



Illinois Area 21

District 12

Alcoholics Anonymous

## NEWSLETTER

October, 2013

[www.aa-eci.org/newsletter](http://www.aa-eci.org/newsletter)

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### AN EARLY LESSON IN STEP TEN

When I was in my first 90 days, I had to take a week long business trip by myself. My sponsor assured me that there would be AA meetings in the area that I was staying. The plan was that between those meetings, the Big Book, my telephone, and my Higher Power, I would be just fine. Little did I know, not only would I make it through the week without a drink; I would learn a lesson that serves me well to this very day!

When I got to town, I called the Intergroup office in that area and confirmed that I had the right time and good directions to the meeting. New to the area, I asked the man on the phone if I had time to make it to the meeting from my hotel and he said, "Go on ahead, they'll wait for you!" I appreciated the laugh and headed straight to the meeting house, which was in a single wide trailer behind a church. Walking into the room full of strangers, I sat in the back corner of the room, as most of us do in our early days and waited for the meeting to start.

The meeting was chaired by an easy going guy named "Rock". When he asked for visitors to introduce themselves, I let everyone know that I was just in from Jacksonville and kept my mouth shut after that, hoping to gain something that would help me stay sober. Truth be told, the first part of the meeting was fairly lousy. As people started sharing, all I heard was how miserable they were. One at a time, they told their sad stories about how life was not going their way. Occasionally, one of them would at least add that while things were rough, at least they did not have to pick up a drink over it.

As all of this was going on, I realized that it was going to be a long week if this kept up. I began to look around the room to see if there might be someone who could turn this "pity party" of a meeting around. After all, I did not sign up for "life still sucks, but at least I am still sober". I wanted to hear about "happy, joyous, and free". As I searched the room, I saw a man sitting by the door who looked like he had been in the program a long time. He had bright eyes and a healthy glow about him. With perfect posture, he held his Big Book like a health inspector holds his clipboard. I could see that he was attentive as he listened to the others sharing by the way his eyes darted from speaker to speaker. I just knew that he had to be the local elder statesman of AA and that he would salvage the meeting.

I could not have been more wrong. When it was his turn to share, this old timer stood up and took everyone else's inventory in the worst way. Half of them, he berated for not working their programs correctly in some way, shape, or fashion. The other half

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<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 <a href="mailto:newsletter@aa-eci.org">newsletter@aa-eci.org</a>. Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.</i>	

were not even real alcoholics in his view because they had not had enough DUIs or had not blown a high enough BAC. He cussed. He ranted. He turned red as he beat his chest and raved selfishly about his recovery. By the time he was done, just about everyone wanted to beat him up or crawl under a rock. He sat down with his first and only smile of the night as he surveyed the damage he had done.

The room fell silent and Rock turned to me and said, "How about our guest from Jacksonville? What does Mr. Big City Recovery think about all of this?" I took a deep breath and replied that I was grateful for the meeting because every person in AA serves as a mirror for me so that I can see more clearly where I was, where I am now and where I might go in the program, good, bad, or ugly. I shared that I was grateful that I was not alone and that I had learned a lot at that meeting.

About that time, the meeting wrapped up and it was no surprise to anyone that the angry old timer left before the prayer. I suspected that if he was capable of holding hands and praying with others, he might not be so miserable. I had not made it to the car before dialing my sponsor to process what had just gone on at this train wreck of a meeting. I had to know how someone with so much time in the program could be so miserable and lash out so hurtfully to those he should be helping.

My sponsor explained to me what a bleeding deacon is. A bleeding deacon wears the vestments of recovery and quotes the scripture of recovery, but they are still wounded and instead of helping others recover, they spread their misery. "How does that happen? How do you spend that much time in the program and stay so sick?" I asked. "Simple, he doesn't do any 10th Step work", was the reply from my sponsor. He was so right; this guy took everyone else's inventory but his own.

That lesson has stayed with me since then and serves me well to this very day. The memory of that lunatic going off reminds me that no matter how hard it is, I need to take my own inventory and admit it when I am wrong. If I ignore the step, or even worse, twist it, I could very well end up as a bleeding deacon instead of an elder statesman.

