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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



Tradition 12

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."



December Focus

Twelfth Step Prayer

"Dear Higher Power, my spiritual awakening continues to unfold. The help I have received I shall pass on and give to others, both in and out of the fellowship."

Step 12

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs."

Step 12

The 12 Steps are kind of like a recipe for a special cake, one that brings about a personality change sufficient to allow us alcoholics to recover from our alcoholism. When we've baked the delicious spiritual experience cake, as directed and arrived at step 12, it's time for my favorite part: putting the icing on the cake!

The 12 steps of A.A. in simplest terms are a solution to the disease of alcoholism. They are a set of universal guiding principles that merge the traditional boundaries of religion, history, culture and wisdom traditions. They outline a course of action that, when followed, will remove the obsession in the mind, connect you to a Higher Power and as you continue to grow, show you how to help others who still struggle.

AA STEP 12: SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The concept of "spiritual awakening" has many meanings. Keeping it simple, a spiritual awakening is really just a psychic change that, among other things, eliminates our obsession to drink. For some it can be quite a powerful and immediate experience, for others it is an ongoing co-current part of working the 12 steps.

The co-founder of AA, Bill W. mentions in his autobiography that for him it was a sudden, strong "white light" and life-changing event: "I stood upon a summit where a great wind blew. A wind not of air, but of spirit. In great, clean strength it blew right through me. Then came the blazing thought, 'You are a free man.'"

It gives me chills every time I read that, because after that moment, Bill never took another drink. Thanks to him there are many more free men and women today. For most of us, the "aha" moments, that may not be a white light, are regular events and part of the spiritual awakening that happens over time in a subtle and gradual way.

Step 12(continued)

AA STEP 12: CARRYING THE MESSAGE

I am responsible when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible.

The second part of the 12th step is about carrying the message of recovery to other people. This is not because AA is a cult, it's because "we keep what we have by giving it away." To keep it simple, when we work with others, our lives change. So, we don't help another alcoholic because they're sick—we help another alcoholic because we are sick, and part of our recovery is that we need to be helping others.

The most important things to remember about this part of the AA Step 12 are:

- *The Twelve Steps are a program of attraction, not promotion. We lead by our own example, so talk to people when they are ready and when the time is right they'll ask: "How can I get what you've got?"*
- *Keep your message for the person who's dependent on alcohol to what it was like for you, the result of your steps, and that you have not gotten drunk.*
- *When talking to a newcomer, let go of labels and referring to them as alcoholics. Truthfully tell your story and let other people decide if it rings true for them.*

Sometimes carrying the message can be as simple as making sure that there is a warm, caring, non-judgmental place for other alcoholics to come back to and a hand shake or hug that says "We're here for you—come on in—and keep coming back!"

The beauty and eloquence of AA Step 12 is part of many promises of working the A.A. program. Life really does take on new meaning when watching people recover, seeing them help others, and watching loneliness vanish. Frequent contact with newcomers, and with each other, is the bright spot of our newfound lives.

Step 12 (continued)

THE ICING ON THE CAKE: PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES

When we have had a spiritual awakening as a result of our efforts we are finally able to do, feel, and believe that which we could not do before. This gift, which is a new state of consciousness and being, is really the icing on the cake of sobriety.

On a daily basis we have the opportunity to put into practice things that we are finally in possession of: a degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind, and love. Practicing the 12 steps in all our affairs, trusting a higher power, cleaning house, sharing our experience strength and hope, staying active in service one day at a time, for the rest of our life...is like eating cake, with icing, everyday.

Christmas: Past and Present

By: Tom G.

My last drink was on March 18, 2012. It capped six months of daily blackout drinking, and more than 10 years of increasingly heavy and destructive addiction to alcohol. I then completed two and half months of outpatient rehab and underwent surgery to repair the arm I had damaged from multiple drunken falls. I was also asked not to return to the job I had held for 10 years, nor to contact any of my former coworkers. The arm injury and the loss of the job and coworkers were casualties of my drinking. I was told my liver was also damaged, but that it was mostly recoverable if I never touched a drop of alcohol again.

