

Monthly Reprieve

Volume 11, Issue 10

October 2015

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

An article to those I have rebelled with; the agnostics, non-believers, naysayers and skeptics. *by: Nicole B.*

My name is Nikki B., I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is Sept 15th, 2007. I am a born again agnostic (light hearted humor folks). You told me 8 years ago to find a god of my understanding, you also told me to use the group as my higher power. Thanks to powerlessness, unmanageability and a decision, I found my higher power in you.

In 2007, a new comer to AA, I felt like an outsider at the meetings, hearing a lot of talk about god. I considered myself a perfect agnostic – one who only *slightly* judged others beliefs. I was a woman who had experienced life and did not feel the need to redeem my soul or humble myself... a good natured agnostic or even humanist– so I thought.

I remember *this one guy* at every 4:30pm meeting that talked a lot about his understanding of god, praying on his knees, god always provided for him and the phrase that made me squirm the most... *but for the grace of god there go I...* I was skeptical of this kind of power and thought I would never get spirituality, *get AA, why do I need to find a higher power now?* You told me that it is ok to

have a god of my understanding, well my understanding seemed a bit thin.

Over the course of that first year I reluctantly found the elusive higher power in you. I started talking like you. I shared my experience strength and hope like you. I did not know what I believed but it worked using the group as my higher power – I stayed sober. I met with my sponsor weekly and worked the steps. I still did not know what I believed or how *this* was going to turn out but I stayed sober. I met with new comers, I volunteered. I reveled in the fact the founders of AA wrote a “special” chapter to the agnostics... I got a good feeling back in those days of the idea that I am different then you perhaps a bit smarter—as it seemed that there are so few of us non-believers, these were to be the first lessons I came to understand as false pride. I did not see how egotistical I was, you still helped me. It took me until a few years ago to see my part in my resentment towards people who seemed too spiritual.

Today I feel so blessed for your patience and understanding. May I only re-

turn the same love and tolerance back to all I encounter.

I have days that I think, I can't be more connected to you, suddenly I veer off path – I manage my life. My sponsor reminds me that this is part of the journey and to go help someone else. These renews me and gives me a reason to seek again and I get honest and I surrender to my higher power – you. I dig deeper, I answer the phone and take uncomfortable actions, I act well and life gets peaceful again. I call this a pretty good life.

If you are new and skeptical of your higher power or if you have been around and are skeptical... perfect, go work with another alcoholic, meet with your sponsor and work the steps, my experience is that a god of your understanding will show up, just continue to seek. It may not look exactly like your friends higher power, that's just fine. Today I relate with both the fellow new comer agnostics and the seemingly mystical giants.... I am apart of all of this, another view point and story to share, not better or worse then, I am you and you are me – God.

Tenth Concept

“Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined”



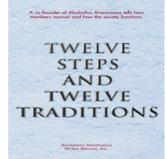
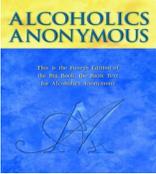
October Focus

Step Ten

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it”

Tenth Tradition

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy”



Our Stories

Service - The Cornerstone of Recovery

By: Adam M.

When I first started coming around the tables of Alcoholics Anonymous, I was scared, shaky, disheveled, and had no idea at all what to do or what I was getting myself into. What I did know beyond a shadow of doubt was that I needed help and a lot of it for that matter. My life was a train wreck, seemingly no matter what I did or intentions I had on any given day, there was always a path of hurt feelings and destruction left behind by my actions.

My story starts way back in the early to mid 1990's when recovery clubs were hopping and just full of people recovering from this insidious disease. I jumped in and got a sponsor pretty much right away and got ready to work these steps as quickly as possible so I could get better as quickly as possible. I had no idea at the time that this is a life-long design for living. So imagine my surprise when upon asking my first sponsor what we should do to get this ball rolling, he told my eager self to slow down a couple hundred notches and read a few pages in this book he gave me, and we'd talk next week.

I was like what? Apparently you didn't hear me sir, I'm messed up and I need help quitting drinking because it's ruining my life.

His response was, 'Okay, on top of reading I want you to pray every morning and night saying nothing other than please and thank you, hit at least one meeting a day and pick up every ashtray you see, empty it, and when you're done with that wash out the coffee pots and wipe down the tables'.

I was mortified! How on Earth was this going to in any way shape or form keep me sober? This was my first introduction to service work in A.A.

Well folks, we always could use help cleaning up after the meetings and fortunately for the average Joe, you won't be asked to clean out ashtrays, unless you take a service position or feel like it's a god thing to pick something up when you see it lying on the ground.

