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# District 41 Messenger

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**Summer – 2015**

Addison – Bensenville – Elmhurst - Lombard – Oakbrook Terrace  
Villa Park – Wood Dale

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## ***The Words We Use...CHANGE***

**Change...** Our main concern in the 4<sup>th</sup> Step is our future. The past is history. We use the inventory to choose what areas of our lives need changing. **Step Four begins the growth steps, and Steps Six and Seven turn our eyes toward change.**

**Change ...** Rather than judge ourselves, we accept what we discover in our inventory, and become willing to change. **Willingness is what frees us.** We make mistakes, and we learn from them. We start where we are and set out to rid ourselves of destructive habits.

**Change...** Our program requires a personality change sufficient to recover. We make the effort to put our lives back in the proper order...a complete willingness to move forward. Unproductive actions and attitudes become objectionable to us. We unlock ourselves from bad connections.

**Change ...** The pain of maturing. We are leaving behind all we have been in favor of and choosing what we are called to become. We embark on a lifetime study of ourselves. **The problem of what we are, and what we are not, is one of the greatest problems we face.** Most people will do anything to avoid facing themselves. There are reasons we are where we are now...understand them.

**Change...** Somewhere along the line we stop searching for what we have lost and start exploring what we have found. As long as we persist in taking wrong actions, we're going to get wrong results. Practice something different. Are we willing to change our lives or not?

**Change...** We work to change fear into faith, hate into love, egoism into humility, anxiety and worry into serenity, complacency into action, denial into acceptance, jealousy into trust, fantasy into reality, selfishness into service, resentment into forgiveness, judgement into tolerance, despair into hope, self-hate into self-respect, and loneliness into fellowship.

**Change...** Changes which are about to take place in our lives result in a cooperative effort. **God provides the direction, while we provide the desire and action.** All we need is the willingness to let God lead our journey. We must invite him into our lives. The smallest beginning is acceptable to God. **The work to be done is ours, but assistance is always there.** Sow the seeds and the plants will grow.

**District 41 Treasurer**

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Villa Park, IL 60181

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**Websites**

Dist41@aa-nia.org

aa-nia.org/event

aa.org

## **Service Opportunities**

District 41 General Service Representative (GSR) meetings are the place to find avenues for important service work.

If you are interested in any of these areas, D41 is in need of your time and talents.

*The Archives*

*Cooperation with Professional Communities*

*The AA Grapevine*

*Literature*

*Public Information*

*Special Needs*

**Dear Alcohol....**We had a deal where you would make me funnier, smarter, and a better dancer....I saw the video ...We Need to Talk.

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***Pay Attention to Yourself***

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**Change**...What do we want to gain? **What are we willing to give up???**

**Change**...**Personality = Accumulated Mental Habits.** If we want to change, we will begin to practice something different to take the place of our defects. Old ideas will be cast aside, and a new set of motives will begin to dominate the mind.

**Change**... **We can go anywhere we want to go based on what we are willing to give up.** We have the power and the right to react with a different attitude. We have the ability to change. Human beings learn the essential lessons in life not by reading or thinking about them, but by doing them. We act ourselves into a new way of thinking.

**Change**... **Pay attention to yourself.** The most important thing in life is what we do next. Fulfill something we are able to fulfill rather than running after something we will never achieve.

**Change**... **If we want sunshine we must step out into the sunshine.** If we have locked ourselves away in a dark closet, why not come out into the light? We can walk out of our self-imposed prison only to discover that the door was never really locked and the windows were not barred. Every door is open. Let go of self-doubt. **Believe in yourself.** Just believe you are good ...everything else will follow.

**Change**... **It is only when we let go of the “lesser” that we can take hold of the “greater.”** Turn our faces to the sun, and the shadows will fall behind us. **With all our hearts we must desire to be different from what we are now.** To map out a course of action, and follow it to an end, requires a deep level of courage.

**Editor’s Note:** These words of guidance are taken from years of scribbling in notebooks after listening to meeting comments and reading books. **I don’t often remember exactly where comments come from, and every paragraph has a little from one place and a little from another to promote fluidity.** BUT, I can make a list of references from my book shelf. “**Shift Happens**” by Robert Holden, Ph.D. “**Drop the Rock**” by Bill P. and Todd W. “**Carry this Message**” by Joe McQ. “**The Steps We Took**” by Joe McQ. “**Drinking: A Love Story**” by Caroline McKnapp. “**Understanding the 12 Steps**” by Terrence Gorski.

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## 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous June 10, 1935 ...Sobriety Date of Dr. Bob Smith.

On May 12, 1935 Bill Wilson was introduced by Henrietta Seiberling to Dr. Bob Smith. Bill was sober, nervous, but cheerful. Bob was sick from a bender and claimed he could only spare fifteen minutes of his valuable time. Hours later, talking to each other well into the night, they parted company. After Bob’s last drink a month later, they shook hands and agreed...**Let’s Get Started. We Have Work to Do.** And so it began and so it continues. One alcoholic talking to another.