I attended at least one, sometimes two, AA meetings almost every day, except for the day of my surgery. With the help of a loving but firm sponsor, I worked my way through the first three Steps. By the time Thanksgiving came, I was well into admitting the exact nature of my wrongs. I had mended a lot of the damage I'd inflicted on my family, and I made living amends by being present, sober, accountable and loving.

Despite my progress in the program, I was really anxious about Christmas—and still full of self-pity. Not only would I have to cope with the usual holiday drama, but I'd have to do so without alcohol. And also without my mother, who had just lost her own battle with addiction.

It was AA—my home group and the clubhouse where my home group met, as well as my sponsor and new AA friends—that made all the difference. All this and prayer helped me accept all these feelings that flooded me: There was the grief I felt seeing my mother's empty stocking and hear-

ing silence where her laughter used to ring; the anxiety caused by the needling of my brother-in-law; the exasperation of being tucked between my bickering niece and nephew at dinner; and the flash of disappointment when I realized I wasn't getting that eBook reader after all.

To help me get over my nearly terminal case of self-centeredness and self-pity, I engaged as best I could in service to others. Even though I have to observe a strictly gluten-free diet, I baked and brought in breakfast cookies and muffins—gluten free, of course—to brighten up our 7:30 a.m. meetings. Everyone devoured the goodies, and I felt good about this little bit of service, especially because many newcomers came in off the street and they didn't have much else to eat.

I contributed to the holiday party the AA groups were putting on for the children of members who otherwise would have faced a rather sparse Christmas or Hanukkah. It also felt good to share what little money I still had so a child would have a little holiday joy.

I chaired several meetings during December, including my home group's Christmas Eve morning meeting, which required me to really listen to others and to pay attention to everyone in the room so that those who needed to share, especially newcomers like me, wouldn't be overlooked. Hearing members share about their struggles to repair the damage from drunken holidays past and their anxieties about relapsing, really helped me feel grateful that my Higher Power had removed my obsession to drink, and that with his love and mercy, I still had my family and another chance at life.

Then, when the usual family tensions arose and I started feeling anxious, sad and afraid on Christmas Eve, I had a place to go: our holiday alca-thon at the clubhouse—24 hours of AA meetings, every hour, on the hour. I went to two meetings on Christmas Eve after the family dinner, and when I couldn't sleep in the pre-dawn of Christmas morning, I went back for three more! There was something so calming about six sober drunks clustered together in a sea of chairs at 4:30 on Christmas morning, sharing about the gifts we had been given this past year. Instead of mourning my losses, or feeling sorry for myself, I was giving thanks for the gift of sobriety.

A few more people came to the 5 a.m. meeting, where we talked about the power of the Serenity Prayer during stressful times. And then when 6 a.m. arrived, so did about 60 or so alcoholics and their loved ones, for a really joyous meeting. I never expected to be sitting in an AA meeting watching Christmas morning dawn, and yet, there I was. I couldn't imagine being anywhere more perfect or more beautiful.

Not only did I survive the holidays, the holidays became even more precious to me. My self-pity dissipated and my heart swelled with gratitude and love. As I counted all the gifts I got this year, I marveled that not one of them came in a gift box or a gift bag, or in a bottle or a glass.

Happy Sober Holidays

stay serene & sober
this holiday season



A.A. RESOURCES LOCATED IN AREA 75 - SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

The following are the telephone numbers and addresses of the four local central offices and one intergroup located in southern Wisconsin.

