

Illinois Area 21

District 12



Alcoholics Anonymous NEWSLETTER

August 2014

www.aa-eci.org/newsletter

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DISTRICT
NOTES Rosemary T.
EVENTS Sarah H.

HOW I CAME TO BELIEVE

Several weeks ago I was at an old timers meeting – people whom I had spent many a meeting with many years ago in my wobbly, shaking, days-old sobriety. Several people there had long term sobriety, in addition to living lives as leaders in international business and community organizations. J.J. had just celebrated 42 years of sobriety; F. 32 years; and R., 29 years. J.J. is still the sponsor of F and R.

I had carried J.J.'s words in my heart for decades – when brand new, I had shared in a meeting that I didn't believe there was a god. I still remember his kind and firm, "there is a god, and it is not you."

After the meeting I decided to ask this fellow traveler (who had long ago scooped me into the fold; introduced me to new meetings, new people, new book; whom his family welcomed me into their home when it had been years since I was welcome anywhere; who listened and cared for me as sober people in AA do) exactly how he came to believe in the first years of his sobriety? Had his belief changed over the decades? What exactly WAS the secret of his relationship with his higher power?

As we stood in the church basement after the meeting, his now 82 year old eyes, usually glimmering, misted; his lips quivered as he spoke.

"I remember it just as if it were a moment ago. My wife was packing to leave me. I had been fired from my job. I had no friends. I had nothing. I wouldn't have cared about losing my job, or even my family so much. I had given up on everything. Nothing mattered to me. One of my family friends asked me 'what are you going to do?' and I did not know. Then he said 'what about AA?' So I called, and found a meeting. I have no idea why I went.

I went to the meeting, then came back home, and sat in my chair in a darkened room in front of the TV. For some reason, I looked up, and my wife asked me how long I was going to sit there. I looked at her, and asked her what she meant – it was my house, I could do whatever I pleased. She said to me 'J., you have sat there for days now in front of the TV – and it is not on.' I realized I did not remember anything about the week EXCEPT walking into that meeting, and seeing people who were sober, some laughing, but who spoke of how they had quit drinking, and were free. I haven't had a drink since. My higher power, my God, showed himself in that meeting – and continues to show himself at every meeting I attend. I SEE God in each person who comes through that door – I am with God in every meeting I attend. I will never forget the first moment I saw God."

So somehow, after years of wondering 'is the god of my understanding the 'real' god?', is it enough to experience the change, to see the change in others? Is unexplained calm, joy, laughter, enough? I realized that I, too, see god in every meeting I go to. I also have the opportunity to experience the god of my understanding in any moment that I choose to let go of my conceptions and perceptions of 'life as it should be' to opening my heart to see life as it is.

The experience of acceptance is nothing short of stunning. As I let go, and lift my gifts up to my higher power as well as I can understand Him – the Force for Good – I am allowed to share my gifts as best as I am able. Not always, not the best nor the worst, just flow. Somehow this feels as simple as lighting and gliding as a summer butterfly.

So upon the 1 year anniversary of a fellow traveler, I sat in a sun filled yard, pen in hand, and wrote:

District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs

DCM Gary S. (dcm@aa-eci.org)

Alternate DCM Mona Lee H.

Secretary Katrina R. (secretary@aa-eci.org)

Treasurer Steve B. (treasurer@aa-eci.org)

Corrections Mike K.

Treatment Facilities Don D. & Joe M.

Meeting List Liza W. & Mona M.
(meeting-list@aa-eci.org)

Answering Service Randy G.
(answering-service@aa-eci.org)

Newsletter VACANT (newsletter@aa-eci.org)

Grapevine Mark G. (grapevine@aa-eci.org)

PI-CPC Tom D. (picpc@aa-eci.org)

Website Rosemary T. (webmaster@aa-eci.org)

Archives Mike W.

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.

