

Monthly Reprieve

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June 2020

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

Did You know....

Due to the Covid-19 virus, some meeting places have re-opened but our great community has created **Zoom** meetings. These virtual meetings can be accessed on a phone, a tablet or a Computer. These **Zoom** meetings will allow us all to stay in touch with one another during these trying times. Please check on your friends, sponsors, and sponsees' during this difficult time. If you need help or info about accessing **Zoom** meetings that would be the perfect reason to reach out to your A.A. community network. Please visit the website to see which clubs and meetings are in person and which are still online @ www.racinecentraloffice.org May we all continue to practice faith, love and tolerance during this difficult time.



Tradition 6

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



June Focus

Sixth Step Prayer

“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.”

Step 6

“We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

Step 6

In *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, the guidebook written by one of AA's founders, the chapter on Step 6 begins:

*'This is the step that separates the men from the boys....' So declares a well-loved clergyman ... who goes on to explain that any person capable of enough willingness and honesty to try repeatedly Step Six on all his faults—without any reservations whatever—has indeed come a long way spiritually....*¹

"The step that separates the men from the boys." No doubt in today's more gender-focused society he would add, "...and the women from the girls." Or maybe he would just say that it's where the rubber meets the road, for no other Step so challenges us when it comes to the sustained effort required to "practice these principles in all our affairs."

Why this is so might not be immediately apparent when we first encounter Step 6. It certainly wasn't apparent in the early days of AA, for the "Big Book," *Alcoholics Anonymous*, devotes just one short paragraph to it. In effect it says that willingness is indispensable and that if we're not completely ready to give up a character defect, then we should ask God to help us become willing.

That doesn't sound like much. But anyone who has lived the program for any length of time knows—as Bill W. learned during the years between the Big Book and the 12&12—that becoming willing or "entirely ready" often requires substantial persistent effort. God doesn't do all the work; we must do our part.

Exactly what our part involves varies for each of us depending upon the particular character defect, how attached we are to it, and whether we believe the benefits of practicing it outweigh the costs of giving it up. Some defects seem pretty harmless—at least in comparison with others that are worse. And some seem so much a part of us, or so useful in getting what we think we need in life, that we might not even recognize them as defects until we're sick and tired of the suffering they cause.

So just what are these character defects that the Step is concerned with?

Some people equate them with the "Seven Deadly Sins," otherwise known as Pride, Greed, Envy, Lust, Sloth, Anger, and Gluttony. (See the note below on Sin.²) That's not a bad place to start, for if we look closely at more specific defects we usually find that they are manifestations of one or more of the seven. Self-centeredness, for instance, is connected with pride...and with greed...and with each of the other 5 as well.

Other sources have compiled extensive lists of character defects, such as the one linked in the notes below.³ Studying such lists and discussing them with your sponsor and others can be helpful, but in working Step 6 you will develop your own list that applies specifically to you. And as you continue working the Step over the years, that list will probably grow—though as we progress in recovery we usually get free of most of the worst defects. All of the character defects in these lists describe habitual attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors that cause unnecessary conflict with other people, within ourselves, and with the God of our understanding. Often they have evolved from survival strategies that we learned in childhood. They may have served a purpose at one time, but later in life they interfere with developing healthy relationships and with learning more effective strategies for dealing with life's challenges. Yet we cling to them like a starving child clings to a tiny crust of bread, fearing to let go and take the bowl full of strange food he's not sure of. Giving them up is an act of faith.

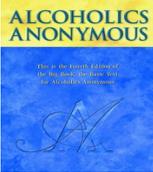
Becoming entirely ready, then, is often achieved as the consequence of a painful struggle with each defect similar to the struggle that brought us to the program in the first place. Most of us are not willing to give up the worst of them until we can no longer stand the pain they cause and have exhausted our efforts to manage them. Thus the process of recovery requires persistent effort to identify patterns of thinking and behavior that no longer work for us.

We must be willing to continue the process of thorough self-examination that we started in Step 4, and to continue discussing our findings with trusted others as we learned in Step 5. We must be willing to reconsider all of our habitual thoughts and behaviors in light of the character defects that we are beginning to recognize: are we really being nice, or are we being passively aggressive? We must be willing to acknowledge the harmful consequences of some behaviors and attitudes that we've learned to rely on, such as acting out anger to get our way. And we must be willing to keep an open mind to learning new and better ways of doing things, and to letting others show us how.

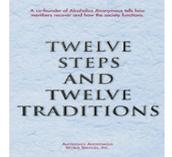
How do we know that we're willing?

By doing it.





Our Stories



New life and staying strong through adversity by Dan K.

