

Illinois Area 21

District 12



Alcoholics Anonymous NEWSLETTER

December, 2013: The Holiday Issue

www.aa-eci.org/newsletter

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Newsletter Staff

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DISTRICT
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EVENTS Sarah H.
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FOR AAs, A SEASON OF GRATITUDE

The holiday season can be difficult for many A.A.s, especially the newcomer. The pressure to drink may feel overwhelming when it seems all the world is hoisting glasses in one toast after another. At these times, the prospect of the usual round of holiday parties can be as inviting as a stroll in a minefield to the alcoholic struggling to stay away from the first drink.

The A.A. group, though, can be a refuge. Meeting marathons provide a safe place for recovering alcoholics who are on their own, as well as those looking for a break from family festivities. Some groups schedule dances or potluck dinners, providing a place to congregate and celebrate in sober fellowship.

It's safe to say that A.A. group celebrations are held in most parts of the world, wherever seasonal festivities are celebrated. Large or small, in remote rural areas or big cities, the sharing and hospitality always center on a regular A.A. meeting. But the styles of group gatherings are as varied as the members and regional customs dictate. Some A.A. members will create a tradition of going to dinner with friends on the holidays. A.A.s generally do better with structure, and we can make it easier on ourselves by planning ahead. Arranging our own get-togethers with A.A. members is a good way to make the best of the holidays. Obviously, we can have a New Year's Eve party like anyone else, minus the alcohol (and the hangover).

Some find it rewarding to throw themselves into carrying the message of A.A. by visiting hospitals, treatment centers or correctional facilities. One A.A. returned each year in December to the rehab where he got sober. Another A.A. bakes "cop cookies" and hands them out to officers who used to arrest her.

The story of the first holiday season for A.A. was the subject of an article in the December 1952 Grapevine. Bill W. remembered only a quiet day in New York that first Christmas — there were so few members. Meanwhile, the six men who constituted the whole of A.A. in Akron gathered with their families at Dr. Bob's house. The Grapevine article quotes one A.A. member at that gathering: "There were thanks that we had come this far. However, I am certain that there was still considerable fear and trembling . . . not fear that this new way would not work, but doubt that we would be

<i>District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs</i>	
DCM	Gary S. (dcm@aa-eci.org)
Alternate DCM	Mona Lee H.
Secretary	VACANT (secretary@aa-eci.org)
Treasurer	Steve B. (treasurer@aa-eci.org)
Corrections	Mike K.
Treatment Facilities	Tim C. & Creighton (co-chairs) Don D. & Joe M.
Meeting List	Liza W. & Mona M. (meeting-list@aa-eci.org)
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>	

able to hold onto it. We remembered our many failures and thanked God for what he had already granted us and prayed for continued strength.”

This time of the year can be fraught with yearning for a feeling about the holidays remembered from long ago. It is also natural that if you imagine yourself out of step with what’s called a season of joy, you will feel isolated. And it’s widely accepted that the pressure to be merry, on cue, is stressful. A.A. members, though, have the benefit of a program that teaches the value of acceptance, an antidote to the enforced gaiety of a season when loneliness may seem a failing as well as a misery.

And A.A. members have a way or remaking their worlds, or rediscovering what they once had. In the words of the Twelfth Step, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is about “the joy of good living.”

As Doug H. in Maine looks back on his drinking days, he remembers the holidays as “something to dread — too much free time to reflect on how lonely I was, what a failure I was. And how was I going to make sure I had enough booze around to keep the demons at bay? Then there were all the people I “had” to see, get-togethers that would remind me, lest I forget, what a failure I was. Now holidays are just what they’re supposed to be, a break from work, a time to relax. Above all, they are a time to reflect on what the A.A. program has given me and to do what I can do in return.”

One member says, “I’m Jewish, but we celebrated all the holidays — had a Christmas tree, the whole thing. Of course, my now ex-wife did everything and I drank.” Now sober 16 years, he reports that, “My first wife has invited me and my current wife to celebrate Thanksgiving at her house. It comes around full circle. The journey continues.”

And, when all else fails, contact your local intergroup/central office for holiday meetings and events in your area.

~Reprinted from Box 4-5-9, Volume 49, Issue #6

BIG BOOK TRIVIA

November's question:

On page 50, 3rd paragraph, who was the “American Statesman”?

Answer:

Alfred E. Smith, four time governor of New York

December's Challenge:

On the bottom of page 55 who was the “Minister's son and atheist who asked himself 'Who are you to say there is no God?'”?