So

For A Fellow Traveler – 1 Year Sober

you walked in the door
alone, unsure
didn't know what you were looking for

but you were here

you listened with a heart that ached
we told you of the steps you'd take
1-12 to freedom
out of hell, to grace

so you walked

to many meetings you came,
the big book you studied,
the path from shame

your sponsor with his hand extended
loving grace, your guide
through snarls of demons with he, and Him, you wended

step by step beyond the pain
a loving Spirit God you found
redemption - simple, so profound
embraced your soul, hither, yon

once the rootless weed, now flowering tree
a miracle, a joy to see

a fellow traveler now you be

YOU now comfort the lost, the hopeless and meek
YOU invite them to join the dance
road of happy destiny

your gentle heart, your grace-filled glow
you live your daily reprieve
from The Mighty Foe
earnest, free -
you are a gift to know
congratulations to thee,
celebrate and pass it on...
happy one year free!

As I reread the poem, I realize it is the story of each one of us in the rooms. It was my story; it is the story of every person who takes up the steps. Per Dr. Bob: 'trust god (with no need to define him) clean house; work with others.' Watch for the presence of god within the next person who walks into an AA meeting. And pass it on.

~Grateful & Anonymous, Champaign

BIG BOOK TRIVIA

July's question:

On page 149-150, what was the little company and who were it's two alcoholic employees?

Answer:

Honor Dealers Company, Auto Polish Dealership. Jimmy B., whose story is "The Vicious Cycle", first appearing in the 2nd edition, and Bill W.

August's Challenge:

On page 174, what was "another of the leading universities"?

ANNIVERSARIES

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

Ryan C.	12 years	June 15	Mark G.	24 years	July 1
Bill & Georgia S.	43 years	June 15	Rich M.	1 year	July 9
Ken D.	2 years	June 23	Jim A.	35 years	July 17
Jean H.	3 years	June 28	David H.	2 years	July 19
Bob S.	24 years	June 30	Ann B.	10 years	July 20
			Melanie S.	17 years	July 20
			Phaedra	1 year	July 20
			Graham	25 years	July 21
			Amy	2 years	July 28
			Janet K.	2 years	July 28

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

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

DCM Gary W. reported that the GSO has released a DVD on AA's history, *Markings on the Journey*. The District voted to purchase a copy for borrowing by groups and individuals.

Area 21 will hold its officer elections at the next quarterly assembly, September 7 in Bloomington. GSRs are eligible to vote for officers and so are encouraged to attend.

The District received \$459.96 in group contributions last month and had \$191.80 in expenses.

Committee Reports

Corrections Committee Mike K. reported that all slots for both the Men's and Women's jail meetings have been filled.

The Newsletter Committee is looking for someone to handle pickup and distribution of the newsletter. If interested contact Rosemary T. at the website webmaster@aa-eci.org.

GSR reports

Ruben L. (Monday Night Study Group Danville) reported that the group had gone through the Big Book and is now reading Living Sober.

Linda Z. (Noon Bird) reported that the group will begin meeting Mondays and Fridays at noon, in addition to Wednesdays and Saturdays. Meetings are open and the Friday meeting will be Big Book Study.

Bill B. (S.W.A.T.) reported that the next SWATluck (Sept. 7) will be the annual alligator/fish fry and it will also be an Old Timers' meeting with a panel consisting of Kathy (from California), Sam, Lou and Clarence.

New Business

D.C.M. Gary S. reported that District elections will be held in December for DCM, Alternate DCM, Secretary and Treasurer. The Slate Committee will meet in November to create a list of candidates. He also announced that due ill health, he was not planning to run for a full term (he replaced Kate M. when she resigned in April 2012). Anyone interested in running for any of the officer positions should contact him, and attend the November meeting.

The next District meeting will be Sunday, August 17 at Fellowship Corner at 2 pm.

SPEAKER MEETINGS

Sunday, August 3rd, 12pm

SWAT, Speaker: Chris P. from Oaklawn
1714 Springfield Avenue, Champaign

Saturday, August 9th, 8pm

As Bill Sees It, Speaker: Sarah H.
1714 Springfield Avenue, Champaign

Saturday, August 9th, 10am

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

Monday, August 11th, 8pm

Cellar Dwellers, Speaker: Jessica B.
602 W. Green, Urbana

Saturday, August 16th, 6:30pm

Bottoms Up, A Panel – 'Old vs. New': Rachael & Coby S. and Judy & Terry S.
Serenity Shack, 117 N. Ohio Street, Rantoul

