Promise One

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through”



January Focus

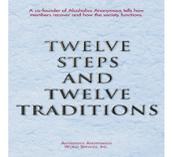
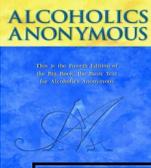
Step One

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable”

Visit RACO online at: www.racinecentraloffice.org

Tradition One

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity”



Our Stories

The Professor and the Paradox

By: Kenneth H.

I am in the public information business. I use that phrase or designation because if I say I am a college professor everybody always has a tendency to run the other way. And when they learn that I am a specialist in English, they have looks of horror for fear they are going to slip up and say “ain’t.” I often wish I sold shoes or insurance or fixed automobiles or plumbed pipes. I would have more friends.

My story is not a great deal different from others – except in a few specific details. All the roads of alcoholism lead to the same place and condition. I suppose I have always been shy, sensitive, fearful, envious, and resentful, which in turn leads one to be arrogantly independent, a defiant personality. I believe I got a Ph.D. degree principally because I wanted to either outdo or defy everybody else. I have published a great deal of scholarly research – I think for the same reason. Such determination, such striving for perfection, is undoubtedly an admirable and practical quality to have, for a while; but when a person mixes such a quality with alcohol, that quality can eventually cut him almost to pieces. At least it did so to me.

I began drinking as a social drinker, in my early twenties. Drinking constituted no problem for me until well after I finished graduate school at the age of thirty. But as the tensions and anxieties of my life began to mount, and the set-backs from perfection began to increase, I finally slipped over the line between moderate drinking and alcoholism. No longer would I drink a few beers or a cocktail or two and let it go at that. No longer did I let months or even weeks go by without liquor. And when drinking, I entered what I now know was the dream-world

of alcoholic fantasy. Then for about five years of progressively worse alcoholic drinking, of filling my life and home with more and more wreckage, it looked as if I were going to ride this toboggan of destruction to the bitter end.

Maybe I didn’t get as bad as some of the others. I must confess that I never went to teach one of my classes drunk or drinking – but I’ve been awfully hung-over. My pattern was to be drunk at night, boil myself out to creep to work in the morning, drunk the next night, boil myself out the next morning, drunk again the next night, boil myself out the next morning. I may not have drunk as much whiskey as some, but there isn’t anybody who’s drunk any more Sal Hepatica than I have!

Now there are all kinds of drunks: melancholy drunks, weeping drunks, traveling drunks, slap-happy and stupid drunks, and a number of other varieties. I was a self-aggrandizing and occasionally violent drunk. You wouldn’t think a little fellow like me could do much damage, but when I’m drunk I’m pure dynamite. I’m not going into any of the details – The University can fire me yet!

I came to believe actually that life was not worth living unless I could drink. I was utterly miserable and sometimes desperate, livings always with a feeling of impending calamity (I knew something was bound to “break loose”). And to do away with such a fear, I would try a little more drinking, with the inevitable result – for by this time one drink would set up in me that irresistible urge to take another and another until I was down or hung-over and in trouble. In the hung-over stage I would vow never to touch another drop, and then be drunk the next night.

I knew at least that there had to be some changes made. I tried to change the time and place and amount of my drinking. I tried to change my environment, my place of living – like most of us who at one time or another think that our trouble is geography rather than whiskey. I even entertained the idea of changing wives. I tried to change everything and everybody, except myself – the only thing I could change. I did not know that it was physically impossible for me to drink moderately. I did not know that my body’s drinking machinery had worn out, and that the parts could not be replaced. I did not know that just one drink made it impossible for me to control my behavior and conduct and my future drinking. I did not know, in short, that I was powerless over alcohol.

My family and my friends sensed or knew these things about me long before I did. Finally, as with most of us in A.A., the crisis came. I realized I had a drinking problem which had to be solved. My wife and a close friend tried to persuade me to contact the only member of Alcoholics Anonymous we knew of in town.

This I refused to do. But I agreed that I would stop drinking altogether, maintaining stoutly and sincerely that I could and would solve this problem “on my own.” I would feel much better doing it that way, I insisted. I stayed sober for two entire weeks! Then I pitched a “lulu” – a terrific drunken affair in which I became violently insane. I also landed in the City Jail. I don’t know exactly what happened on this bender, but here are some things that did happen which I was told about subsequently. First, the officers who had come out to my house did not want to take me in – but I insisted!

Also, I insisted that they wait in the



Resumed on Page 3



Living Step One - One Day at a Time

By: Adam M.
(from page 1)



The Professor and the Paradox

By: Kenneth H.
(from page 2)

...not alcohol and drugs or people, places or things. I think for most people, that's a hard pill to swallow. However, for me it made perfect sense when it was explained to me, alcohol was but a symptom. Oh what a relief.