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

Silver D. resigned as District secretary earlier this month. Anyone interested in running for the position should attend next's month's District meeting (Dec. 15, 2pm).

Committees:

Corrections: Creighton C. reported that the Committee has two new co-chairs, Don D. and Joe M. They will be assisting him in scheduling volunteers. The Tuesday night panel at the Pavilion is close to being established.

Meeting Lists: Liza W. reported that the current list ran out and has been reprinted. A revised list will be printed in January. Any groups with changes to location, format, date, time should contact her at meeting-list@aa-eci.org.

Groups:

Sherri G. is the new GSR for Cellar Dwellers; Tom D. reported that As Bill Sees It has established a prudent reserve and purchased new copies of *As Bill Sees It*. Mike W. reported that the Friday Night Fellowship is establishing a prudent reserve, is selling literature and is looking for home group members. Jim A. reported that the Monticello Thursday night meeting is going well and will make disbursements next month.

ANNIVERSARIES

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

Beth F.	October 14	17 years
Maureen M.	October 27	28 years
Paula P.	October 29	34 years
Nancy N.	November 5	5 years
Roland W.	November 12	1 year
Bob S.	November 13	24 years
Peggy B.	November 18	30 years
Shelby B.	November 20	6 years
Mike H.	November 23	7 years

Corrections to last issue:

Rick W.	October 23	10 years
Mike J.	October 21	11 years

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

SPEAKER MEETINGS

Sunday, December 1st, 12pm

SWAT, Speaker: Ed B. (*more SWATluck details on p.4*)
718 S. Randolph Street (hall), Champaign

Monday, December 9th, 8pm

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

Saturday, December 14th, 8pm

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

Saturday, December 14th, 10am

Attitude of Gratitude, Speaker: TBA
2055 E. Harrison, Charleston

Wednesday, December 18th, 7:30pm

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

Saturday, December 21st, 6:30pm

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

Monday, December 23rd, 8pm

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

Friday, December 27th, 8pm

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

Saturday, December 28th, 6pm

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

Saturday, December 28th, 5pm

Shoulder to Shoulder Group, Speaker: TBA
First Christian Church, 16th & Wabash, Mattoon

Sunday, December 29th, 8pm

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

The newsletter committee would like to make note of our error in November's issue. Andy W. was the speaker at the Sunday noon SWAT meeting, not the As Bill Sees It speaker. We apologize for any inconvenience this caused for Andy or any speaker meeting attendees.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW MEETING! "NO EXCUSES"

Closed AA meeting

Started Friday November 1, 2013

12:00pm – 1:00pm

At THE SHACK IN RANTOUL – in the back room

Format: ½ study and ½ discussion of all Alcoholics Anonymous approved literature

CHAMPAIGN ISCYPAA 2014 February 28 – March 2nd

*Holiday Inn
1001 W. Killarney Street
Urbana, IL, 61801*

Starts Friday February 28 at 5:00pm and goes through Sunday March 2nd at noon.

The hotel has offered a discounted rate for the event - \$85.00 per night. To book your room either (a) email the hotel or call 1-217-328-7900. Make sure that you mention that you are with ISCYPAA to get the discounted rate.

Saturday night Banquet,
followed by a Speaker

REGISTRATION
\$20.00

REGISTRATION & BANQUET
\$40.00

BANQUET
\$25.00

Registration forms can be obtained at the Hall at 718 S. Randolph or from any ISCYPAA member

SWATLUCK!

Sunday, December 1st

Quarterly Potluck & Speaker Meeting

*The Hall
Fellowship Circle
718 S. Randolph Street
Champaign, IL*

SWAT: Serenity, Willingness, Acceptance, & Tolerance

SWAT invites you to our annual December potluck, speaker meeting, and holiday party!

FEATURED SPEAKER: ED B. FROM JEWETT, IL
30+ YEARS SOBRIETY

FOOD TO FOLLOW MEETING!
SWAT IS PROVIDING THE MEAT
PLEASE BRING A SIDE DISH TO SHARE
(OR JUST YOURSELF IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SIDE DISH!)

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S AT THE HALL December 24th, 25th, 31st, and January 1st

Fellowship Circle
718 S. Randolph Street, Champaign

The Hall will be open from the first meeting Christmas Eve to the last meeting Christmas Day and the first meeting New Year's Eve through the last meeting New Year's Day.

All scheduled meetings will be held, but in between meetings the Hall will be open.

A sign up sheet will be posted in the Hall for volunteer to staff the Hall.

Join US!

Your District 12 Newsletter Committee would like to wish everyone a safe, sober, and happy holiday and best wishes for an incredible New Year.