Questioning the amount of alcohol you drink, how frequently you drink it, and your reasons for drinking can be a daunting task. Typically we do these deep self-assessments after we have sustained some type of negative consequences from our drinking, like not remembering everything from the night before, making questionable decisions, or feeling physically unwell the day after. If you have ever gone through this self-assessment process, much like I did, you probably thought of drinking in terms of a range or spectrum. For me, my spectrum of drinking looked like casual drinking on one end, then some large middle area, and then 'problem drinking' on the far end. That far end of 'problem drinking' seemed like a very far and miserable place, so I very naturally viewed myself far away from that end of the spectrum as possible using mental reasoning or 'rationalization'. The problem drinking end of my spectrum looked like an island very far from my current state, populated with the likes of loss of job, divorce, jail, and other awful consequences that I didn't feel I was anywhere near. As long as I wasn't on that island of certain misery my drinking was perfect acceptable to me, right?

What I failed to consider was that my drinking spectrum scale I used for myself was not calibrated with reality, and I was rationalizing how far I was away from that terrible island of problem drinking. I wanted to make sure my own scale didn't make me the sole person on that island of problem drinking, and as a consequence of that fear I was actually rationalizing my much higher alcohol consumption. I was terrified of the labels associated with problem drinking - labels that I didn't want to be: an alcoholic, addict, or problem drinker. I was not comfortable with these terms, and I wasn't honest with myself. As a result of my own self dishonesty I made sure the outcome of my trusty self-assessment placed me anywhere but in the area of problem drinking.

I was actually asking myself the wrong question completely, because I was fearful of an undesirable outcome. If I fell into an area of problem drinking with those terms I didn't want to see myself as, then what? Would I maybe have to do something? What if I don't want to so since I considered myself to be somewhat normal with my alcohol consumption? I certainly didn't want to make any life changes based on falling into a category I didn't like or understand, that didn't make sense to me. There was one question, however, that I could not dispute the answer to: what was I doing on a regular basis that is screwing up my life? The answer to this question was drinking, and fortunately I didn't need a scale to determine my answer. It became clear to me that regardless of what labels may apply to me, taking steps to address my drinking seemed like a reasonable place to start improving my life.

My drinking had turned from a fun social activity to something of an emotional crutch for me somewhere along the line, and it didn't really matter when, just that it had become something different for me now. My personal relationships were suffering, my work performance was lower, my physical health was declining, and my finances were stressed from purchasing alcohol inside and outside of pubs, restaurants, and bars. I decided to write these negative consequences down on paper I noticed that my relationship with alcohol was very unbalanced as my personal suffering and consequences were greatly out weighing my perceived 'fun' benefit of consuming alcohol. This realization didn't feel like a traditional 'rock bottom moment' that some speak of. Rather, the negative consequences of my drinking had just become unacceptable to me, and based on that fact I made a decision to take actions to change my daily life to live a balanced life that didn't revolve around drinking. I decided I wanted to try sobriety for 90 days, and find a therapist to examine my own personal reasons for my excessive drinking. My self-honesty and not caring of labels allowed me to schedule a Doctor visit for a physical in the first time in a very long time, and actually tell them how much I was drinking and desired changes I wanted to make. I was shocked when I wasn't shamed for my over indulgence of alcohol but rather praised for wanting to make changes for a healthier more sustainable me. I found support groups and surrounded myself around sober people and opened myself up to new ideas. I found that committing to 90 days gave me a workable goal that didn't terrify me yet sufficiently motivated me to strive towards the goal.

Due to the fact that I didn't care for labels and/or categories related to my drinking, I rationalized my excessive drinking based on my own skewed personal spectrum of what I saw as 'normal drinking'. I viewed my drinking as acceptable when the negative consequences to my life suggested a different story. It was only when I could be honest with myself was I then motivated to make the decision and take subsequent actions to change my relationship with alcohol and improve my life for myself. The biggest obstacle in this process was my ability to be honest with myself as I learned the most important conversation you will ever have is the one you have with yourself each and every single day. Make it an honest conversation, and stay strong.



Thank You to the Following Groups for Your continued support to Your Central Office!

Barb & Pete Weber
PayPal Donations
District 36
Kenosha Stepping Stones
Kenosha Alano

*Thank You again for all of your continued support.
Teamwork makes the dream work*



Here is the May financial listings for Your Central Office!

