

Monthly Reprieve

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RACINE AREA CENTRAL OFFICE'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

The solution has always been the same *by: Dave N.*

I was 38 years old when I arrived at the doors of AA. The previous twenty-five years of drinking had yielded a cost that was finally too much for me to continue to pay. My drinking, and all the attendant alcoholic thinking and actions that came along with it, had brought me to a place of unimaginable pain, desperation, hopelessness, and an absolute conviction that my life up to that point had amounted to nothing and was spinning into an abyss, a place from which I could not return.

I had spent the morning and early afternoon on the day I quit drinking in a bar on Taylor Ave after getting drunk the previous night and having a fight with my girlfriend, not surprisingly, about my drinking. My girlfriend at the time was in recovery and trying hard to stay sober. She never pushed the whole recovery bit on me, but would leave her Big Book out where it could easily be seen. She went to meetings on a regular basis and worked with other alcoholics when the opportunity presented itself. She struggled from time to time, but never resorted to picking up the booze or the drugs.

One day she was asked by one of the guys I worked with if she could help him with his drinking and she agreed. She told him she would take him to a meeting and introduce him to some other men in AA who could help him. She also gave him a meeting schedule and told him that if he needed a ride to a meeting she would be happy to help him out with that, too. For the next several weeks she would pick my friend up and give him a ride to the meetings, nothing more, and nothing less. My insecurity and insane jealousy convinced me that

her kindness and helpfulness for this other alcoholic was merely a ruse for some other sinister behavior.

Over those few weeks my jealousy boiled and seethed inside me until I could no longer contain it and I confronted her. In a drunken state I had accused her of infidelity and said horrible things about her and my friend. I left the house angry and drunk and went to the bar. When I returned home I confronted her again and asked why she was helping this other guy when she could plainly see that I, her boyfriend, desperately needed help too. The answer I received was simple and straightforward, "Because you didn't ask" Drunk and sobbing I asked for help. Within minutes I was on the phone and talking with another alcoholic. That day I went to my first AA meeting.

I had tried many times in the past to stop drinking on my own, never with any success, and never for more than a day or two, and didn't hold out much hope that this time would fare any differently. I found though, that the longer I stayed around other sober people, not only did I make some good, well intentioned friends, I found that the obsession to drink began to ebb and before long I had strung together a couple of months without a drink. I began to feel better physically and my mind began to clear, a new world was opening up for me and I began to feel hope, an emotion that for many years previous seemed impossible. I went to meetings three times a day, every day, I began to read the literature, I got a sponsor, I began to immerse myself in the AA way

of life. There was one aspect of all this that I questioned, and struggled with; a relationship with God. Don't get me wrong, I prayed, I worked with other alcoholics, I worked the steps, but there was a certain arrogance on my part, in that I came to believe in God, but my dependence on him was superficial at best. Outwardly I thanked and praised him, but inwardly I was taking credit for all the success I was having in AA and my life. There was no true dependence. AA had led me to a God of my understanding, a God that had delivered me from the obsession to drink, and yet my ego and pride refused to allow that power into any other area of my life. I was still running the show, still carrying God around in my back pocket like a "get out of jail free" card. This way of thinking and acting had its price.

Around eight years sober a situation took place in my life that shook me to the core. I found myself feeling profound pain and loss, hopelessness, and a loss of direction, not unlike that I felt when I first stopped drinking. The day came when I found myself seriously considering a drink to ease the pain. I was terrified and felt utterly alone. I fell to my knees and begged God for help with all the sincerity of a dying man and like before he was there. The pain was still there, but the obsession to drink had vanished.

Since that day I have invited God into my life every day. Working the steps and my participation in AA and my life has taken on a whole new dimension as a result. Thank God for AA.

Sixth Concept

"The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative in most world service matters should be exercised by trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board".



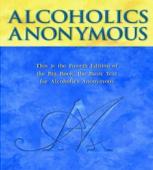
June Focus

Step Six

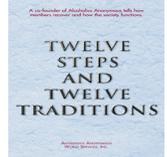
"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character"

Sixth Tradition

"An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose"



Our Stories



Flora's Story: Finding a New Freedom

By: Flora S.

My name is Flora and I am an alcoholic. On June 22nd I had my last drunken stupor. It was my little cousin's graduation party. It was about 12:30 pm I started drinking. Hours went by, not one of them did I stop drinking. It was now about, maybe 6 pm, wow I can't really remember. What I do remember is piling 3 of my kids, my nephew and one of their friends in my van. My van that was already beat up from of my other drunken stupors.

