

# 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

## A Life Worth Living *by: Lee H.*

The warning signs were there. And as the years rolled by, I knew I was getting older and not getting any better.

My alcoholic story begins in the summer of 1966 in the basement bar of a school friend's parents house. It was there that I first drank with the purpose of getting drunk.

From that day forward, for the next 37 years, I drank as often as I could, at first letting little get in the way of it, and toward the end letting absolutely nothing get in the way.

My first drunk, I imagine, was like every other alcoholic's. It was almost magical - I loved it! Alcohol for me was the missing piece of the puzzle -- the miraculous elixir. It "evened the playing field", per say - made up for shortcomings. It connected the dots! I had cracked the code! In an instant, I wasn't shy or awkward anymore! I was funny, crazy, outgoing and invincible.

This set of falsehoods would cloud my judgment, hurt me, and all who cared about me for decades. There were plenty of warning signs I blew through during those years that would have stopped a non-alcoholic in his tracks.

In high school, with an A on the line in my favorite class with a teacher I adored, I had prepared well for a forensics competition and should have been ready to compete. But I was too drunk on the Thursday night of the competition to

be in any shape to compete.

When my teacher asked if I was alright, I lied, said I didn't really care, and accepted my C. The summer before college I crashed into a parked car and a bike rack full of bikes. I tried to run, but was in no shape to do that.

I was brought home by the police, who knew my dad so didn't cite me for drunk driving. Then off to college, rooming with a friend I'd known since junior high. We'd both planned to play football in college, but it never happened. He got kicked out of school for drugs, and I dropped out because I couldn't reconcile studying with my nonstop party mentality.

Before I dropped out, the R.A. on my dorm floor sat me down and gave me this warning, I was becoming a "waste of a life were many. All along my friends and family, doctors, even the police kept asking me why? And my only answer was: I don't know.

A life wasted.

June 18th 1998 I was in the sick room of the Grove Club, forced to attend an AA meeting because I was staying at a crisis center and spa after a three-day getaway at "Club Detox"!

I would not remain sober from that point on for 6 years. Still, I heard enough that day to point me in the right direction, and give me some hope. I heard, and finally believed, that I didn't have to live like this anymore, and I could have a

meaningful life again.

Eventually, on April 23, 2004, I found my home in AA, with a host of wonderful friends. And with that, I began to repair relationships I had previously destroyed.

My name became re-associated with employment, a drivers license, and insurance! These changes really came to me in an unexpected way. They came after working the 12 Steps and believing that I needed to carry the message to other alcoholics! It has been quite refreshing to think about people other than myself.

Belief in a Higher Power and a desire to do the next right thing, I've recently been attending AA meetings at the Veterans Hospital in Milwaukee with my good friend Rich N, which has again helped me through a time of need - because I sometimes forget that nothing helps us more than working with another alcoholic!

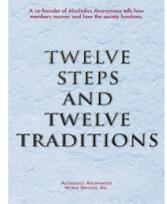
My college roommate, the friend I'd known since junior-high school, called me yesterday to tell me he's entering treatment at the VA in Milwaukee, starting today. He asked me if I would be his sponsor! I haven't seen him in 40 years, but I told him, "Of course I will, my old friend. I'm excited to work with you". Is this the reason I've been to thousands of meetings and hundreds of visits to detox?

Yes, I believe it is! I've figured what they told me all along was true" - to keep this gift I was given so freely, I must continue to give it away" - a life not wasted.





# Our Stories



## Acceptance That Leads To Growth

**By: Courtney L.**

Before coming to Alcoholics Anonymous, the only way I knew how to live was by drinking. My life revolved around alcohol- which store I would need to drive to for my next bottle, what hiding place would work best so that no one would find my stash, how soon I could get home to take my first swigs of relief.

Alcohol ran my life, and I was certain that I would never be able to live without it...until I came to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

By the grace of a Higher Power of my own understanding, the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and many fellow members of the program, I have not taken a drink since October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

I was able to work the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous as a program of recovery, but I had a lot of learning to do in Steps One, Two, and Three before I could readily take the necessary actions in Steps Four through Twelve.

It took some time before I fully comprehended Step One. I had surrendered to the fact I was an alcoholic all right and that drinking caused all sorts of problems in my life. However, I did not succumb to the fact that my life was just as unmanageable *without* the drink.