~Phil A., Jacksonville, FL

(reprinted from *Add-a-Line*, the Northeast Florida Intergroup newsletter)

## ANNIVERSARIES

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

Pam H.	September 1	28 years
Creighton C.	September 9	27 years
Lynelle L.	September 20	3 years

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

## BIG BOOK TRIVIA

September's question:

On pages 174-175, which one of "the local sanitariums" did Dr. Bob commit himself to?

Answer:  
Fair Oaks Villa, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

October's Challenge:

On page xvii, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, who was the "very first case"?

## DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

At the September 15<sup>th</sup> district meeting:

**DCM Report:** Gary S. reported that Area 21 has established its own prudent reserve and now has an excess of funds; a committee has been appointed to study how to disburse the excess. The Area literature committee will now have a display of AA GSO approved literature at Area Assemblies. The area Corrections committee has ordered and distributed Big Books to institutions in the Area. They are planning to order more; local corrections committees interested in obtaining Big Books may contact Area 21 to get a message to their corrections chair at [www.aa-sia.org](http://www.aa-sia.org).

**Treatment Centers:** Creighton C. reported that volunteers are needed to fill slots for Tuesday evenings at the Carle Pavilion. If interested, contact him directly or by email at [treatment-centers@aa-eci.org](mailto:treatment-centers@aa-eci.org)

**Meeting List:** Liza W. is the new co-chair of the committee. A new run of print meeting lists are out; they are dark orange. She is working on corrections to the list; any groups with changes should contact her at [meeting-list@aa-eci.org](mailto:meeting-list@aa-eci.org).

There are two new meetings starting in October. In Champaign, on Oct. 1 (Tuesday) a women's step study will begin 7:30 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1700 Crescent Drive. On October 23 (Wednesday) at 8 p.m., a closed meeting will start in Bement, at the United Methodist Church, 249 N. Piatt St.

**Grapevine:** Mark G. encouraged district members to subscribe to the Grapevine and suggested that financially secure groups consider subscribing. He also said that old issues are needed for inmates and local jails; anyone with old issues should leave them at the Hall on the bookshelf to be picked up.

**Website:** Rosemary T. reported that she and Martin B. are continuing to refine features on the new site: a Speaker Meetings & Events Calendar, current and past District Newsletters in PDF form, and a page with links to the AA's General Service Office with links to PDF forms to registering new groups or reporting changes in GSRs. A mobile app (to make the site easier to access on mobile phones) is coming; funding was approved last month by a vote of the GSRs. If you have suggestions or comments about the site email [webmaster@aa-eci.org](mailto:webmaster@aa-eci.org)

**Election of District Secretary:** Silver D. was elected District Secretary. Her duties are to record, prepare and distribute the minutes for the monthly District meetings. She can be reached at [secretary@aa-eci.org](mailto:secretary@aa-eci.org)

## SPEAKER MEETINGS

*Sunday, October 6th, 12pm*

SWAT, Speaker: Steph B.  
718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

*Saturday, October 12th, 8pm*

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

*Saturday, October 12th, 10am*

Attitude of Gratitude, Speaker: Gus L.  
2055 E. Harrison, Charleston

*Monday, October 14th, 8pm*

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

*Wednesday, October 16th, 7:30pm*

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

*Saturday, October 19th, 6:30pm*

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

*Thursday, October 24th, 7pm*

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

*Friday, October 25th, 8pm*

Friday Night Meeting, Speaker: TBA  
Madison & 7th, Charleston

*Saturday, October 26th, 6pm*

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

*Saturday, October 26th, 5pm*

Shoulder to Shoulder Group, Speaker: Gary S.  
First Christian Church, 16th & Wabash, Mattoon

*Sunday, October 27th, 8pm*

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

*Monday, October 28th, 8pm*

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MONTICELLO AA GROUP ANNUAL PICNIC

**October 6**

The Monticello AA Group's Annual Picnic will be held at the Forest Preserve Park Pavilion in Monticello, Illinois on Sunday October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013, from 3:00 – 8:00pm.