Off we went to a Racine Raiders game at Horlick Field, and next to me in my cup holder was my water bottle full of mostly alcohol. The game went on and luckily I only sipped on my bottle. Game over and off we go, me still in the driver seat. By the grace of God, the kids made it safely home. Well me, I finished up my bottle and off to a birthday cook-out I went. There I finished off a couple more bottles, so I was told. I'm sure I made a fool of myself. At this point I've already smoked a blunt and also taken some pills. I didn't want to fall asleep. Time passed and I was off again, behind the wheel, on my way to Dicky's Bar where I drank even more. By this time I'm crying and arguing with my boyfriend at the time.

After a few drinks and an argument that wasn't over, we headed to an after set. Of course I'm still driving because I don't like leaving my van anywhere. I don't know when I left. How I got to my boyfriend's house or even when I fell asleep. I woke up at 10:00 pm because I'd promised my kids I'd take them to Great America and I had already cancelled before. So with the taste of whiskey in my mouth, off to Great America we went. I do not recommend anyone get on a roller coaster hung over. We left after only a few rides. They were tired and all I had was two slices of

bread I thought would save me. Well soak up the alcohol in my stomach, but no luck. It was this day, Sunday; I realized it had been too much. It wasn't hitting something with my van in February driving drunk after a different argument with a different boyfriend because I was flirting drunk. It wasn't all the shots and drinks I had with a couple lines and throwing up all over the wall at the bar. It wasn't the day my kids asked what were they going to eat and I threw ham sandwiches out the window. It wasn't putting my daughter's boyfriend in a headlock and taking his truck window off track drunk again. It wasn't even all the times that my kids took my keys so I wouldn't drive drunk.

It was Sunday June 22nd when I realized I was driving under the influence of alcohol drunk with not only my kids in the car, but someone else too. It was that Sunday night I realized what I now know as powerlessness over alcohol. I knew something had to change. I needed to change. I had a problem. Better said I have a problem on my own, I can't stop. I wouldn't be able to stop if I didn't ask for help. Asking for help wasn't something I was good at or even wanted to do. I swallowed all I could and called the one person I knew or thought would understand and could help. He brought me to a 4:30 Monday night meeting. I remember sitting there hearing everyone's story. At times thinking I am nothing like them. Maybe I wasn't so bad. Still hearing and not really listening all I could think about was the beer in my fridge. I went home poured some out and drank some. Smoked some weed. Actually a couple more times that week. Finally Thursday I decided Friday June 27th would be my sobriety date. Something I would give my mom for her birthday. The first 90 days I wanted to die - I cried

every day. I went to over 90 meetings in 90 days. I got a sponsor. I heard and listened to everyone's stories. I shared mine, crying almost every time. It was at almost 4 months I sat in a meeting and the topic was "what has God done for you?" I realized for the first time in 24 years I was okay with being alive for me. I was enough. For almost 24 years I wondered why I didn't die with my mom. Why her husband of six months let me live. I imagined it was because one day my kids would be examples to show someone you can have a bull shit story and still be great examples.

It was at this 4:30 meeting I realized I was alive for ME. I was enough. That's what God had done for me. That is what God is still doing for me. Why do I keep coming back? It's the only way to repay my sponsor and everyone else who has helped me. I come for the peace and serenity I get to feel now. Not always, but more than I ever have. I come for the smiles, the love, the laughter. I come because I have a responsibility to my AA friends. I come to share my good and bad times, in hopes I can help someone. In hopes someone can relate and know they are not alone -just as those who were before me; the ones who kept coming back and gave to me. I come back because I know where I belong now. I come back because there is so much to learn and grow from. I come for the acceptance. I come where I am not judged. I come for the big hugs. I come because they loved me when I couldn't love or forgive myself. Most of all I come because I believe this is where I belong and where God wants me.



Emotional Sobriety

By: Courtney K.

It's been brought to my attention that I am emotionally drunk. If I were to be completely honest, it's possible that I have been in an emotional blackout for at least a few months. When I told my husband, "I think I'm in an emotional drunk," it shocked me when he said, "yeah it seems like you've been that way for a loooong time." Emphasis on the loooooong. Wait..what?!

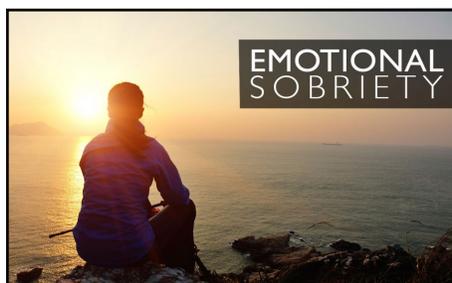
He wasn't supposed to have known that. This was supposed to be a surprise to him, the one I perhaps take it out on the most, my punching bag.

I had a baby eight weeks ago. I love my daughter so much, she is beautiful and a blessing. She is also a very difficult baby. She's a crier. Those of you who have had a crier or known a crier know exactly what I mean.