At first, I had assumed that by eliminating the drink I was eliminating my problems. It was not until my sponsor explained to me that, "...elimination of our drinking is but a beginning," that I was better able to understand all of Step One (*Alcoholics Anonymous*).

Step One entailed honestly conceding to my innermost self that as an alcoholic, I could not manage my own life. I had to learn to live my life by a new set of principles if I was going to live a life filled with contented sobriety. Since I could not rely on myself, then who or what was I to rely on? Steps Two and Three helped to answer this question.

It was not enough to admit complete defeat over alcohol; I also had to accept the fact that my "defense *must* come from a Higher Power" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*). In other words, Step Two required enough open-mindedness to believe that there was a Power greater than myself that could do for me what could not do for myself.

My experience, as well as so many other alcoholics' experiences described in our book, proved this. I was out of options; therefore, it was not difficult for me to take Step Two. Step Three, however, took me some time.

Step Three requires that I turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I *understood him*. Although the idea of choosing a God of my own understanding filled me with hope, I at first challenged this idea. "Why then, does the Big Book use the word 'God' and capitalize 'He' as if referring to a Christian God?" I questioned. It was in re-reading the chapter "We Agnostics," that I began to understand that this was not the case. "When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God," it said. "This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*).

I learned that I must lay aside any prejudices that blocked me from turning over my will to a Higher Power, and that I indeed could freely choose my own concept of a Higher Power.

Whenever I find myself questioning the intent of Step Three or find myself struggling with the concept of a Higher Power (or any of the 12 Steps for that matter), I turn to the *Big Book* for answers. It has yet to leave me unsatisfied.

My name is Courtney, and I am a grateful recovered alcoholic. Thank you for letting me share.

### Third Step Prayer

*"God, I offer myself to Thee- To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life.*



## March Focus

### Step Three

*"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him".*

### Third Tradition

*"The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking".*

## ***A Life Full of Purpose and Meaning - Only Through Recovery*** (by: Manuel M.)

Recovery for alcoholics is an essential part to maintaining a life and living a positive lifestyle.

The definition of recovery is the act or process of recovering from the sickness, a shock or a setback . Restoring to a former or better condition and also the gaining of something lost or stolen.

For many prospects, recovery seems almost impossible. Many say that this is due to the fear o change. The fear of change can stem from many areas of one's life. Perhaps they believe from what they have been told, that they are not good enough, but they are not worthy, that they are destined to fail or simply because they have become comfortable in their own discomfort.

For many folks, recovery comes easily. When this is due to the fact that they are given the gift of desperation. Which means that their life and lifestyle has become so unmanageable that they know there has to be something done in order to change their fate that they have been creating through destruction.

This varies from person to person and situation to situation. Some may be faced with legal consequences or consequences in relationships with significant others or family and friends. At times, the onset of these consequences has already occurred and those seeking recovery or simply attempting to prove to themselves that they can be better.

If one honestly believes that they are going to die as a result of their alcoholism, then they will seek help. Once this stark fact is accepted, then the person may *begin* to become willing. When one is willing to change, their limit for the process of change is ended. This means that they can succeed in most anything that they truly apply themselves to in order to create a more helpful and beneficial future for themselves.

At the beginning ,it may seem difficult, yet they are in courage to continue. In recovery - I have found that there is so much more to live for than what meets the

eye. I had previously held beliefs that I was not good enough, nor did I deserve to be prosperous and happy.

At one point, I thought there was no purpose for my life. I had come to the realization that I was simply existing. Nobody had wanted anything to do with me and my family or friends nor employers.

Today, my life has become fulfilled. I am truly happy in my recovery. I am involved in service work. I work with others who are coming into recovery in some of the same facets that I did.

Recovery has shown me that despite what life throws at me, I can see a positive in the negative. There are lessons that I have yet to learn. Yet there are many people whom are in my recovery family that are willing to stand by my side and guide me through these trials.

At one time I felt that I was alone in this world even though I was surrounded by millions... today this is not the case. I have connected with complete strangers and now they are my family and friends.

This is possible for anybody. There is hope! And we can change and recover from alcoholism. I need not tell you how much drinking career was, because if you are an alcoholic you can understand the malady it has created in my life. I no longer have to turn to the drink in order to drown out feelings and emotions that come up when life shows up.

