

Illinois Area 21

District 12



Alcoholics Anonymous

NEWSLETTER

August, 2013

www.aa-eci.org

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Newsletter Staff

EDITOR &
LAYOUT Kelly A.
SPEAKER
CALENDAR Jeff R.
DISTRICT
NOTES &
EVENTS Rosemary T.
DISTRIBUTION Bonnie

EVIDENCE OF GRACE

I never really thought that I wanted to get sober, or to stay sober. I believed that only boring, straight-laced nerds did not drink. I also believed that life could not be fun, or exciting, or worth the effort if I did not have my source of power and control; which I believed could only be found in the bottle. I was so delusional that I believed that drinking to excess was the issue, and that if I could learn to control my drinking, and I could seek treatment for my "emotional issues" that all would be well. I would magically become the kind of person that went to work regularly, attired in clean clothes, and made use of proper personal hygiene. I believed that I would suddenly know how to pay my bills, follow through on my commitments and become a stable, trustworthy member of society. Alcohol was not the issue, but rather the amount of alcohol consumed daily was the issue; abstaining in the short term, followed by a method to ensure some control would take care of all the internal and external wreckage in my life. I don't recall believing that I needed a hand up, but a hand out would be nice.

With this attitude and a firmly held faulty belief system, I entered the rooms of AA to find the "method" that I sought. Sobriety would only be a short term affair, and I would learn how to behave. I held close my decision to drink if life became too hard or too painful. Yes, I would stay sober today, but if I were to get fired, or to lose my boyfriend, or God forbid, someone I loved were to die, I WOULD drink. This is the deal that I cut with myself. If the going got too tough I would have a ready made excuse and a course of action. Little did I know that my Higher Power had a different plan for me. My Higher Power recognized that I was dying, and suffering from the pain of loneliness, self deception, self centered fear and a form of moral bankruptcy. My Higher Power's plan was to throw me into the rooms of AA, have total strangers love me for no reason that I could fathom, help me to see my fears, self aggrandizement, dishonesty, and despair. However, these would only be revealed to me with equal amounts of hope, honesty, love and acceptance. The grace of my Higher Power was to teach me that all my secret dealings made with myself were not to be.

When I had one year of sobriety, I began to see that the man that I loved and had been with for many years was a crutch for me, and a hindrance to my sobriety. This man was a lovely person, but we had formed a silent partnership that was comprised of mutual delusion and dishonesty, and the feelings that we had for each other were toxic to us both. I made the decision to live on my own for the first time in my life. This decision was not really my own, but one that was revealed to me by my Higher Power. I needed to learn to love others and myself, before I would really be capable of a romantic relationship. Also, I had much to learn about caring for others, without a self serving agenda. I could not believe that I had the courage to end this relationship, and the power to take a leap of faith to try to live completely alone. I soon saw that it had not really been my doing, but rather the doing of my Higher Power, and his grace.

<i>District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs</i>	
DCM	Gary S. (dcm@aa-eci.org)
Alternate DCM	Mona Lee H.
Secretary	Erin Y. (secretary@aa-eci.org)
Treasurer	Steve B. (treasurer@aa-eci.org)
Corrections	Mike K.
Treatment Facilities	Tim C. & Creighton
Meeting List	Mona M.
Answering Service	Sam E. (answering-service@aa-eci.org)
Newsletter	VACANT (newsletter@aa-eci.org)
Grapevine	Mark G.
PI-CPC	Tom D. (picpc@aa-eci.org)
Website	Rosemary T. (webmaster@aa-eci.org)
Archives	Doris A. & Mike W.
<i>District 12 holds its meetings on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 2pm in the Fellowship Circle Hall at 718 South Randolph, Champaign.</i>	
<i>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.</i>	

I had found a high paying executive position in a company shortly after I became sober. I could not see for a long time that the job and all the benefits that were associated with this job were a gift that I had received. It was not long before my mighty ego became so entrenched in the status and the financial payoff, that I forgot this position was an opportunity for growth, and a gift born of God's grace. My ego convinced me that it was surely all about ME! MY brilliance, MY perfection, MY.....whatever. After four years in this position, and with approximately 4 years of sobriety, I lost this job. My ego was deflated, my style of living adjusted accordingly, and my true self was ultimately revealed. The spiritual self, not the ego. God had done for me what I could not do for myself. My Higher Power had stepped in to bring humility, self respect, and immense love for others and myself, and taught me again what exactly mattered in my sobriety. It was time to actively rework the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

