



Illinois Area 21

District 12

Alcoholics Anonymous

NEWSLETTER

February, 2012

www.aa-eci.org

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Quality vs. Quantity

As a long standing member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have become an advocate for working on the issues that impede us from reaching the goals that we set for ourselves. Recently, a newcomer said to me, "I want to have 5 or 10 years sobriety so I don't have to deal with so much." This took me aback because it had been a while since I had heard anyone comparing length of sobriety with serenity. My response was something along the lines of, 'We all get sober One Day at a Time.'

Granted, some of us have a very hard time in the beginning of sobriety sorting out what is important to stay sober. Dealing with legal issues, family problems, and financial woes can be very overwhelming. Some newcomers are blinded by those most pressing problems that make their lives seem more difficult. As newcomers, we tend to hear in meetings that 'everything is just dandy in the land of long term sobriety' and we just have to stay sober to get sobriety.

Well, I'm here to say that it isn't always true. As the *Big Book* states, we have to "Clear away the wreckage of your past" (page 164) that follows us into sobriety and we have to deal with this either as a newcomer or we will have to deal with that wreckage again and again later on. As Elizabeth Kubler-Ross explains in *Seven Stages of Grief*, sometimes we get stuck in anger or bargaining instead of moving through to acceptance. Some of us try to ignore the problems that we bring with us into sobriety by telling ourselves that we only have to not drink.

Bill Wilson broached the subject in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* by telling us that we have to change everything about ourselves to maintain the quality of sobriety that we wish to achieve. Sure, after several years of 'just not drinking,' we have the tools of the program which give us ways to maneuver around the things that make us want to drink. More often 'just not drinking' doesn't produce the serenity and contentment that makes our lives easier and then we are able to comfortably live with ourselves.

Now, I realize that everyone is different and what works for one person, doesn't necessarily work for another person. There are a few A.A. Slogans that will help explain this question of Quality vs. Quantity. First of all, 'But for the Grace of God....' refers to the fact that things could be much worse for me if I drink. I could lose my my job, my driver's license, my children, my...you fill in the blank. Sometimes I hear this slogan go through my head when I am aware of a situation with fellow members of Alcoholics Anonymous where there is ill will or disruption in the normal flow of life. Thankful I am not in the middle of the conflict, I am reminded that Grace is a gift from God and the A.A. program. The ability to separate my personal opinions from the facts of the situation was a great lesson to me from the members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs

DCM	John C.
Alternate DCM	Melanie G.
Secretary	Kate M.
Treasurer	Steve B.
Corrections	Jay S.
Treatment Facilities	Bill B.
Meeting List	Mona M.
Answering Service	Scott S.
Newsletter	Tammy M.
Grapevine	Andy C.
PI-CPC	Linda B.
Website	Joe P.
Archives	Doris A.

District 12 holds its meetings on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 2pm in the Fellowship Circle Hall at 718 South Randolph, Champaign.

If you would like to submit something for publication, or just send comments or questions to the Committee, please email newsletter@aa-eci.org. Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.

Secondly, 'One Day at a Time' is meant to shorten our viewpoint from 'This is how it will always be forever' to 'All I have to concentrate on is right now, today, not what might happen tomorrow, next week, or next year.' Long term sobriety is built on a foundation of reliance on a Power Greater than myself, acceptance of the here and now, and the humility to be teachable. Have you ever heard "Grow or Go?" I don't think that is a slogan, but Bill Wilson talks about this concept in the *Twelve and Twelve*, on page 115.

"After we come into A.A., if we go on growing, our attitudes and actions toward security—emotional security and financial security—commence to change profoundly."

Another slogan which helps me understand that the quality of my sobriety depends solely on the maintenance of my spiritual condition is Einstein's definition of insanity, "Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." It is quite apparent to some members of A.A. that when recovering members change how they think, how they act, and how they feel about themselves, only then are they able to reach some sort of self acceptance and live their lives with as much serenity as possible.