I have been given another opportunity to live a happy and purposeful life. And it is only through working a program of recovery and change that this is been possible for me.

There are many suggestions which we should heed when coming in to AA. Some of them will seem outrageous at first, and some inconceivable! Yet these suggestions are truly the guides for living a fulfilling life today. It is my hope that you may be interested in changing your life and becoming part of ours! Welcome to a new, fulfilling "way of life".



# 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) 939-9697 or [nova221sgn@wi.rr.com](mailto: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](mailto:raconewsletter@gmail.com) for information on available positions and position requirements. We look forward to seeing you at the next Committee meeting!

## Tri-County Mini Conference

The 33rd Annual "Tri-County Mini Conference" - HAPPY, JOYOUS and FREE - will be held on Saturday, March 14th at the U.A.W. Hall in Kenosha, WI. The address is 3615 Washington Road and the event/registration begins at 8:00am. Join us for a full-day of speakers, panels, a chili-lunch, dance, alkathons and much more! Come be a part of this wonderful tradition of food, fun and fellowship! Please contact Pam L. or email [raconewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:raconewsletter@gmail.com) for additional event details. See you there!

## Upcoming Events & Activities

**Saturday, March 7th**  
**RACO Steering Committee Mtg**  
 Racine Area Central Office  
 Starts at 9:30am

**Saturday, March 7th**  
**GAME NIGHT at The Grove**  
 The Grove Club, Racine, WI  
 Starts at 9:00pm

**Saturday, March 14th**  
**Tri-County Mini Conference**  
 U.A.W. Hall in Kenosha, WI  
 Starts at 8:00am

**Saturday, March 21st**  
**St. Paddy's Day Dance**  
 The Grove Club, Racine, WI  
 Starts at 8:30pm

**Sunday, March 29th, 2015**  
**2015 Easter Egg Hunt**  
 The Grove Club, Racine, WI  
 12:00 to 2:00pm

**Saturday, April 11th**  
**Acoustic Café**  
 The Grove Club, Racine, WI

*Know of any future A.A. events? Email [raconewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:raconewsletter@gmail.com) to get published in next months Reprieve!*



# Racine Area Central Office has moved!



**BIG NEWS EVERYONE!** Racine Area Central Office has officially moved locations! While we're still located within Elmwood Plaza—RACO is now on the front (north) side of the building, Suite 225B, next to the Asian Buffet restaurant! The meeting times have not changed and we still have plenty of great recovery merchandise that can be purchased at very reasonable costs! Come stop in and check out the "new" RACO!!



# Help is Everywhere

## District/Club Information

<b>District 17</b>		<b>Racine, Wisconsin</b>
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: <a href="http://www.benjaminhouseracine.org/">http://www.benjaminhouseracine.org/</a>		
<b>District 7</b>		<b>Kenosha, Wisconsin</b>
Kenosha Alano Club 630 56 <sup>th</sup> St. Kenosha, WI 53140 (262) 654-8246	Outcasts 1310 63 <sup>rd</sup> St. Kenosha, WI 53144	Club Breakaway 8017 Sheridan Rd. Kenosha, WI 53143 (262) 653-9800
Kenosha Alano Club Website: <a href="http://kenoshaalanoclub.org">http://kenoshaalanoclub.org</a>		
<b>District 36</b>		Burlington 12 x 12 Club 724 N. Pine St. Burlington, WI
<b>West Racine/Kenosha County</b>		
<b>District 6</b>		Walworth County Alano Club 611 E. Walworth St. Delavan, WI 53115 (262) 740-1888
<b>Eastern Walworth County</b>		
<b>District 12</b>		<b>Eastern Lake County, Illinois</b>
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: <a href="http://alanoclubwaukegan.com/">http://alanoclubwaukegan.com/</a>		
Waukegan Hotline: (847) 623-9660		
<b>District 10</b>		Antioch Recovery Club 311 E Depot St.; Suite C Antioch, IL 60002 (847) 838-1882
<b>Western Lake County</b>		
Antioch Recovery Club: <a href="http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/">http://www.antiochrecoveryclub.org/</a>		
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	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	VACANT
Webmaster	Courtney L.
Co-Webmaster	Brian K.
Advisor	Darrel S.
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24-Hour Hotline: (262) 554-7788	

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