But this isn't about cigarette butts or being a maid, it's about getting out of one's self and doing things just because. Not for pay or recognition, not for a pat on the back from your sponsor. But because doing things for other people helps us to not focus so much on ourselves and if you're an alcoholic of my nature, that's a very easy thing to do.

Service work in Alcoholics Anonymous can be anything

that we can do to reach out and help a fellow sufferer. It could be working the Twelve step itself, to getting someone a cup of coffee, lending an ear and just listening to the newcomer, greeting people or just sharing our experience, strength and hope at meetings.

Service work could also include chairing a meeting, being a group's GSR or volunteering on one of the AA service committees in your area, which I happen to know firsthand that we need help pretty much everywhere in our district, (hint hint) - such as; volunteering for a shift now and then on the Hotline or volunteering at R.A.C.O. if you have some free time. It's a horrible thing when we can't keep the door open at our central office because of lack of people signing up to help. There are open positions and co-chair positions open at the district level as well. If you are a member of one of the many clubs in the area, consider running for a position on the board or join one of the many sub-committees. There are a few positions currently open at The Grove Club that could use support, so check it out!

I understand that to some, this seems like a tall order. It's hard enough just to get sober. And once we're sober our lives get busy! But I say don't forget where you came from and how you got to where you are now. Odds are it's because of the actions and selfless giving of others time to help out our cause in one way or another.

You see all of these things help us as alcoholics carry the message to those who have not yet found a new life without the need and obsession for alcohol. It's an opportunity to practice the principals in all of our affairs.

As an added bonus, service work can be tons of fun and you get to meet so many new and awesome people. So, if you have any interest or a sponsee who needs something to do, I encourage you to jump right in and get your hands dirty. Carrying the Message, is our primary purpose and in my opinion there is no better or effective way to do so than to get in the business of helping others. A.A. is more than a set of principals; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, or else we ourselves can wither and die.

As I've heard many an old timers say, "you have to give it away in order to keep it." The best way to give it away, is to help other alcoholics who are still suffering - so get busy!



The Tornado and the Hurricane

by: Laura T.

Love, companionship, trust, friendship, intimacy. These are just a few things human beings strive to have with another person. We spend years in search of the elusive "true love" or "soul mate". For myself and countless other alcoholics, the idea of love, was always better than the outcome.

Relationships are hard work. They are give and take, communication, trust, change, and commitment. Now, for alcoholics, some of these ideals are difficult, seemingly impossible goals. For alcoholics are, a selfish, self centered, self seeking group of people; which does not bode well for whomever we might attempt a relationship with. Or take hostage, if you will.

Many people that come into AA decide that dating, or more commonly referred to as 13th stepping, will be easier with another AA. There appears to be a thought among some AA's, that if someone is "in the program", they will more readily understand each other's quirks, character defects, psychosis, etc. It has been my experience that this line of thinking is flawed. Very very flawed.

Enter the Tornado and the Hurricane.

My husband, of 11 months, recently celebrated 10 years of sobriety. He is the Tornado. I

have just under 4 years of sobriety, and I am the Hurricane. Our relationship is the first sober relationship that both of us have ever had. Ever.

I have discovered that once the- amazing, butterflies in the stomach, laugh at every joke, hang on every word, never argue or disagree, can't get enough of you sex, brand spankin new shininess wears off; you end up staring across the table, over a cup of coffee, thinking, "What the hell did I ever see in this person? And they are definitely NOT working the program the way I think they should"! Then there is judgment.

Judgment leads to resentment. Ah yes, the number 1 killer of all AA's. It seeps in like a silent black fog and places a wedge between two sick people who begin to believe the lies and skewed perceptions of the alcoholic mind.

My experience with resentment toward my partner not working his program, and subsequently not working my own program, is this; We will listen, but not hear. We will become angry, but we stuff it inside, and await a seemingly more appropriate time to take it out and use it as ammunition during an argument over something not worthy of it. We will stop communicating and replace it with pas-

sive aggressive hurtful comments toward each other. We become fearful and paranoid of losing the relationship, so we blame and badger, to no end, about the possibility of there being someone else. We inevitably push each other to a breaking point, and then the Hurricane and the Tornado collide.

For me, the storm ended when I asked my husband to leave, and told him I wanted a divorce. That was not what I wanted, but I was at a turning point. I turned to AA, and thankfully so did my husband. Working with a sponsor, going to meetings, prayer to a Higher Power, and service to others, is the only way a relationship will ever work for me.

Using the steps of AA is the most simple way to have and maintain a healthy relationship, however, as alcoholics, we have short memories and unfortunately sometimes have to learn our lessons the hard way. Again and again.

Today it is sunny. Sometimes it is partly cloudy. There is even occasional fog. Yet with the help of our Higher Powers, the 12 steps of AA, sponsors and sponsees, and continual inventory; the Tornado and the Hurricane are at peace.