That is where a stumbling block appears for us when we think that there are certain things that we need not change about ourselves. Step 6 and 7 are the cornerstones for changing ourselves to be what our Higher Power wants us to be. Step 6 states, "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." Supposedly, we found all of our defects of character in our 4th and 5th steps. But how many of us have done more than one 4th step and revealed additional defects that weren't so glaring on other 4th steps?

We can pick apart the wording of this step to rationalize that, 'Maybe I wasn't ENTIRELY ready' or, 'My Higher Power didn't seem to think that particular character defect was worth removing...' Unfortunately, we are human and if we think for our Higher Power, then we are on a very slippery slope. Only God is God.

My point is, allow your Higher Power to change the things about you that need changing, and God decides what those things are. Prayer and meditation are great filters for bringing to light what our Higher Power wants from us. As Alcoholics, we tend to complicate the simplest of matters. Take a moment to ask yourself, 'What is it about other people that bothers me the most *and* can I find those same characteristics in myself?'

Apart from the years since my last drunk, the things that continue to be part of the quality of sobriety in my life are 'Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness.' Honesty about my character defects, which include changing how I think. The ability to be open minded about those defects and what I need to change about myself. And my willingness on an ongoing basis to change. Change being the key to quality, no matter how long I've been sober. If I'm not willing to change, then am I willing to live with the consequences? My Higher Power presses me to change, over and over. Change how I think, how I act, and what I believe. Thank you, Higher Power, for giving the gift of change and the gift of Grace, along with the ability to see what my Higher Power would have me be one step at a time.

~Cindy N., Champaign

AA TRIVIA

From January:

Where was Bill when he read the ominous epitaph on an old tombstone?

Answer: Winchester Cathedral, England (Big Book, page 1)

February's Challenge:

What was Dr. Bob's sobriety date?

IN MEMORIAM

Colleen F. of Paxton; August 13, 1949 – January 7, 2012

Colleen was born in Omaha, Nebraska. She graduated Paxton High School in 1967. She received her registered nurse degree from Parkland College and completed her bachelor's degree of nursing at Olivet Nazarene University in 1999. Condolences to her AA family and her family of sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, and many grandchildren.

DISTRICT 12 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting List – Make sure to pick up a new (light blue) meeting list!

Grapevine – Encouraging members to continue to increase subscriptions toward helping Area 21 reach its goal. GRAPEVINE is at 800-631-6025 or www.aagrapevine.org. For those of you creative members, you can not only submit articles for our Newsletter to consider publishing, but you can also send articles through John C., our DCM, to get sent to the Grapevine for publishing.

Treatment Center – There are 39 service positions being filled by only 23 people. There is also a new opportunity for treatment center meetings in Learna (between Mattoon and Charleston)!

GSR votes for those whose groups had opinions on:

Area Assemblies in the future to be held in a central location:
4 in favor, 1 opposed, remaining neutral

The Area 21 Spring Conference is canceled at this time. Is there interest in restoring this conference to life:

3 in favor, 1 opposed, remaining neutral

NOTES FROM THE DCM:

We had a par financial year in 2011 and need your continued support in 2012. Groups, please put District 12 in your monthly or quarterly allocated disbursements and mail your check to: **AA District 12 Treasurer, P.O. Box 2413, Champaign, IL 61825-2413**. Include your group service number, name, Area & District. You can e-mail your DCM, John C. at johnc@dndcillinois.com for a better understanding of why it is important to give to district, area, and G.S.O. and invite him to attend your group's business meeting.

District 12 is about carrying the message. Please, if you are a new group or an existing group we encourage you to appoint a GSR so that they can attend our District 12 meetings. Without an active GSR, you risk missing information from other groups and what others are doing to carry the message to their home group members. A GSR helps keep the group up to date on what's going on in the AA communities around our state and internationally. Your GSR can report to you where your contributions go, what workshops and events you could participate in, what committees need service work to be done in, and keeps your group up on the organizational AA chatter. Service work is volunteering your talents and time, sometimes very minimal, to help spread the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. It is a vital part of our recovery.