The next thing that was explained to me was that I needed to come to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I was like, "this is easy." "I totally believe in God, check that one off the list". Next was, we made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

I didn't quite get the, "as we understood Him" part, but "okay, let's do this". I figured everyone knew who God was. The creator of heaven and earth.

Moving forward working the steps and working with others, I found I knew very little about God. Sure I believed in Him, but did I ever fully surrender to Him. Most importantly I learned that there is a huge difference between believing in God and having a personal relationship with Him.

That is what I had been searching for my entire life. It didn't happen overnight, but through an awful lot of ups and downs and ins and outs, I slowly started giving all of it to Him.

My spiritual house started to get in order when I gave Him all of me. When I sit back and think about it, I am absolutely amazed at how much my life has changed since I let God run it, instead of me always trying to be the director.

There are times I catch myself taking it back, but the cool thing is, that I can recognize it quickly and hit my knees, ask for help and give it all right back.

It is in that moment that I can truly know peace and match calamity with serenity.

...that they wait in the living room while I went back to the bedroom and changed into my best and newest suit (with socks and tie to match), so that I would look nice in jail! I don't remember the ride downtown, but when I "came to" in the jail corridor, I didn't like the looks of the little cage they were shoving me into, so I took issue about that with three officers and indulged in some fisticuffs with all three of them at once – each one of them twice my size and armed with a gun and a blackjack.

Now what kind of thinking and acting is that? If that isn't insanity, or absurd grandiosity, or some sort of mental illness, what is it? Because I yelled so loud and made such noise, I ended up downstairs under the concrete in a place they call "solitary." (That's a fine place—now isn't it?—for a college professor to spend the night!)

Two days later I was willing to try A.A., which I had only vaguely heard of a few months before. I called at the home of the man who started the A.A. group in my town, and I went humbly with him to an A.A. meeting the following night.

As I look back, something must have happened to me during those two days. Some forces must have been at work which I do not understand. But on those two days – between jail and A.A.—something happened to me that had never happened before. I repeat, I don't know what it was. Maybe I had made a "decision" – just a part of Step Three (I had made lots of promises but never a decision) – though it seems to me that I was at the time too confused and fogged up to make much of one. Maybe it was the guiding hand of God, or (as we Baptists say) the Holy Spirit. I like to think that it was just that, followed by my own attempt to take the Twelve Steps to recovery.

Whatever it was, I have been in A.A. and I have been dry ever since. That was more than six years ago. A.A. does not function in a way which people normally expect it to.

For example, instead of using our "will power," as everyone outside A.A. seems to think we do, we give up our wills to a Higher Power, place our lives in hands – invisible hands – stronger than ours. Another example: If twenty or thirty of us real drunks get away from home and meet in a clubroom downtown on Saturday night, the normal expectation is that all thirty of us will surely get roaring drunk, but it doesn't work out that way, does it? Or talking about whisky and old drinking days (one would normally think) is sure to raise a thirst, but it doesn't work that way either, does it? Our program and procedures seem to be in many ways contrary to normal opinion. And so, in connection with this idea, let me pass on what I consider the four paradoxes of how A.A. works. (A paradox, you probably already know, is a statement which appears to be false, but which, upon careful examination, in certain instances proves to be true.)

1. We **SURRENDER TO WIN.**
2. We **GIVE AWAY TO KEEP.**
3. We **SUFFER TO GET WELL.**
4. We **DIE TO LIVE**

For further explanation on these 4 concepts, please check out:
Experience, Strength & Hope (page 151)



Events and Service Notes

RACO Service Opportunities

As we enter 2015, several positions on the RACO Steering Committee are now available!

If you might be interested in one of the many positions (see page 6 for committee positions), please e-mail raconewsletter@gmail.com



Upcoming Events & Activities

Saturday, Jan. 3rd

White Elephant Gift Exchange
The Grove Club
8:30pm
(Show up w/ wrapped gift Valued at \$5+ and be ready to exchange for some fun gifts!)

Fridays in January

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

Anytime/Anywhere

Women’s Sober Living House
Oxford House
Interested, call 262-833-5010

Detox Help Needed

Volunteers are needed for detox meetings at St. Lukes Hospital. 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 email raconewsletter@gmail.com or contact Roxann D.

Reprieve Mission Statement

The Racine Area Central Office's newsletter, Monthly Reprieve, is published to foster unity and to facilitate communication among A.A. Members, groups and districts within the Racine Area Central Office's service area.

Monthly Reprieve aims to be instrumental in carrying the A.A. Message. This monthly newsletter seeks to publish A.A.-related material, including personal stories of experience, strength and hope. Material published

is under the oversight of the Racine Area Central Office's Steering Committee.

Nothing published in the Reprieve should be thought of as a statement of Racine Area Central Office or A.A. Policy. Finally, the publication shall not constitute endorsement by the newsletter itself, by the Racine Area Central Office, Districts, local groups, or A.A. As a whole.

(To submit an A.A. related event or activity for a future Reprieve issue, please e-mail raconewsletter@gmail.com with date, time and location).



