



East Central Illinois AA District 12 Newsletter

November 2007



Service and Sobriety

Sometimes I get the blahs, like life is just flat, one foot in front of the other, not really going anywhere, just going through the motions... and I question why I even exist. What's the point?

Then the phone rings and Julie asks for a newsletter article. Or I remember I've got a commitment to meet someone for coffee or to help get something done.

Sometimes I'm the one making or taking a phone call about "stinking thinking" and the desire to do something stupid or even self destructive.

Sometimes someone needs a ride.

Sometimes I need to call 911 because someone is so drunk they cannot even sit up, and then stay with them until help comes.

Sometimes someone smiles and says "Hi! How's it going?" or I realize someone else needs a smile from me.

Those things happen and my mood changes. I feel useful and that is the point.

In AA or in my neighborhood, when I help, I grow.

The more I help the more I see opportunities to help and somehow, as I take time to help, I seem to gain even more time to do even more – and to get everything else I have to do done as well.

If your program needs a jump start, or even just a tune up, consider volunteering. You will feel better about yourself, gain energy, gain time (seems a paradox but true, spend a little time on something other than yourself and you will have more time for yourself), even gain some serenity, some improved quality of sobriety.

If nothing comes to mind, stick around for your next group business meeting or drop by when district is meeting. Opportunities abound. Join a jail meeting or a treatment facility meeting. Put your name on the list to take calls forwarded by the AA answering service or be available to give someone from out of town a ride when they call the service. Deliver literature for the Public Information committee to a library or school, doctor's office or clinic, or anywhere else it would be useful. Help plan the Spring Conference on 2009, or just sit in on some of that committee's meetings until something

When I become available to help, I make myself accountable for my actions and accountability is one of those principles we put above personalities.

Yours in sobriety - Gil

Sense and nonsense on the road to recovery

IF CHRISTMAS COMES, can New Year's be far behind? No, of course it can't, and between the two a lot of luses, sober and otherwise, have a difficult time. 'Tis, after all, the season to be jolly. Most of us spent a great part of the holidays being very jolly indeed, not so much on New Year's Eve--which is Amateur Night, when even hardened civilians are likely to be a wee bit tipsy--as on Christmas.

We were always in the van of Christmas Eve celebrants, and it wasn't until AA that we could enjoy (enjoy?--hell, even eat) a holiday dinner. Pre-AA Christmas mornings were times of crashing hangovers, palsied hands, and rebellious stomachs. Add those three symptoms to the racket made by screaming brats, and see what you have.

But we were not alone. Consider, if you will, the plight of the fellow who tottered into AA the day after Christmas. "What turned the trick?" asked a sympathetic old-timer. "What made you come to AA?"

"Well," said the shaking sot, "yesterday my mother-in-law came to dinner."

"Yes?" prompted the old-timer.

"Well, when I opened the door for her, I saw two of her!"

**District 12
Little Book Store
515 Bonnymeade Dr.
Champaign, IL 61821-3490**

217-359-3457

TUESDAY NIGHT NEWCOMERS

A HISTORY

The Tuesday Night Newcomers Group first began in late 1992 at the Alano Club. At this time, the club was located at the corner of South Neil Street and East Springfield Avenue.

The group's format is based on one used by a newcomer's meeting in St. Louis. Its six-week cycle includes five pre-selected topics: The Disease Concept, Sponsorship, Spirituality, Steps and Tools, Living Sober, and an open-topic meeting. Each of the five pre-selected topics begins with a short lead by a guest speaker, followed by regular discussion for the remainder of the meeting.

When the Alano Club moved to South Water Street in January 1999, the Tuesday Night Newcomers moved with it. But by August of 2000, it felt compelled to move to 120 South Neil Street, where it remained for the next two years.

However, The Tuesday Night Newcomers began to see a steady decline in its attendance, which had always traditionally been strong. The worst thing about this was, no newcomers were showing up anymore.

By July 2002, with the group's weekly attendance down to half a dozen (from an average of forty during its years at the Alano Club), a group conscience was called. The final decision was for the group to leave Neil Street and merge with an unregistered newcomers meeting at Fellowship Hall. The move was slated for August 6th, 2002.