Racine Area Central Office Summary of Income/Expense 2020

Income Summary:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD
Donations-Groups	982.00	1140.70	695.00	693.39	3021.62								6532.71
Office Sales	1358.40	590.05	392.35										2340.80
Charge and Debit Card Sales	149.35	469.70	93.55										712.60
Rent-Groups	490.00	527.00	534.00										1551.00
Transfer from Savings				1000.00									1000.00
Fellowship Day													0.00
Gift Certificate Redeemed													0.00
Gratitude Cans	100.91	43.15	89.65										233.71
Small donation can (office)	9.85	10.80	5.05										25.70
Big donation box (meeting room)													0.00
Larry Pfeiffer Memorial (Gerald Green)			40.00										40.00
Tri County Conference Literature Sales													0.00
WE Energies Refund			327.79										327.79
District 36 Hotline (bill split)													0.00
District 17 Hotline (bill split)													0.00
Total Income by Month	3090.51	2781.40	2177.39	1693.39	3021.62	0.00	12764.31						

Expense Summary:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD
Rent & Water	1030.00	1254.88	1030.00	1030.00	0.00								4344.86
Electric (Heat & Air)	241.62	239.22	233.00	171.10	123.98								1008.92
Telephone - AT & T	132.18	131.07	131.36	131.36	131.08								657.05
Internet/Telephone - Spectrum	141.54	140.93	140.93	141.38									564.78
Sam's Club Membership													0.00
Office & Maint. Supplies	212.96	278.98	806.58		36.68								1337.20
Credit Card Fees	13.53	32.47	21.35	12.15	27.75								107.25
Bank Fees	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00								50.00
Literature & Merchandise	296.45	817.80	659.10	622.20									2395.55
Website			89.00										89.00
Wisconsin Sales Tax	118.51			138.31									256.82
State of WI (tax registration 2014 penalty)			150.00										150.00
Liability Insurance				745.00									745.00
Newsletter													0.00
Repair and Maintenance	120.00	120.00	80.00	313.00									633.00
Total Expenses Month to Month	2316.79	3025.33	3353.32	3314.90	329.49	0.00	12339.43						

Account Balances
 Checking: \$3,195.48
 Savings: \$2,597.75



Services and Service Opportunities

RACO Volunteers Needed!!

We can help fill your volunteer positions by listing them with us

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 Ted V.—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 longterm 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!

Volunteer Positions

Come join us in the fellowship.

Looking for volunteers to help in the following areas:

People Interested in doing 12 Step Work and working with those "Young in Sobriety"-8pm at 12&12 Club 724 Pine St Burlington

Staffing Volunteers @ RACO- please contact Ted V @262-909-4320



Best Practices For a Digital 7th Tradition

Online meeting spaces make it difficult to “pass the basket.” Some groups have set up digital contribution accounts with services like Venmo, PayPal, Google Pay, etc. to deal with this problem. Now might be a good time to review an essential piece of AA literature, “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.”

Each group is autonomous and might consider taking a group conscience on whether digital contributions are an option, and which platform (or mix of platforms) best suits their groups’ needs.

Why collect 7th Tradition for an online meeting?

Our regular meeting locations still have operating expenses...

Our meetings facilities may rely on our regular rent to help pay their rent, utilities, and employees. Meeting supplies will still be needed when our meetings reopen – coffee, paper products, literature, refreshments. And after an extended closure, we may experience a large influx of people who are motivated to re-join the fellowship in person. Central Office and the General Service Office still have operating expenses such as... Websites – which we may now rely on more than ever!

Phone lines, rent and insurance on office space, Utility and other ongoing expenses Paid Special Workers who deserve our continued support. Their compensation is crucial to their ability to serve us. Our Districts and Areas and H&I still have expenses...

Regular expenses to support the work of committees and events that will take place when the crisis has passed are still there. Web services support for groups expenses for venues for events that have been cancelled may still need to be met, since any income from the event won’t be there to support the pre-payment of reservations, cancellation fees, etc. The expense of re-arranging for venues to reschedule events is very real. Let’s continue to support these folks during the crisis.

Teamwork makes the dream work

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	West Racine/Kenosha County	
	Burlington 12 x 12 Club 724 N. Pine St. Burlington, WI	
District 6	Eastern Walworth County	
	Walworth County Alano Club 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	Western Lake County	
	Antioch Recovery Club 311 E Depot St.; Suite C Antioch, IL 60002 (847) 838-1882	
Antioch Recovery Club: http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/		
Antioch Hotline: (847) 395-5988		

Racine Area Central Office <i>Officers/Steering Committee</i>	
Chairperson	Jon K
Co-Chairperson	Rachel M.
Secretary	Mary Kay
Co-Secretary	Larissa H
Treasurer	Tom M
Co-Treasurer	Mike S
Staffing Coordinator	Ted V
Co-Staffing Coordinator	VACANT
Newsletter	Jon L
Co-Newsletter	Chris J
Hotline Chairperson	Jake T
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Chris W
Literature Chairperson	John B
Co-Literature Chair	Lori B.
Procurement	VACANT
Co-Procurement	Eric E.
Webmaster	Dave W
Co-Webmaster	VACANT
Advisor	Toni M
Advisor	Roxanne D
Advisor	Pam L
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24-Hour Hotline: (262) 554-7788	

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