At five years of sobriety the unimaginable happened. My mother whom I loved more than any one person in my world, died within six months of a diagnosis of throat cancer. HOW could this happen? She was my AA inspiration, my spiritual guide, my hero, the one person who I knew loved me no matter what. My mother had given me immense insight in to God's capability for love, long before I began to understand this source. My mother had gently introduced the AA program to me. My mother was someone that had actually experienced a complete personality change by working the steps. My mother was, for me, a walking, talking reminder of the 10th step promises. HOW was I going to continue recovery, and find my strength without my mother? Once again though magically, wondrously, spontaneously, the absolute grace of my Higher Power began to work in my heart, mind, relationships in and outside of the program. My Higher Power showed me that my mother was ready to move to another plane, that I could help her die. It was

revealed to me that I could myself try to be a reflection of the power of AA, and in doing so, I could love my mother through her passing, and I could also love my AA family, and my family of origin. This was the most amazing, inspirational, loving, faith-filled time I had ever experienced. I absolutely KNEW that I was not the architect of my internal transformation, and that God was again there to carry me through, and more importantly, to help me carry others.

Since the time of my mother's death, many years later, I have experienced too many deaths of beloved friends and family. I have lost jobs, relationships and money. What I now know though, is that I never needed to use my back up plan that I had made in early recovery. I did not have to drink to get through the pain. I did not have to make manifest the idea that there really is nothing so bad that a drink won't make worse. I only needed to stay present, stay open, and allow the lovely Grace of God to guide me through. Yes, I have at times felt the physical ache in my heart of a devastating loss. But rather than run and hide, I can choose to reach outward and allow my Higher Power to continue doing for me what I cannot do for myself. This has been a difficult time for me as of late, as I have watched friends of mine grieve the profound loss of a beloved person in their lives. My prayer is that they will feel God's Grace, and remember the power of the limitless love in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

~Cheri P., Champaign

BIG BOOK TRIVIA

July's question:

On page 171 in Dr. Bob's story, where was the "small New England village of about seven thousand souls"?

Answer: St. Johnsbury, Vermont

August's Challenge:

On page 179, who was "The friend at whose home Dr. Bob woke up"?

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

At the July District 12 Business meeting, DCM Gary S. reported that he is updating GSO and Area records for the AA registered meeting and contacts. If your group has changed GSRs or alternates, please contact him (dcm@aa-eci.org) with that information. To encourage service work, there will be sign up sheets for the various service opportunities/committees at Soberfest in September.

Committee Reports:

Corrections: The Committee has decided to rename the Champaign County Jail Meeting as the There Is A Solution Meeting.

Newsletter: The committee is still looking for a chair to coordinate the production of the District's monthly newsletter. Anyone with a computer with internet connection, word processing / editing skills, organizational skills and able to meet deadlines please contact Gary S. (dcm@aa-eci.org). The Newsletter is also looking for people to contribute articles for publication; please submit those to newsletter@aa-eci.org.

Grapevine: Mark G. is still gathering materials for Grapevine subscription sales.

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperating With Professional Communities): Tom D. reported that he has distributed information to two the three local public health clinics in Champaign. He is looking for people to join the committee and come up with a list of agencies and offices throughout the district to distribute literature to. If interested please contact Tom D. at picpc@aa-eci.org.

Website: The site has its same address aa-eci.org, but is still in the process of redesign and content creation. In order to help people get to their first meeting, Rosemary T. is requesting that GSRs or members attending meetings outside of CU please submit digital photos of your meeting site (building) showing the entrance door to the meeting (She already has photos for C/U). These will be posted on Google Maps and made searchable by address and location. When taking the photos, make sure no cars are visible to preserve members' anonymity. Please send photos as email attachments to webmaster@aa-eci.org

GSR Reports:

The Monday Meeting in Monticello (8 pm) has a new name, the Friends of Bill Group, and a new GSR, Kelly C. The Friday Night Fellowship in Champaign (Friday, 7:30 pm) is the oldest registered meeting in the District and is looking for Old Timers to be interviewed for an article about the group's history. If interested please contact the group at fridaynightfellowship@yahoo.com or speak with the GSR, Mike W.

The next District Meeting will be Sunday, August 18 at 2 pm.

SPEAKER MEETINGS

Sunday, August 4th, 8pm

S.W.A.T., Speaker: Melanie G.

602 W. Green, Urbana

Saturday, August 10th, 8pm

As Bill Sees It, Speaker: Bill B.