I want to fix her and heal her. I want to know what is wrong with her so I can make her stop crying. But I can't. I've taken her to the doctor and gotten her some medication which does help. I rock her, feed her, sing to her, coo at her, carry her, put her down, pick her up and change her all day long while trying to give her big sister attention, too. But this isn't really about her crying. It's about my lack of a reprieve and ability to

handle life on life's terms.

It's been hard to get to meetings (not an excuse) and it's very tough to hold a conversation on the phone due to little children constantly needing me (not an excuse). I need to be superwoman and handle this all, after all I signed up for this, right?



When I look at the clock and realize the next meeting starts in ten minutes, I find some reason not to go, like dinner is almost ready or the baby needs a bath or the ever believable (kind of-not really) "oh I can go tomorrow." As if this house wouldn't survive without me. As if my sobriety deserves to be on the back burner. As if my daughters don't deserve to have a spiritually fit mother. What really happens at that moment is my head tells me that I can't tell people that I'm crazy and I can't share my dark and twisted thoughts with you, the people who have saved my life and loved me even when I've said some really

sick things. It gets ugly without this program. Especially in sobriety.

I have found myself questioning every area of my life. And I mean EVERY AREA, leaving me like a puddle on the ground, paralyzed by fear. There hasn't been any trust in God, very minimal fellowship, service work and recovery. And I wonder why I'm in turmoil. Half measures avail us nothing.

So here I go, the chronic emotional relapse to face the group and tell on myself. To ask for help. I'm struggling and it's hard. I do believe that raising children is one of if not the toughest job in the world so it's understandable that I'm stressed, tired and worn.

But that makes it even more necessary to run to the program of AA and utilize my tools. As soon as I call another alcoholic there is instant relief. Suddenly, I don't want to talk or think about my problems. They mention something that hits the exact note I needed to hear. They make me laugh. They provide me with relief. They remind me of why I stay in Alcoholics Anonymous. And as always, I keep coming back.



Events and Service Notes

When Anyone, Anywhere Reaches Out For Help, I Want The Hand Of A.A. Always To Be There ...

Are you an AA member with the desire to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic? Your service is needed by the District 17 Special Needs/Accessibility Committee. No prior knowledge is needed, and there are tons of ways in which your service is needed. Be on the lookout for the volunteer signups like the one below circulating at the meetings, or bring this form to *your* meeting/group, or contact the Carly R at racinespecialneeds@gmail.com for other ways to contribute.

Whom We Serve:

- ✓ Physically disabled
- ✓ Deaf & hearing impaired
- ✓ Blind & visually impaired
- ✓ Learning or reading impaired
- ✓ Seniors and homebound
- ✓ Language barrier
- ✓ Single parents requiring childcare.
- ✓ Encourage Big Book tape study meetings in each district.
- ✓ Encourage groups to provide childcare.
- ✓ Update special-needs information on Where & When's.
- ✓ Bring meetings into the home, hospital, or long-term care facilities; encourage

How We Serve:

- ✓ Provide interpreters for meetings and events.
- ✓ Provide Braille A.A. literature and programs for special events.
- ✓ Assist the physically disabled at events; provide rides in special cases.
- ✓ Encourage wheelchair-accessible meetings and events.
- ✓ districts and groups to support regular meetings in special-needs facilities.
- ✓ Provide literature and hold workshops on special needs.
- ✓ Explore other special needs; work with GSO and other districts & areas.

Special Needs/Accessibility Committee: Contact: Carly R (chair)
racinespecialneeds@gmail.com

And For That, I Am Responsible !

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.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Fridays in June

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

Saturday, June 6th

RACO Steering Committee Mtg
Racine Area Central Office
Racine, WI
9:30am - 10:30am

Grove Picnic Planning Mtg.
Grove Club, Racine, WI
11:00am

Saturday, June 20th

Grove Picnic Planning Mtg.
(Another)
Grove Club, Racine, WI
11:00am

July 2nd—July 5th

International AA Convention
Atlanta, GA

Saturday, July 11th

Grove Club Picnic
Pritchard Park
11:30 - 6:00ish



Racine Area Central Office FINANCIALS

Donation Detail	May
Anonymous donations	25.80
Benjamin House - People, Places & Things	26.75
Benjamin House, 10:00am Sun. Newcomers	7.00
Benjamin House, 10:00 a.m. Sun. Dwnstrs	20.00
Benjamin House, 6PM Monday, 12x12	14.00
Benjamin House Saturday 7AM Cellar Dwellers	10.00
Benjamin House Saturday 10AM Big Book	6.00
Grove Friday Night 5:30 Big Book	60.00
Grove Sunday 7:30 speaker Meeting	41.00
Racine Transitional Care	50.00
RACO, Weds. 7:00 BB	50.00
RACO, Saturday, 6:15 Literature Meeting	100.00
Union Grove United Church of Christ WED pm	20.00
Total Donations	430.55

Additional RACO Notes



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 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!



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	VACANT
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	Jessica H.
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 S.
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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