GSRs – WE COME SO THAT WE DON'T MISS OUT ON ANY OF THE FUN WE GET TO ENJOY TODAY IN AA!

Come meet your District 12 Officers, Committee Chairs, and many of our GSRs at our next District 12 meeting Sunday, February 19th at 2:00 pm in the Hall at 718 S. Randolph.

ANNIVERSARIES

To submit an anniversary to the newsletter, please email newsletter@aa-eci.org. (Be sure to get consent!)

Dan D.	January 1	3 years
Brenda N.	January 2	6 years
Jerry R.	January 4	10 years
Kelly C.	January 6	1 year
Erin Y.	January 13	1 year
Rebecca K.	January 13	3 years
Tim C.	January 17	2 years
Kristen S.	January 22	7 years
Bill S.	January 30	5 years

*Missed anniversary from January's edition:
Matt J., December 27th, 2 years*

SPEAKER MEETINGS

Saturday, February 11th, 8pm

As Bill Sees It, Speaker: TBA
718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Monday, February 13th, 8pm

Cellar Dwellers, Speaker: TBA
602 W. Green Street, Urbana

Wednesday, February 15th, 7:30pm

Nuts and Bolts, Speaker: TBA
Camel Club, 508 E. Fairchild, Danville

Saturday, February 18th 6:30pm

Bottoms Up, Speaker: Cheri S.
Serenity Shack, 117 N. Ohio Street, Rantoul

Thursday, February 23rd, 7pm

H.O.W. Group, Speaker: Jeff J.
718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Friday, February 24th, 8pm

Friday Night Meeting, Speaker: Mike J. (from Decatur)
Madison & 7th Avenues, Charleston

Saturday, February 25th, 6pm

Working with Others, Speaker: TBA
718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Sunday, February 26th, 8pm

Grapevine Group, Speaker: TBA
Prairie Center, 122 West Hill Street, Champaign

Monday, February 27th, 8pm

Monday Meeting, Speaker: TBA
109 E. Van Allen, Tuscola

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Southern Illinois Area 21
March 2012 Area Assembly
March 11**

Hosted by District 7
MT. VERNON HOLIDAY INN
222 POTOMAC BOULEVARD
(I-57 & IL RT. 15)
MT. VERNON, IL 62864
Rooms: \$79.00 + tax
618-244-7100

Registration begins @ 7:30 a.m.
Assembly meeting begins @ 9 a.m.
Registration + Lunch: \$15.00

**Saturday Night Speaker Meeting
@ 8 p.m.**

Primary Purpose Group

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
3205 Broadway
(32nd & Broadway)
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

**For More Information Contact Mike O.
618-315-7661**

**Superbowl Party & Chili Cook-Off
Sunday, February 5
Rantoul at the Serenity Shack**
(in place of the usual Friday Feed on Feb. 3)
Bring a pot of your chili (or just yourself).
5:30 p.m. Kick-Off
3 winners to be chosen for the best chili!

**Great River Roundup 2012
Friday, March 2 – Saturday, March 3**

PERE MARQUETTE LODGE & CONFERENCE CENTER
ROUTE 100, GRAFTON IL 62037

Room Reservations: 618-786-2331

EVENTS INCLUDE 4 SPEAKER MEETINGS, STICK MEETING, RED BALL MEETING, BANQUET AND DANCE

Roundup Registration:

All events (including all meetings, banquet & dance): \$40 per person

Conference events only: \$20 per person

Dance only: \$5 per person; \$8 per couple

Banquet seating is assigned and limited to 300, so advanced registration is strongly suggested.

Send registration information (name, address, zip) and check payment to:

Great River Roundup
P.O. Box 522, Wood River, IL 62095

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC CONFERENCE
EVENTS AND OTHER LODGING IN
THE AREA CONTACT:**



BRUCE 618-304-5273

DON 618-910-2248

JOHN 618-931-0159

KIM 618-917-6719

ROUNDUP!!