

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 Wonder of We *by Dave N.*

My alcoholic ego would love to take credit for the life I've been given the last 18 years, but the truth is that without the fellowship of AA I would be long ago dead, or worse yet, still living under the alcoholic rock I was pulled out from under.

I came to Alcoholics Anonymous a broken man, desperate and lonely, empty of almost any spiritual life, an alcoholic aberration of the person God created.

Married and divorced three times because of alcoholism and infidelity, a father of two beautiful children who loved their dad, but suffered because of his alcoholism, a host of inebriate associates, but no true friends, I had no idea, no clue, how to function as a husband, father, or friend.

Finances in ruins, living month to month, robbing Peter to pay Paul, my financial situation was in dire straits to say the least.

Vaguely sensing my situation was somehow related to my drinking and my behavior when drunk, I tried several times to quit on my own – an exercise in futility that always ended in abject failure.

At the suggestion of my then girlfriend and after a particularly rough patch of drinking, I called a person in AA and that day I went



to my first meeting. I was scared and not even sure AA could help me. I was convinced, however, that I couldn't stop on my own. I was still drunk when I attended that meeting, but no one asked me to leave. I sat through that meeting and listened to people share their experiences and their message of hope. I was told

things like, "Just keep coming back", "We'll love you until you learn to love yourself", "One day at a time" and most importantly, "You don't have to do this alone". That first meeting was over 18 yrs. ago and since that day I have not had a drink.

The wonder of "We" had begun for me on that very day. I had left that meeting with little more than hope, but what a gift I'd been given. Hope that what they said was true, that I could, with the help of "We", never put a drink to my lips ever again.

As the months went on I struggled often with wanting to drink and each time I did as those in AA suggested, pick up the phone and call another alcoholic, I was spared another drunken episode.

I was retired so I went to three meetings a day, at first because I had to. All I knew was that when I was around

Continued on page 4

Sixth Tradition

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



June Focus

Dear God, I am ready for Your help In removing from me the defects of character Which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery. Help me to continue being honest with myself & Guide me toward spiritual & mental health.

Sixth Step

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

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ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUSIt is the first step
to the road to the 12
steps of recovery.

Our Stories

Step Six: Dropping the Rock *by Tim Powers*

A 12-Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous with how
members recover and how the society functions.TWELVE
STEPS
AND
TWELVE
TRADITIONSAlcoholics Anonymous
World Services, Inc.

With each Step you take in Alcoholics Anonymous, you are digging deeper within yourself and getting at the root causes that have kept you stuck in your addiction.

The Sixth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous is an excellent example of that point and is often seen as THE Step that separates the men from the boys (or the women from the girls). It is during this step that you must be completely willing and ready to *have the God of your understanding* remove the character defects.

As with every other Step in AA, the Sixth Step will challenge you to go to places within yourself that you may fear. Overcoming an addiction to alcohol (or any addiction for that matter) isn't easy by any stretch of the imagination. It may seem that once you conquer a mountain, a larger one looms on the horizon and a new set of challenges threatens to throw you off course. You may be tempted to try and bypass this Step or try to go through the motions and give a half-hearted effort, but with working the Steps must be all in. Half-measures won't help you truly leave your alcohol addiction behind.

The crux of the Sixth Step of Alcoholics Anonymous is addressing our character defects and having the willingness of the God or Higher Power of our understanding to remove them from our lives. When we look at the word character defects we automatically think the worst of ourselves and feel that once again we have to drag ourselves through the proverbial mud and broadcast to the world all of our faults.

If you are approaching the Sixth Step it may seem like you are putting yourself through another round of personal torment and torture for the sake of a recovery that may be uncertain. However, it is important to understand what character defects truly are and what approach that you can take in order to make the process less daunting.

A simple definition of a character defect is a fault of failure to meet a certain standard. Taking a look at this description of the word, it can easily be seen how the meaning focuses on where a person is flawed and has a specific character trait or traits that need improvement. Perhaps the biggest thing to remember about character defects is that **is does not mean you are a bad person**. It should go without saying, but we as hu-

man being are not perfect creatures, and each and every one of us has defects or flaws that we must contend with throughout our lifetime.

Perhaps a better way to understand the concept of character defects is through changing how we view and define it. Instead of seeing your faults and failings as defects, you should frame it as shortcomings that must be addressed and worked on. By changing the way you view things, it will help build a sense of esteem and character as you continue working your program of recovery. The bottom line reason why you work the Sixth Step is beautifully illustrated in The Twelve Steps and Traditions:

So Step Six – “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character” – is A.A.’s way of stating the best possible attitude one can take in order to make a beginning on this lifetime job. This does not mean that we expect all our character defects to be lifted out of us as the drive to drink was. A few of them may be, but with most of them we shall have to be content with patient improvement. The words “entirely ready” underline the fact that we want to aim at the very best we know or can learn. (p.65) (excerpt from <https://sobriation.com/the-sixth-step-of-alcoholics-anonymous/>)



“Wonder of We”, continued from page 1

AA's I didn't have the obsession to drink. Once again the power of "We" worked it's magic. I was slowly losing my fear of social situations and becoming more open to meeting with new people. My sponsor suggested that I do some service work, actually he volunteered me for service work, and I met others new to the program whose sponsors volunteered them as well. My feelings of loneliness and sense of apartness began to fade. The wonder of "We" was infiltrating my life in a most wonderful and exciting way. I began to see life as so much more than an endless stream of inebriate incidents and accidents and hope for a life worth living was becoming a reality.

