

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

Gratitude - an "action" in recovery? *By: Kevin B.*

For many decades now, we in the Fellowship have formally carved out from the calendar the month of November as a time to express our collective gratitude for our sobriety and all of the blessings that have been given to us by our Higher Power. Why this month in particular was originally chosen, no one seems quite sure, though its connection with Thanksgiving seems obvious. Gratitude Month has, since the 1950s, been celebrated in November and our shared thankfulness over the years has taken many forms and will continue to do so as our membership widens.

We all know Gratitude serves us best when it's kept alive - in our individual lives and in our group conscience. Realizing this, countless A.A. groups over the years have used the month of November to open the door of gratitude even wider. It's a sure way of maintaining a continued healthy sobriety, group unity, and to avoid complacency and stagnation.

Many groups observe Gratitude Month by holding Traditions meetings and taking up special contributions to the General Service Office for A.A. services worldwide. Our particular Area meetings will have 'gratitude cans' which will take up an additional offering, which will go to help Racine Area Central Office. While these are obviously difficult times for many, if we can give even a little bit more to express our

thanks for what this program has done for us - it will go a very long way for RACO.

Many of us, at one point or another, have been assigned to write a "gratitude list" from our sponsors. Whether it be an exercise in early sobriety or one after a period of frustration in our life - they are a great tool to bring us back to the present moment and appreciate all the gifts we have around us. Whether you're living on Park Ave. or under a park bench, everyone most certainly has a multitude of reasons to be grateful, if in fact we've embraced the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous to discover this new life before us.

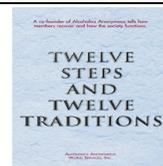
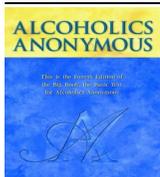
It's easy to look at all the things in our life that we don't have or that haven't gone the way we've planned. Many of us may have health issues, financial troubles, relationship quarrels or occasional consequences from the past that may still haunt us today. It's easy to feel that all this work to better our lives isn't paying off or that we've been cheated in the hands we've been dealt. It can be difficult to accept that sobriety does not ensure a problem-free life. But what it *does* ensure is that we have a new way of dealing with and responding to life's problems in a responsible manner that won't consume us with guilt, shame and remorse.

There are some basic, tangible things in most of our lives today that have become all too easy to

take for granted. No matter what, we are loved. Loved by God and loved by our fellows. There are a host of people in this Fellowship that want you to succeed and live a happy life, even if they know nothing about you. If you're reading this, you've likely got the ability to see. You can view and appreciate all the glorious works of wonderment this world contains. You've probably eaten a meal today and had a pillow to lay your head on last night - not everyone in the world can say that much. And down to the most basic gift - that of a single breath. Each opportunity to breathe allows us to remain in this world and strive to be better than we were the day before. The practice of mindfulness and appreciating each breath can help bring us back to those underlying blessings of "being" that we often dismiss.

I will be challenging myself this November to create a new Gratitude list each day, with just a few blessings I've been granted which I may not always acknowledge. I invite you to join me in the challenge and get back to basics in documenting your Gratitude with a daily list. I'm sure we will all be surprised at just how much we have to be thankful for this season.

Through God's grace and the strength of this Fellowship - I wish you all another 24 hours full of gifts in sobriety.



Our Stories

Spiritual Maintenance to a New Way of Life

Step Eleven states that we "sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out".

Before coming into recovery, I had my preconceived notions as to what prayer and meditation were. I had no realistic vision of how they could be applied to maintain a spiritual platform in which to keep me free from drugs and alcohol.

I had always displayed great faith and remarkable persistence in my drinking. I worshiped the bottle, I took every problem to the bottle, I leaned on it with almost childlike trust. I persisted in this sick devotion long after the bottle "god" had repeatedly betrayed me and had wrecked my life.

After finding A.A., I still needed faith and persistence - but with a new direction. I looked to a Higher Power for the answers I had vainly sought in the bottle. This quest took faith, it took persistence, it took a strong determination to succeed in sobriety. But the Higher Power I found in A.A. has been a reliable guide and partner, never once betraying me and, in the process - repairing the wreckage of

the past and providing a new way of life. Through the guidance of the Twelve Steps, I have been able to maintain and thoroughly enjoy this new way of life.

So what does prayer and meditation look like in Step 11? Does it mean that we offer up a prayer before every decision we make in our lives? Do we learn Buddhist mantras and sit cross-legged hoping for a euphoric state of bliss?

Step 11 means something different for every conception of a "Higher Power", but the Big Book offers us a good plan for how to best approach this continual communication with God. Page 86 suggests that we conduct a spotcheck inventory as we retreat for the night and then start our new day with a plan and devotion for Him to direct our thinking and actions.

While we may not always be given an immediate plan of action or a solution to our troubles, the book states "We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for awhile. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. We find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We

come to rely on it".

In addition to our regular conscious contact with God, we then are required to act as He would have us. There is no use in knowing what the "next right thing" is and continuing to do what we ultimately want, despite any potential consequences. The Big Book's portion of Step 11 concludes with the powerful phrase, "Faith without works is dead". As simple as it may sound - this sentence describes a great deal of our recovery lives in general.

Steps 2 and 3 lay the groundwork for our trust in a Higher Power. Step 11 helps to maintain that relationship well after we've "sobered up". It is what keeps us from returning to the insanity which is based on our own ideas, perceptions and judgments of the world around us. Regular attention to prayer and meditation is what separates sobriety from contented sobriety. If we want to remain spiritually fit and act in accordance with God (and society's) expectation's for us - Step 11 is the guide for us to follow, one day at a time... and sometimes just one breath at a time. *By: Anonymous*

November Focus—Step 11

Eleventh Promise

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

Eleventh Concept

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, inductions procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.



Events and Service Notes

27th Annual SOBERFEST

McHenry's Soberfest is an annual conference put on by the McHenry's Soberfest Group of Alcoholics Anonymous Northern Illinois Area 20.

McHenry's Soberfest has meetings and activities for AA members, Al-Anon members, Alateens, and our guests all weekend long! There are AA and Al-Anon speakers Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.



Join us for our Saturday evening banquet and speaker. Even if you don't register for the banquet, you can still hear all the speakers and dance the night away. There are even shops with recovery related jewelry, clothing, and literature.

When: November 18-20th, 2016
Where: Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, WI
More info: www.soberfest.com

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.

New AREA 75 Website Launched!

Have you visited the Area 75 tent and much more! Head on website recently? It has undergone a major makeover and has a fresh new appearance! Check it out for meeting information, Area 75 Events, Service information, Archived Con-

over to www.area75.org and browse around a bit! It's a great tool for local recovery and a way to stay connected to what's going on in our Area!



GRATITUDE CANS

 If your regular meeting does not yet have a donation can for "Gratitude Month", please stop by RACO to collect one and delegate someone to return when the month ends!

THANK YOU!



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	Roxann D.
Co-Chairperson	Toni M.
Secretary	Deb K.
Co-Secretary	VACANT
Treasurer	Pam L.
Co-Treasurer	VACANT
Staffing Coordinator	John B.
Co-Staffing Coordinator	Bruce P.
Newsletter	Kevin B.
Co-Newsletter	Stacy K.
Hotline Chairperson	Mark S.
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Jason A.
Literature Chairperson	Rachel M.
Co-Literature Chair	VACANT
Procurement	Wes D.
Webmaster	Courtney L.
Co-Webmaster	Brian K.
Advisor	Darrel S.
Advisor	<i>(Positions Open)</i>

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