718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Monday, August 12th, 8pm

Cellar Dwellers, Speaker: TBA

602 W. Green, Urbana

Saturday, August 17th, 6:30pm

Bottoms Up, Speaker: TBA

Serenity Shack, 117 N. Ohio Street, Rantoul

Wednesday, August 21st, 7:30pm

Nuts and Bolts, Speaker: TBA

Camel Club, 508 E. Fairchild, Danville

Thursday, August 22nd, 7pm

H.O.W. Group, Speaker: Lee

718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Saturday, August 24th, 6pm

Working with Others, Speaker: TBA

718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Saturday, August 24th, 5pm

Shoulder to Shoulder Group, Speaker: TBA

First Christian Church, 16th & Wabash, Mattoon

Sunday, August 25th, 8pm

Grapevine Group, Speaker: Mona

Prairie Center, 122 W. Hill Street, Champaign

Monday, August 26th, 8pm

Monday Meeting, Speaker: TBA

109 E. Van Allen, Tuscola

Friday, August 30th, 8pm

Friday Night Meeting, Speaker: TBA

Madison & 7th, Charleston

ANNIVERSARIES

*To submit an anniversary to the newsletter,
please email newsletter@aa-eci.org.*

(Be sure to get consent!)

Bob S.	June 30	23 years
Bridget L	July 1	25 years
Mark G.	July 1	23 years
Cindy N.	July 5	26 years
Sam E	July 11	4 years
Jason E.	July 18	3 years
David H.	July 19	1 year
Becky W.	July 26	2 years

All anniversaries are published after they have passed in the following month's newsletter.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2013 Illinois State Conference "Our Solution in Action" August 23-25

(Hosted by Northern IL Area, Districts 22 & 23)

Hyatt Regency, Schaumburg, IL
1800 East Golf Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173
1-888-421-1442
Conference Room Rate \$89
Mention IL State AA Conference
<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/ILStateAA>

AA Speakers

Friday: Debra B. (Madison, WI)
Saturday: Jack G. (Huntington Beach, CA)
Sunday: Mary D. (GSO Staff)

Al-Anon Speakers

Friday: Eric S. (South Elgin, IL)
Saturday: Beverly B. (Lewisville, TX)
Alateen: Kathie R. (Elgin, IL)

ALCATHON – AL-ANON – ALATEEN – DANCE

Groups that wish to sit together must register together (8 per table).

Conference Contacts:

Larry S. 847-702-1952
Allen J. 630-830-6145
Colleen H., Al-Anon Contact 224-629-6453

Fees: AA/Al-Anon –

Conference only: \$20, Conference and Banquet: \$53
Alateen –
Conference only: \$5, Conference and Banquet: \$38

Call the conference Special Needs Chairperson at 847-271-4417
no later than 2 weeks before the conference
if an interpreter is needed.

17th Annual National Archives Workshop "Our Past and Beyond" September 12-15

Hilton Hotel
700 East Adams, Springfield, IL
217-789-1530
Conference Rate: \$102 plus tax/night

Speakers, Presentations, Workshops and Panels
Big Book History Presentation – Don B.

Registration:

Conference only: \$35
Conference and Banquet: \$75
Saturday Night Banquet and Keynote Presentation: \$40

For more information contact:

Johnnie H.: (309) 712-2190 johnnie092401@aol.com
Connie S. (618) 304-7557

www.aanationalarchivesworkshop.com

District 18 (Southern IL: Edwardsville, South Roxana) Picnic August 18

Dad's Park
400 Daniel Boone Trail
South Roxana, IL 62087

Set Up: 11:00am
Eat: 12pm
Clean Up: 4:00pm

Meat & Drinks Provided, Bring a Covered Dish to Share
Games for Kids of All Ages, 50/50 Raffle, Fire Truck, Washers
More information: Robert S. 618-741-9005

6th Annual Fish & Alligator Fry and SWAT Quarterly Speaker Meeting & Potluck September 1

Join the SWAT group for their quarterly speaker meeting and potluck, please bring a dish to share!

Speaker: Karen C.

Following the speaker meeting, SWAT will be hosting its traditional quarterly potluck. In addition, Jimmy and Michael are also hosting their 6th annual fish and alligator fry!

718 S. Randolph, Champaign. Meeting starts at 12pm, fry and potluck to follow!

Area 21 Fall Assembly (hosted by District 6) September 8

Tazwell Woodford County Headstart
233 Leadley Avenue
East Peoria, IL 61611

Registration Opens at 7:30 am
Assembly Begins at 9:00 am
Registration \$5
Lunch \$10

Saturday Night Speaker Meeting:

September 7, 2013 8:00 pm
Mike F. (Past Delegate Panel 53, Area 38)
Hilltop Group
155 North Western Ave. Peoria, IL 61614

Lodging:

Reservations Open until August 16, 2013

Sleep In Peoria

4244 Brandywine Drive, Peoria, IL 61614
Phone (309) 682-3322; Fax (309) 682-3031
\$69.99/night + 12% tax, up to 4 persons/room

Super 8 Peoria

1816 W. War Memorial Drive, Peoria, IL 61614
Phone 309-688-8074; Fax 309-688-8284
\$65/night + 12% tax, up to 4 persons/room

For more info contact:

Dick S. (309) 253-4654 spence25000@gmail.com
Jerry B. (309) 231-9873
John W. (309) 232-0839