The merging of the two groups was successful. The Tuesday Night Newcomers brought its format, GSO registration and service structure to the unregistered meeting, which had an abundance of newcomers.

The Tuesday Night Newcomers continues to meet each Tuesday night, carrying the AA message of hope and recovery to the newcomer.

--The TUESDAY NIGHT NEWCOMER'S group meets on Tuesday nights (I think) at 8 pm in the Fellowship Hall at 718 S. Randolph, Champaign, IL

Twelfth Tradition Checklist

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to *me* if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to *my* standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is *my* part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition--or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AAs' behavior--especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made *me* so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of *me* among 500,000 AAs?

B.L.
Manhattan, New York

2008 Southern Illinois Area -21 AA Spring Conference
Hosted by SIA-21 & District 7
March 7 - 9, 2008

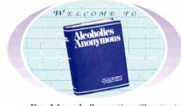
***"Communication and Participation –
The Key to Unity and Self Support"***

Friday: 4:00pm Registration Opens
7:45pm Opening of the Conference
8:00pm Chuck A. – Evansville, IN

Saturday: 8:00am Panels begin
1:30pm Joe O. – St. Louis, MO (Al-Anon)
6:00pm Banquet
7:30pm Program begins
8:00pm Don M. – Louisville, KY.
10:00pm Dance/Band – Sullivan Drive

Sunday: 10:00am Bill H. – Mt. Vernon, IL.

3 - 4 per room
\$70.00 = tax per night
You must reserve by Feb. 15th
and mention SIA Spring
Conference for special rate.
Mt. Vernon Holiday Inn
222 Potomac Blvd.
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
800-243-7171 / 618-244-7100



SPEAKERS
HOSPITALITY ROOM
PANELS
ALCATHON MEETINGS
ARCHIVE DISPLAY
GRAPEVINE and LITERATURE
INFO
LIVE BAND
FELLOWSHIP & MORE

For More Information Contact:
Doug H. (618) 292-1854 or Yvonne F. (618) 967-8174
Area21.2008springconference@yahoo.com

Registration Form

One person per form please
may be copied

Pre-registration \$20.00
Banquet \$19.00

Make Checks Payable and Mail to
2008 SIA-21 Spring Conference
PO Box 42
Nashville, IL 62263

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____

Please Check Only One
AA _____ Al-Anon _____ Alateen _____ Guest _____

Deadline for Mail Registration is: March 1st 2008
Must Reserve Banquet by March 1st, 2008

Baa Humbug

Here come the endless songs about "Joy to the world..." and "Jingle Bells..." and "Peace on Earth...". On TV. In the stores. You feel like screaming "STOP"; "PLEASE STOP". We go to meetings

and listen to our fellows struggle with the family obligations and family traditions and lost opportunities for family happiness. We huddle together

in our 'new family'. It is a time of "feeling" good; or a time of "feeling" depressed. We can't predict when; nor, can we explain why. We pause. We reflect.

We realize it is the 12th month. We turn to the 12th

Step and read "the joy of living is the spirit of Step 12". How can this step bring genuine joy out of the chaos of our emotions? The 12th Step suggests we "try

to carry this message to other alcoholics". It asks that we perform a service. It asks that we make the effort to share our experience, strength and hope with another alcoholic. We remember that practicing

the 12th Step is part of OUR program of recovery, even

though it is focused on another. Unless we do this "carrying the message", our own effort at 'working the

steps' is not complete. We need to "Do" this to insure

our own sobriety.

The next practice suggested in the 12th Step is "to practice these principles in ALL our affairs". What are 'these' principles? Admission of powerlessness?

Our inability to 'manage' our families, fellow workers, neighbors, even fellow alcoholics? Do we remind ourselves that we have come to believe in a Higher Power, who can and will guide and direct

our lives? Decision to 'turn our lives and our will over'? Which of our "affairs", what part of our lives are we trying to apply OUR will? Are we being 'fearless and

thorough' in our continued personal inventory? Are we seeing and admitting OUR part in whatever situation

exists? Are we admitting to ourselves the EXACT nature of what we have uncovered?

With ourselves?