Meat will be provided, please bring a covered dish to share.

Open Speaker: Mary W. (Champaign)

Electricity and lighting will be available.

### 31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL COLUMBUS MEN'S WORKSHOP

**October 11-13**

**Food & Lodging:** Columbus Youth Camp is a rural, wooded setting with 8, 20 man cabins; beds and mattresses are furnished. You are encouraged to camp out, so please bring your own tent.

Bring your own pillow, sleeping bag, towels, toilet articles, flashlights and an "Open Mind."

Meals, snacks, soft drinks and coffee are provided but we do ask that you PLEASE bring EXTRA SNACKS such as cakes and pies to share or we may have to increase registration costs in the future.

Everyone Welcome – Scholarships available.

Registration Begins	9:00am
Friday evening meal	6:00pm
Introduction to workshop	8:00pm
Donation	\$55.00

For more information: Tim Fields (812) 378-3455

There will be a horseshoe and golf tournament; 50/50; T-shirt and 'guy stuff' raffles

To assure your participation, send your name, address, telephone # and a \$20.00 deposit or \$55.00 total registration fee to: Chairman, P.O. Box 644, Columbus, IN, 47202-0644

Note:

- If you have special dietary needs, you need to send a proposed menu with your registration
- No pets or off-road vehicles
- The first 144 to register will receive the traditional workshop mug
- Any group that would like to put on a 10-15 minute skit on Friday or Saturday night contact Tim Fields to book your act! One group has already signed up
- Charlie is in charge of the hog roast again this year, but we'll have pig anyway
- Let us know if you would like to chair a breakout session or your group wants to chair one of the speaker meetings

### HALLOWEEN PARTY

**November 2**

633 E. Bodman Street  
Bement, IL 61813  
6:00pm to ?

Good Music, Good Food, Good Fun!

Donations will be accepted. All proceeds\* go to the new AA\* meeting for operating expenses.

Halloween costumes are optional. Please bring a covered dish to share. Call Steve H at 217-714-5441 for more information.

\*Proceeds go towards the new Open AA meeting on Wednesday evenings at 8:00 p.m. at the Bement Methodist Church, 249 North Piatt Street, Bement, IL.

The first meeting is Wednesday October 23, 2013 at 8:00 p.m. in the basement of the church. Please come support the new meeting. Everyone and all ages are welcome.

*For more information please call Steve H. at 217-714-5441.*

### EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL FORUM

**November 15-17**

*Hilton Fort Wayne, Grand Wayne Convention Center  
1020 South Calhoun Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46802-3005*

Forums provide an extraordinary opportunity for sharing experience and exchanging information among A.A. members interested in service, local trusted servants, and the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. and Grapevine. Staff from both the GSO and the Grapevine will be present. It will be a weekend of lively participation for all concerned.

Registration begins at 2:00pm on Friday, November 15, 2013. The Orientation for First-time Attendees is at 6:45pm and the opening session starts at 7:00pm on Friday. The Forum closes at noon on Sunday, November 17, 2013. There is no registration fee for the Forum. There will be simultaneous translation available from English to Spanish. We want all A.A. members to be able to participate regardless of language.

**Forum Registration:** You may register for the Regional Forum by filing out the Forum Registration Form and mailing it to G.S.O. or you can register online at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org). All persons registering online must include their full name and postal address. Online Forum registrations must be received at G.S.O. before November 11, 2013 in order to be processed. If you miss the deadline, we welcome on-site registration. It is not necessary to call G.S.O. to pre-register; advance registration simply helps our planning.

Hotel Reservations at the Hilton Fort Wayne at the Grand Wayne Convention Center can be made by one of the following methods:

By phone: Call (260) 420-1100 use Group Code: ECR to get the special room rate no later than November 1, 2013.

Single / Double Room: \$104.00 plus tax  
This is a non-smoking facility

By internet, please go to the hotels website to 'online hotel reservations'

In order to get the special room rate, be sure to register for your hotel accommodation no later than November 1, 2013.

If you have any questions about this Regional Forum, feel free to email: [regionalforums@aa.org](mailto:regionalforums@aa.org)