

Our Distilled Experience
DISTRICT 12 NEWSLETTER

JANUARY
2018

8 Years of Carrying the Message Solutions in Rantoul, IL

On January 15th, 2010, the Solutions group formed at the Serenity Shack in Rantoul, IL. Regular meetings are held every Sunday at 6:00pm. Founding members included Mick L., Jack H., Mark G., among others with Tom Q listed as the first GSR in the 2014 Directory for A.A. If you haven't been to this meeting you must try it out! All meetings begin with a lead that shares a paragraph from the first 164 pages of the Big Book. Then all are invited to share, but the goal is to stay based in the solution, not the problem. This is a closed meeting. Attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. The Solutions Group is looking for more home group members and would love your support! So please join them every Sunday, 6pm at 117 N. Ohio Street, Rantoul, Illinois 61866.

"The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism." - Alcoholics Anonymous, page 17

If you have any additional information regarding the start of this group please contact archives@aa-eci.org.



Our Purpose

The East Central Illinois District 12 A.A. Archives Committee is available to collect, preserve, and protect a variety of original material containing information of permanent historical value relating to the history of District 12.

Plans for the New Year

If your group would like to nominate an Archives Committee Member at your next Business meeting, we would love to have them be a part of our Committee. They can serve as big or small of a role as they would like. We want to continue to build upon our history and preserve the Historical Development of A.A. for years to come. Please feel free to contact us at archives@aa-eci.org for further information, or send a committee member to visit your next business meeting.

A Vision of Tomorrow

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

“CLEAR vision for tomorrow comes only after a real look at yesterday. That's why we AAs take personal inventory; that's why this issue of The Grapevine directs us to meditate upon the great happenings of 1951. It is our yearly inventory. Every AA will agree that we have just lived through an awesome, destiny-shaping twelve months.” - Bill W. from the January 1952 Grapevine.

As God would have it... The above quote was revealed to me when I did not know what I would write on this page. If I had to sum up the great happenings of 2017 I would agree that I just lived through an awesome, destiny-shaping twelve months due to one thing: Happiness. For almost all alcoholics happiness is hiding behind every pessimistic thought, like a flashlight in a dark room, flickering because our batteries are running out too quickly. As a member of AA I get to see happiness in the unexpected waves of joy others experience. But in myself I only see it well after the fact. I think we all find happiness at the times we need it the most. I imagine happiness cheering us all on, promising that this New Year is just the beginning of a new life where we will see more of each other around the tables.

Happiness for most alcoholics has to come knocking at our door, demanding us to open our arms and embrace it—but we often refuse. No matter how many warnings it gives us, or

how difficult it is to admit that we need happiness, we fall victim to the pessimistic thoughts. I personally find my depression asking me, with a sorrowful tone, "What's the point of going on?" My anger asks me, or rather yells at me: "Why don't you shout and break things!?" and my anxiety hesitatingly asks: "Don't you realize everyone is waiting to watch you fail?"

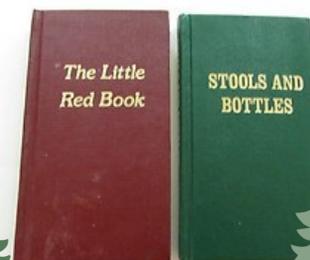
But happiness did not ask me anything. It told. It promised. It told me that I am worth all the space I occupy. It told me I am able to move onto greater things in life. It promised me that despite the fact that things change, change can be growth, and from growth comes healing.

As I reflect on the happiness of the last 12 months, I find happiness in everything. I found it when I saw two strangers holding hands on the sidewalk. I found it in the type of laughter that is so rare and powerful that it hurts your stomach. I found it in music. In foods that tickle my taste buds. I found it in my kid's eyes when Jimmy W. came over for the holidays, because he is the closest thing my kids have to a grandfather. I found it in all of you, who have taken the form of my family by always giving me advice and allowing me to show my true colors. I even found happiness in times that felt like the world was crashing down on me. So I know today that even if I don't find it right away, happiness shows up eventually.—Antonia D.

The History behind lesser known AA Literature

In 1946, after a strong experience with beginners meetings and The Tablemate, *The Little Red Book* was published by Ed Webster and Barry Collins. Dr. Bob helped to edit it and was consulted for the text. He is known to have passed Little Red Books out. This was AA's first step book. It was written as an accompaniment to the Big Book, just like the Twelve and Twelve. Together, the Little Red Book and the Akron guides and pamphlets are fantastic insights into how Dr. Bob was working the steps and taking others through them. Bill spoke highly of the Little Red Book but declined to publish it because the trustees wanted a book the society could own. The Twelve and Twelve was published in 1952 just 6 years after the LRB and 2 years after Dr. Bob died. The Twelve and Twelve eventually dwarfed the LRB in AA, primarily because groups stopped selling the LRB.

Stools and Bottles was a talk that Ed used to do that was then turned into a book. It offers a GREAT look into how they were working steps 1, 2 and 3 and has a really cool set up for the 4th step.



The Death of a Healer

By Jason W.