A life of fulfillment with the help of Step 10

by: Wagner L.

I am an alcoholic; my name is Wagner. When I think about the 10th step, I immediately reflect on my Higher Power; which I call God today. The reason I say, "Which I call God today" is because I remember a time when I didn't believe in God. The tenth step is vital to have a belief, faith, and action as part of your life.

The prior steps are set in order to prepare you for a proper 10th step. Alcoholism is a disease that I can have a daily reprieve with the help of my higher power and a proper 10th step. Although working all 12 steps is a must, performing a 10th step is essential for good living. When I look at the 10th step – Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it – two words stick out: inventory and wrong.

Taking inventory is necessary for growth; we can see that in every aspect of life. In basic business formats this can drive prosperity. Admitting your wrongs can show the character of the individual. An alcoholic of my type, self-centered to the core and surrounded by a hundred different forms of fear, has but one solution to this malady. I must see the facts of my situation. The answers cannot come from me; instead they come from a process called recovery.

My higher power has provided me an opportunity today to look at the problem; which is me today. My higher power has also provided me with the opportunity to stay within today. So starting my day off with prayer and ending my day with a proper 10th step gives me hope, which was lost for a long time in my life.

Towards the end of my drinking, suicide was an option and alcohol was necessity. Alcohol was my best friend and still can be, even in sobriety, if I do not do a proper 10th step. When you hear people talk about a love for their kids, spouse, or parents that is the unconditional love that I showed for alcohol.

Once I crossed that line of alcoholism my fate was set. It talks about this in our literature, where only an act of divine providence could redirect my life. I must see that, only through God's grace and mercy, is the only reason I exist today. God has taken the obsession away from me and a proper 10th step maintains a good daily living for me today. Alcoholics Anonymous and a Higher Power will forever be intertwined together; I found my Higher Power through the tables of Alcoholics Anonymous. It was a miracle that I walked through the

doors of Alcoholics Anonymous and I get to see miracles when I am active in the fellowship.

By taking a look at my assets, discarding my liabilities, and humbling myself before man, puts me in a place where recovery is possible in my life. Going through the process, which I previously discussed, gives me a chance to look back over the course of a day and see where I was at fault.

Before I lay my head down at night I can amend my wrongs. Resentment, fear, and isolation do not have to dominate me as it once had done in the past. For example, I struggle with selfishness. I want to hoard my time, money, and relationships. When I do this I am always in conflict with myself and others. I love my football and having my weekends off. I figure I work hard so I deserve this; I also have a family to take care of. The fact of taking out of my time to care for others may come into question at times. I have become upset, angry, and started fights over this. I had to inventory these events. I know today that no true happiness can come to my life by not giving of myself to my family. Personal time is needed; however, I must pray and discuss details with others to reach the goals I pursue.

I know today that healthy sharing of my life and time provides me with the peace and serenity I have always wanted. The actual admitting I am wrong, saying the words out of my mouth, changes me. It breaks down that person from the past and God can rebuild a new individual.

Often you will hear people speak of individuals trapped in alcoholism; who they believed would never stop drinking. They might have known this person their whole life; however, once recovery has set its roots in that same individual, all prior resemblance ceases to exist. The same two people who may have known each other all their life will walk right past each other and not recognize each other. They can even have a conversation and have trouble remembering how they know each other.

It is amazing how a program of recovery-working all 12 steps can change a person's appearance, speech, and actions. Good housekeeping is imperative for the alcoholic. It is critical or we continue to die that spiritual death; which we have been trapped in for so many years.



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) 939-9676 or 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

Reprive). 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!

Detox Help Needed

Volunteers are needed for detox meetings throughout the area. Detox meetings are a great way to carry your message to the newcomer, who often needs to hear a message of hope.

Requirements to become a volunteer are six months to attend with others and one year to attend solo.

Meetings are held Sunday-Friday at 8pm and Saturday & Sunday mornings at 9:30am.

Detox meetings are held at St. Lukes on Wisconsin Ave. and 14th St. For further information, please contact Roxann D.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Fridays in October

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

Saturday Oct. 3rd

RACO Steering Committee mtg
 Racine Area Central Office
 Racine, WI
 9:30am

Grove Activities Committee Mtg
 The Grove Club
 11:45am

Saturday, October 10th

Game Night—Four Square
 The Grove Club - 8:00pm

Saturday, October 24th

Kids Pumpkin Carving
 The Grove Club
 12-3pm

Saturday Oct. 31st

Halloween Dance (w/ DJ Josh)
 The Grove Club
 8:30pm

Saturday, Nov. 7th

Acoustic Cafe
 The Grove Club - 8:00pm



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 | 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. |
| | |
| | |

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