Wednesday, August 20th, 7:30pm

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

Saturday, August 23rd, 6pm

Working with Others, Speaker: TBA
1714 Springfield Avenue, Champaign

Monday, August 25th, 8pm

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

Thursday, August 28th, 7pm

HOW Group, Speaker: TBA
1714 Springfield Avenue, Champaign

Friday, August 29th, 8pm

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

Sunday, August 31st, 8pm

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

Note:

UP TO DATE INFORMATION REGARDING SPEAKER MEETINGS IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE ON THE DISTRICT #12 (East Central Illinois District 12 AA) WEBSITE AT: <http://aa-eci.org/calendar/>

UPCOMING EVENTS & NOTICES

SOBERFEST 2014 September 27

Urbana Civic Center
108 E. Water Street, Urbana, IL

Schedule:

10:00am Brian H. from Chicago IL (AA)
21 years sobriety

Lunch Break

1:00pm Charlie P. from Austin TX (AA)
29 years sobriety

2:30pm Lyri M. from Belleville (AI-Anon)
8 years serenity

4:00pm Third Step Panel "Selfishness and Self-centeredness is the Root of Our Problem"

5:30 – 7:00pm Catered Dinner (Hickory River BBQ)

7:00pm Katie P. from Austin TX (AA)
29 years sobriety

Tickets:

\$20.00. **No tickets will be sold at the door.** A ticket is required for admission prior to 8:00pm.

Via mail – send a note including your name, phone number (optional); full address; email (optional) and the number of tickets requested (with a check or money order made payable to Soberfest) to: Soberfest, P.O. Box 014, Savoy, IL, 61874

Orders submitted by mail must be received by September 5th to assure a ticket; requests received by mail after September 5th will only be filled if tickets are still available.

Questions about tickets?

Contact Mike H. at mikeski@hush.com

SWAT ANNUAL ALLIGATOR & FISH FRY AND OLD-TIMERS SPEAKER MEETING September 7

Be at Fellowship Corner Sunday September 7th at noon! Come eat & greet among sober cook masters wielding massive slabs of fried alligator and fish (courtesy of Jimmy 'Lethal - Gator' W. and Mike 'Dream Fish & Fry Guy' T.). AND be present for the revival of The "Old Timers" speaker meeting! Show up with a dish to share - or just show up, and share. If you need more information, contact trusted servants Mark G. 217-714-8873 or Bill B.

Oh, interesting note: The alligator is fresh caught... don't know about the fish... what exactly IS fresh caught alligator? inquiring minds are encouraged to ask Jimmy W.

3rd (OR MAYBE 4TH!) ANNUAL MONTICELLO THURSDAY NIGHT MEETING POTLUCK & SPEAKER EXTRAVAGANA IN THE PARK September 13

3:30 – 7:30pm

Speaker: Justin M. speaks at about 6:00 p.m.

Food: Brats and Hamburgers on the Grill!

Ready to eat by 4:30 or 5:00 (maybe even by 4pm!)

All are welcome!

Which park, you ask? It's at Monticello's Forest Preserve Park with Baseball Diamonds off RR1 near Highway 105.

AL-ANON 2014 ILLINOIS STATE AFG CONVENTION October 17-19

Planning Ahead - Letting Go, Falling Into Recovery

For al- anon friends or family check out

<http://www.siafg.org/calendar-of-events.html>

or call Betsy C at (217) (878-7670) or Denise B (217) (972-4166)

UPCOMING EVENTS NOTES

Soberfest Planning Committee

Soberfest Planning Committee meets August 9, from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. at Fellowship Corner! Show up to see how you can help -or- for more information contact Janet K. at jlkraces@gmail.com

Illinois State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ISCYPAA)

The ISCYPAA Bid committee has been started for this year! After hosting the state conference this past year, we have now decided to join up to continue outreach within the community and the state. We are looking forward to an event on August 23rd at the Serenity Shack and a picnic cohosted with Cellar Dwellers on September 21st.

If you would like more information we are also looking to fill a few open committee positions! Please feel free to contact: Christine S. 281-757-9929 Chair Rachael H. 217-493-7094 Co-Chair

Save the Date!

The Monday Night 'Cellar Dwellers' will hold their Annual Picnic on Sunday afternoon September 21st at the Crystal Lake Park Pavillion... This will be an event that 'you must not miss; we know you will not want to miss it' !.... Details to follow!