On January 24th 1971, Bill Wilson passed away leaving behind quite the legacy. In fact, 28 years later he was named one of the 100 most influential members of our society by TIME magazine. They even went on to refer to him as “Bill W. The Healer”. But how came an alcoholic who was doomed to a life not worth living be to be called “The Healer”? Most alcoholics are far from being perfect. At most, we are perfectly flawed. However, Bill Wilson took the time to acknowledge all aspects of the disease of alcoholism and document them endlessly. Before he passed away he had taken the time to publicly write about all matters that concern an alcoholic in recovery, including those beyond the bottle. After all, drinking is only a symptom. Most doctors only cared enough to ask: “Why can’t this man stay sober and act normal?” But Bill Wilson took the time to write and document in

great detail the reasons why an individual cannot stay sober, and how their life (in all areas) becomes affected once they are sober and working a 12 step program. Living life sober is so much more than just going through the day without picking up a drink. If he hadn’t taken the time to come up with fairly radical ideas on the construct of living life sober, we as a collective society might not be where we are. Only an alcoholic would think that LSD might be the cure of alcoholism—but then realize that through trial and error our only hope is to find a power greater than ourselves. This is what Bill Wilson did in 1934.

Bill W. of Alcoholics Anonymous Dies

New York Times on January 26, 1971

By John W. Stevens, New York Times

William Griffith Wilson died late Sunday night and, with the announcement of his death, was revealed to have been the Bill W. who was a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935. His age was 75. The retired Wall Street securities analyst had expected to die or go insane as a hopeless drunk 36 years ago but — after what he called a dramatic spiritual experience — had sobered up and stayed sober. He leaves a program of recovery as a legacy to 475,000 acknowledged alcoholics in 15,000 A.A. groups throughout the United States and in 88 other countries. Mr. Wilson, whose twangy voice and economy of words reflected his New England origin, died of pneumonia and cardiac complications a few hours after he had been flown by private plane to the Miami Heart Institute in Miami Beach from his home in Bedford Hills, N. Y. (cont’d)

Mr. Wilson last spoke publicly on July 5 of last year in a three-minute talk he delivered after struggling from a wheelchair to the lectern at the closing session of A.A.'s 35th anniversary international convention in Miami, attended by 11,000 people. Last Oct. 10, he was under hospital care for acute emphysema and was unable for the first time to attend the A.A. banquet at which his “last-drink anniversary” has been celebrated annually. His greetings were delivered by his wife to the 2,200 A.A. members and guests at the New York Hilton. Mr. Wilson gave permission to break his A.A. anonymity upon his death in a signed statement in 1966. The role of Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith as the other founder of the worldwide fellowship was disclosed publicly when the Akron, Ohio, surgeon died of cancer in 1950 after 15 years of uninterrupted sobriety. Mr. Wilson called Dr. Smith “the rock on which the A.A. is founded. Under his sponsorship, assisted briefly by myself, the first A.A. group in the world was born in Akron in June, 1935.” Mr. Wilson is survived also by two sisters, Mrs. Leonard Strong of Brandon, Vt., and Mrs. Owen Evans of Green Valley, Ariz. A private funeral service will be held at the Wilson home Stepping Stones, in Bedford Hills. Interment will be at the family plot in East Dorset. Members of A.A. throughout the world will pay tribute to Mr. Wilson with group memorial services on Feb. 14th 1971.



Our Future will soon be our History

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Upcoming Speaker Meetings

- S.W.A.T - Champaign; Jan. 3rd at 12pm - Anthony B.*
Friday Night Fellowship - Champaign; Jan. 8th at 7pm - TBA
Attitude of Gratitude - Charleston; Jan. 9th at 10am - TBA
As Bill See's it - Champaign; Jan. 9th at 8pm - Brandi W.
Shipwrecked - Champaign; Jan. 10th at 6pm - Allie B.
Cellar Dwellers - Urbana; Jan. 11th at 8pm - Kent W.
We Do Recover - Rantoul; Jan. 16th at 6:30pm - TBA
Nuts and Bolts - Danville; Jan. 20th at 7:30pm - TBA
Tolono Closed Group - Tolono; Jan. 19th at 8pm - Ed L.
*Women's Step Study - Champaign; Jan. 19th at 7:30pm -
Rachael H.*
Working with Others - Champaign; Jan. 23rd at 6pm - TBA
Monday Meeting - Tuscola; Jan. 25th at 8pm - TBA
Ages of Miracles - Mattoon; Jan. 25th at 7pm - TBA
H.O.W - Urbana; Thursday, Jan. 28th at 7pm - Todd O.
Charleston Friday Night Group - Jan. 29th at 8pm - TBA
Charleston Sunday Meeting - Charleston; Jan. 31st at 8pm - TBA

December Anniversaries

- Debbie P. Dec. 5th - 20 years
Lindsay S. Dec. 5th—4 months
Jason W. Dec. 11th—5 years
Andy C. Dec. 12th—8 years
Bonnie O. Dec. 17th—33 years
Rodney R. Dec. 17th—20 years
Greg L. Dec. 18th—3 months
Gary W. Dec. 18th —10 years
Adam M. Dec. 19th—11 months
Tyler M. Dec. 21st—9 years
Terry W. Dec. 24th—9 months
Tyler B. Dec. 24th—2 months
Angela W. Dec. 24th—11 months
Dwight C. Dec. 25th—60 years

Announcements

The District 12 Answering Service Committee helps carry A.A.'s message by coordinating A.A. volunteers to give newcomers rides to meetings and to make 12th Step Calls to those with a desire to stop drinking. If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact answering-service@a-eci.org



*Bill Wilson Birthplace
The Wilson House
East Dorset, VT*