I still needed to treat my alcoholism though. I learned that my recovery depended on so much more than putting the plug in the jug. I had caused so much damage to the relationships with the people in my life while drinking it seemed like I could never make that right. And I couldn't, not by me alone.

I was still full of fear and self-dishonesty, most of which I could not see on my own. Even without a drink selfishness and self-centeredness clouded my judgements and drove my actions. With the help of a good sponsor and a thorough 4th & 5th step I began to see how my life, as orchestrated by me, was never going to be a success. This brought the need for a relationship with a God of my understanding squarely to the forefront. I was not sure how that could be done, but as with all other lessons learned here, it was the shared experiences of those who had gone before me that ignited my desire to seek out God in my life. This has been the greatest gift the fellowship of "We" has given me; the key to living life a day at a time in symphony with a loving and benevolent God.

Over the years I've experienced life as it came; a very emotionally painful divorce, the death of my father, the deaths of beloved AA's, the suicides of two of my sponsees, and a host of other life's ups and downs. Through each and every experience the loving arms of AA were wrapped around me, offering comfort and hope. Never once did I have to face these experiences alone.

Even though I didn't know it, I was part of the "We" from day one, from the moment I asked for help. Over the years I've come to believe in the wonder and power of "We". I also realized there was an awesome responsibility connected to being a part of that.

The "We", the fellowship of AA is the lifeblood of every recovering alcoholic. We cannot recover alone. I came to AA a drunk. You, the fellowship, the "We" taught me how to become a father, a husband, a son, a brother. It taught me that "love" and "gratitude" were actions to be practiced every day in my life, but most importantly, taught me how to find a God of my understanding so that I can continue to become the person He created me to be. For that I am eternally grateful.

Today it is so much more than not drinking, it is about living the "We" and helping the next suffering alcoholic, giving back that which was so freely given to me.

Today I am a father, husband, friend, fellow AA, a participant in life and the lives of those around me. All this I owe to God and the "We" of AA.



Events and Service Notes

RACO Volunteers Needed!!

The Racine Area Central Office has unfortunately had to close its doors during some daytime hours over the past few weeks due to a shortage of volunteers to staff the desk. If you or someone you sponsor has an interest in getting trained to staff the desk and be of service, please call RACO at (262) 554-6611 and we will get you in touch with John B.—RACO's Staffing Coordinator. No one who needs the services of RACO should ever be turned away due to a shortage of volunteers! Be of service to your central office today! :-)

Kenosha / Racine Oxford Houses

Are you in early recovery or know someone who is? The Oxford House concept, which emphasizes that "together we can democratically run a clean and sober house" is helpful to gaining the strength and support to achieve long-term sobriety.

With separate houses for both men and women, there are Oxford Houses in both Kenosha as well as

Racine—providing the support and accountability to help in early recovery. For more information, or to request an interview, please call

(262) 800-3840 or visit www.oxfordhouse.org for a history, vacancies, locations and applications. Let the Oxford House help you or someone you love get a jumpstart into a happy and healthy life of clean and sober living today!

RACO Steering Committee Meetings

The Racine Area Central Office's 'Steering Committee' meets on the first **WEDNESDAY** of every month at RACO (6:30pm). The steering committee invites anyone who may be interested in Area 75 and District 17 events and happenings.

Please note the NEW day/time of the Steering Committee meetings—as they used to be

held on Saturday mornings! 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!

Upcoming Events & Activities

Grove Club Activities

- Saturday, May 6, 12:30-2:30 Cinco de Mayo potluck—Bring a dish to pass!
- Saturday, May 13: Membership Meeting at noon
- Saturday, May 20: picnic committee meeting at 11:15am
- Saturday, May 27: DANCE! DANCE! DANCE!



Kenosha Outcast

MC-
Anniversary Poker
Run/Picnic on June

3 at Petrifying Springs Park-area 5.
Poker Run leaves at noon.
Food Served at 3pm.
Speaker meeting at 8pm.
Dance to follow at the OCMC Afterbar 1310 63rd St.



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 724 N. Pine St. Burlington, WI
West Racine/Kenosha County		
District 6		Walworth County Alano Club 611 E. Walworth St. Delavan, WI 53115 (262) 740-1888
Eastern Walworth County		
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 311 E Depot St.; Suite C Antioch, IL 60002 (847) 838-1882
Western Lake County		
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	Toni M.
Co-Chairperson	Dyland W.
Secretary	Deb K.
Co-Secretary	Alicia E.
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	Tom M.
Staffing Coordinator	Cynthia P.
Co-Staffing Coordinator	Larissa H.
Newsletter	Stacy K.
Co-Newsletter	VACANT
Hotline Chairperson	VACANT
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Jason A.
Literature Chairperson	Rachel M.
Co-Literature Chair	John B.
Procurement	Wes D.
Webmaster	Brian K.
Co-Webmaster	VACANT
Advisor	Darrel S.
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