Madison Area Intergroup Central Office (MAICO)

2000 Engel St, Suite 104
Madison, WI 53713
(608) 222-8989
Fax: (608) 663-9097
E-mail us at info@aamadisonwi.org
Website: <http://www.aamadisonwi.org/>

Racine Area Central Office (RACO)

3701 Durand Avenue, #225 LL-B
Racine WI 53045
(262) 554-6611
E-mail: racostaff@racinecentraloffice.org
Website: <http://www.racinecentraloffice.org>

Winnebago land Central Office - Fond du Lac

P.O. Box 572
280 North Main Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54936-0572
(920) 922-7512
E-mail us at winnebagolandco@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.fonddulacaa.org/>

Milwaukee Central Office

7429 W. Greenfield Avenue
West Allis, WI 53214
(414) 771-9119
Website: <http://www.aamilwaukee.com>

LaCrosse Intergroup

Box 1212
LaCrosse, WI
(800) 886-0695

Events

The Alano Club – racinealanoclub.com

The Grove Club – thegroveclub.com

Masquerade Ball

Saturday, December 31st

8p-Midnight

\$5 Admission

The Benjamin House – benjaminhouseracine.org

RACO Steering Committee Positions Needed!!

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.”

These positions are still available as of the Steering Committee meeting on December 7th , 2022. Please reach out to those looking to do service work – thank you.

The following positions are still needed for the Steering Committee as we close out 2022.

- * Co-Treasurer (3 years sobriety required)
- * Co-Secretary (1 year sobriety required)
- * Co-Chairman (3 years sobriety required)

Talk with your sponsor, sponsees, home groups and others you know in the fellowship who might be interested in this important (and fun) 12th step work. The Steering Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm at the Central Office (RACO).

Please consider donating your faith, hope and strength to the group as we continue to try and help the next suffering alcoholic one day at a time!



Services and Service Opportunities

RACO Volunteers Needed!!

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

Call RACO at (262) 554-6611 or e-mail us to volunteer and we will get you trained!

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 Bookstore

The Racine Area Central Office's bookstore has all of your recovery literature needs (some Spanish versions available). Bookstore is open during normal office hours and debit/credit cards are accepted. Stop in today for your or your groups' literature needs!

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 the RACO office.



Help is Everywhere

District/Club Information

District 17		Racine, Wisconsin	
Racine Alano Club 1140 Douglas Ave Racine, WI 53404 (262) 634-9902 Racinealanoclub.com	The Grove Club 1037 Grove Ave. Racine, WI 53405 (262) 634-9656 Thegroveclub.com	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/			

Racine Area Central Office <i>Officers/Steering Committee</i>	
Chairperson	Jeff G.
Co-Chairperson	Open
Secretary	Simon
Co-Secretary	Open
Treasurer	John K
Co-Treasurer	Open
Staffing Coordinator	Doreen G
Co-Staffing Coordinator	John B
Newsletter	Chris J
Co-Newsletter	Open
Hotline Chairperson	Chris W
Co-Hotline Chairperson	Mike
Literature Chairperson	Craig
Co-Literature Chair	Rachael M
Procurement	Open
Co-Procurement	Open
Webmaster	Dave W
Co-Webmaster	Rebecca B
Advisor	Toni M
Advisor	Tom M.
Advisor	Jon K
3701 Durand Avenue #225B	
Racine, WI 53403	
(262) 554-6611	
24-Hour Hotline: (262) 554-7788	

Interested in receiving the Monthly Newsletter through e-mail?

Become a subscriber today by sending an e-mail to raconewsletter@gmail.com

Your Racine Area Central Office has numerous openings on the steering committee. Please put Wednesday, January 4th, 6:00pm on your calendar and attend the next Steering Committee meeting at the RACO office, 3701 Durand Avenue, Racine, 53405.

Please note that Western Union money grams are no longer accepted by our bank. Thanks to all who have used this method in the past and thank you for understanding and using a different means of donating.

Your story could be what the next recovering alcoholic needs to hear! Please submit your personal story of strength, hope & faith for publication in one of our newsletters!

If interested in getting on the 12th step hotline phone list or to volunteer, please go to the website or click the following link:

<https://racinecentraloffice.org/24-hour-hotline/>

If you know of someone who would like to receive a monthly e-version of the Reprieve, please e-mail request to RACONewsletter@gmail.com

<https://racinecentraloffice.org/>