Financial Reports

Group Donations

GROUP	Nov	Dec	YTD	GROUP	Nov	Dec	YTD
Anonymous Donations	14.50	21.95	213.60	Covenant Tuesday 9:30am Fresh Start	30.00		30.00
YTD Memorial Donations			1,365.00	Covenant Beginners Thursday			30.00
Misc Donations			25.25	Convenant By The Book Thursday 8:00pm			30.00
Alanon - New Beginnings			50.00	Covenant Combined			300.00
Alano 7:00am Daily Reflections		50.00	100.00	Fox River Group - Waterford	50.00		164.00
Alano 10:00am Sunday			50.00	Grove Sunday 10:00am			100.00
Alano 8:00pm Sunday Big Book		50.00	100.00	Grove Sunday 7:30 Speaker Meeting			174.00
Alano 6:00pm Monday Coffee Hour			179.40	Grove Wednesday 10:00am	10.00		10.00
Alano 8:00pm Wednesday		39.00	89.25	Grove Friday 10:00am 12X12			125.00
Alano Friday Night Candlelight			50.00	Grove Friday 5:30pm Big Book			100.00
Benj. House - No Meeting Specified			44.00	Grove Saturday 10:00am			100.00
Benjamin House - People, Places & Things	19.00	5.00	65.10	Grove Saturday 7:00pm			60.00
Benj. House Sunday 8:00am AA/ Alanon			233.00	Kenosha Alano (no specifics)			7.00
Benj. House 10:00am Sunday Dwnstrs	19.00		226.00	Kenosha Big Book Study - Monday 4:30pm			440.00
Benj. House 10:00am Sunday New-comers	50.00		123.00	Kenosha Courage to Change (Aurora)			125.00
Benj. House 10:00am Monday			12.00	Kenosha Grass Roots - Saturday 10:00am			250.00
Benj. House 6:00pm Monday 12X12	16.00	11.00	185.25	Kenosha Happier Hour		200.00	200.00
Benj. House 6:00pm Monday Women's			3.00	Kenosha Here and Now			50.00
Benj. House 7:30pm Monday			52.00	Kenosha St. Mary's Lutheran Sunday Grp		50.00	100.00
Benj. House Tuesday 10:00am			78.05	Kenosha Thursday Night South Side / BB			25.00
Benj. House Tuesday 6:00pm AA/ Alanon			50.75	Outcasts			50.00
Benj. House Wednesday 6:00pm ISM'S	16.00	15.00	135.50	Paddock Lake 12 Step, Monday 7:00pm			144.00
Benj. House Thursday 10:00am			47.00	Paddock Lake Tuesday Came to Believe		15.00	35.00
Benj. House Thursday 1:00pm AA/ Alanon	5.00		55.00	Paddock Lake Miracle on 75th, Wednesday			70.00
Benj. House Thursday 6:00pm Big Book	12.00	11.00	80.25	Pleasant Prairie Good Shepherd 12X12			117.00
Benj. House Friday 10:00am			51.95	Racine Transitional Care	50.00	50.00	600.00
Benj. House Friday 6:00 Young at Heart		15.80	15.80	RACO Mon - Sat 12:15 Group		75.00	75.00
Benj. House Friday 7:30pm	5.15		70.15	RACO Mon 7:30pm Pair of Glasses			20.00
Benj. House Sat. 7am Cellar Dwellers	11.00	10.00	139.00	RACO Wednesday 7:00pm Big Book	50.00		75.00
Benj. House Saturday 7am Upstairs			157.00	Salem Big Book Friday 8:00pm United Meth			40.00
Benj. House Saturday 10:00am Big Book		35.00	35.00	St. Andrew's Fireside Group			30.00
Benj. House Saturday 6:30pm			18.00	Twin Lakes Sunday 8:00pm (Calv Cong)			100.00
Birthday Club - Bruce P.		33.00	33.00	Union Grove Visiting Vets Group 75			100.00
Other YTD Birthday Club			95.00	Untion Grove United Church of Christ Wed			20.00
				DONATION TOTALS	357.65	686.75	8,123.30

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	Club Breakaway 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	Rachel S.
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	VACANT
Staffing Coordinator	John B.
Co-Staffing Coordinator	VACANT
Newsletter	Kevin B.
Co-Newsletter	Steve H.
Hotline Chairperson	Mark S.
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Jon K.
Literature Chairperson	Rachel S.
Co-Literature Chair	VACANT
Procurement	Jenny L.
Webmaster	Courtney L.
Co-Webmaster	Brian K.
Advisor	Dawn S.
Advisor	Darrel S.

3701 Durand Avenue #225

Racine, WI 53403

(262) 554-6611

24-Hour Hotline: (262) 554-7788

**Interested in receiving the Monthly Newsletter through e-mail?
Become a subscriber today by sending an e-mail to raconewsletter@gmail.com**