Another

(usually our sponsor)? With God, in prayer and meditation? When we have discovered and admitted OUR

part in the situation, are we ready to have God remove

the defect that is festering and poisoning OUR lives (and, no doubt, the lives of others)?

Do we humbly ask the God of our understanding to remove this specific shortcoming? Do we allow God to

take it away, root and branch? Or are we not yet ready

to allow this? If not, do we pray for the willingness?

As we 'practice these principles' in all our affairs, we uncover new areas of our lives that need "amending"

(CHANGE). As we go through the seasons of the year, we

see how to best practice the JOY OF LIVING which is

the spirit of our AA program. HOW? Honesty!

Openness!

Willingness!

One final thought. In considering the 12th month,

I looked at the 12th Tradition. Anonymity is the spiritual FOUNDATION of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

There are many 'characters' in AA. Thank God!

Some I

like. Some bore me. Some I admire. Some, I admit,

create annoyance, envy. I take inventory about this.

There is still enough wrong with me, that such reactions disclose areas in my life that need the application to the principles or the program. I pray that I am able to "hear the message" and not confuse

it with "the messenger".

I heard at a meeting, from a speaker with many years of sobriety,

"I thought I was a human being of a spiritual journey,

Until I realized I was already a spiritual being and

That I was on a HUMAN journey."

It is on this human journey that we will "trudge the

Road of Happy Destiny" arm in arm in the Fellowship of the Spirit.

Anonymous

SPEAKER MEETINGS / EVENTS

Sunday 12/01/07

SWAT group Quarterly

Speaker & Potluck-Randy D.

Noon-? 718 S. Randolph, C

Sunday 12/02/07

Area 21 Assembly-East Peoria 9-3

Friday 12/07/07

Serenity Shack First Friday FOOD &

FELLOWSHIP 6:30-? 117 N. Ohio St.

Rantoul

Saturday 12/08/07

AS BILL SEES IT group Speaker

8pm - Brad J.

718 S. Randolph, C (every second Saturday)

Saturday 12/15/07

Serenity Shack Speaker-Erich H. 8pm

117 N. Ohio St. Rantoul

Sunday 12/16/07

District 12 Traditions Panel - 10am

718 S. Randolph, C

Monthly District 12 meeting - 2pm

718 S. Randolph, C (every third Sunday)

Serenity Shack Caroling 2pm-?

117 N. Ohio St. Rantoul

Serenity Shack New Year's Eve Dance

117 N. Ohio St. Rantoul 9pm

Thursday 12/27/07

HOW group Speaker- 8pm

718 S. Randolph, C (every third Thursday)

******ATTENTION******

C-U IS HOSTING

THE 2009 AREA 21 SPRING CONFERENCE

I sure wish I info on ALL Holiday

Events in the rest of OUR DISTRICT!!

Just e-mail me with your info.

FELLOWSHIP HALL HOLIDAY HOURS

THE HALL (718 s. Randolph, C) WILL BE OPEN AT 630AM ON THE 24TH ALL

THE WAY THROUGH 'TIL

MIDNIGHT ?? ON THE 25TH . AS

ALWAYS, IF PEOPLE WANT TO STICK AROUND AFTER MIDNIGHT ON THE 25TH THATS OK.

ALSO, OPEN FROM 6:30am NEW

YEAR'S EVE until at least 1am on NEW

YEAR'S DAY -- CLARK, FC BOARD

The Finest Gift of All Christmas, 1955

EACH of us in AA has received the gift of sobriety. All of us have found a new usefulness and most of us have found great happiness. This adds up to the gift of life itself--a new life of wondrous possibility.

What then are we going to do with this great gift of life?

Because our experience has taught us, we are quite sure that we know. We shall try to share with every fellow sufferer all that has been so freely given us. We shall try to carry AA's message to those who need and want it, wherever in the world they may be. We shall daily re-dedicate ourselves to the God-given truth that "It is by self-forgetting that one finds; it is by giving that one receives."

For us of AA, this is the Spirit of Christmas. This is the finest gift of all.

Lois joins me in our warmest greetings. May the New Year of 1956 be the greatest time of giving and of receiving that we in AA have ever known.

Bill W.