***Take Your Mess and Make It Your Message***

**We Cannot Solve  
Our Problems with  
the Same Thinking  
We Used When We  
Created Them.**



**Expect Miracles**

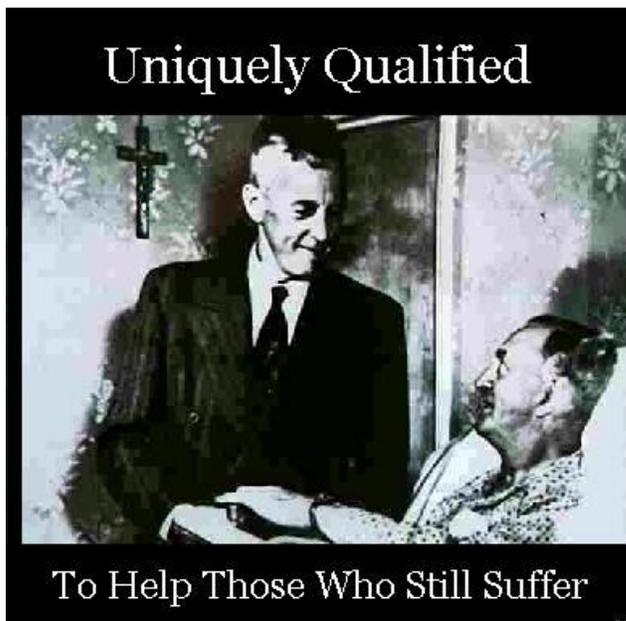
## Upcoming Events.....

**August 28 – 30** ...Illinois State Conference, Normal IL. Celebrating 80 years of Recovery Unity Service. More information from [2015ISCAA@gmail.com](mailto:2015ISCAA@gmail.com).

**September 26** ...Bridging the Gap Workshop, 12-3 pm, Anona East.

**Saturday, October 24** ...Big Book Conference at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, 1025 N. Smith Street, Palatine, IL 60067. Online Registration at [bigbookconference.aa-nia.org](http://bigbookconference.aa-nia.org). Other information at [chasfcs@yahoo.com](mailto:chasfcs@yahoo.com) or [emsvents@yahoo.com](mailto:emsvents@yahoo.com).

**2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, July 2-5 in Atlanta, Georgia.** Convention related question call GSO at 212.870.2015. You may register online at [aa.org](http://aa.org) by looking for the International Convention logo and following the links to register. Pre-registration has already closed but openings may still be available.



## Carrying the Message

*The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Summer Institute on Addictions at Elmhurst College.*

### Report of AA Participation

A gigantic “thank you” to all our service volunteers (from Area 20—DuPage Districts 40, 41, and 42): Mike O, Beth K, Rita B, Eileen C, Jason H, Les M, Susan H, Maggie A, Lisa N, Bob D, and Tom M. A special thank you to Mike O for helping me set up, and to Tom M for helping me clean up. In addition, newsletters were supplied by Racy J, CPC-General Service Staff, *A Newsletter for Professionals “About AA,”* and Mike O, D41 Newsletter Chair, *District 41 Messenger*.

**Almost 500 pieces of literature--that’s over 35 different pamphlets, schedules, and newsletters were distributed to a broad array of professional counselors, social workers, professors, teachers, and CEOs, to name a few, from Illinois and Southern Wisconsin.** Haymarket was a fabulous host, as always, giving us a large display space, as well as lunch. Thanks to all the people on the wonderful Haymarket team.

We (the members at the AA booth) were mentioned in the morning’s (Dr.-Bob-Anniversary) announcement on Wednesday, which resulted in an influx of pamphlet seekers. As volunteers we were not only able to engage with the participants; we were also able to listen to the well-presented, professional lectures.

*Jeane Mc District 41 WebTech and Past CPC Chair.*

## Bill Wilson asked the question...and answered it.

**“Is sobriety all that we are to expect of a spiritual awakening???”** No, sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. As it does go on, we find that ***bit by bit we can discard the old life ...the one that did not work...for a new life that can and does work under any conditions whatever.***

Regardless of worldly success or failure, regardless of pain or joy, regardless of sickness or health or even of death itself, a new life of possibilities can be lived ***if we are willing to continue our awakening, through the practice of A.A.’s Twelve Steps.***” (As Bill Sees It...Grapevine, 1951)



My life was so woefully embarrassing...the drinking, the fighting, and the running from relationship to relationship. It was embarrassing and exhausting and tedious. And, in the end, I didn't understand the point of it all. Where was all this going?

I was humiliated and terrified because I couldn't see an end to it. My sense of panic and impending doom was overwhelming.

**I wanted to stop, but just couldn't find a way to get there.**



My adult life started out with Great Expectations, followed by disappointment, leading up to a case of unbearable shame, guilt and remorse. Every time I sucked out of the bottle it sucked out of me until I got smaller and smaller.

**Drinking ate its way through my life in the same way cancer eats through bones and blood and tissue, destroying everything.**

**I lived a double life when I was drinking. Sometimes a triple life.** And I used alcohol to switch gears from Version A of myself, to Version B. I couldn't get from one to another without a drink. A couple of drinks would get me ready for work, and a couple of well-placed drinks would get me through the day, followed by more than a couple of drinks to get me through the evening. *Of course... a couple of drinks meant a couple of big gulps from a bottle of cheap vodka.*

After a while the shift from Version A to Version B became more difficult. At the end I didn't know what version of myself to believe. I didn't know who I was...Version A or B or C. **When I drank long and hard enough, life got messy. All of the ID cards in my wallet didn't give me a clue of who I was or where I was going.**

**In the morning I would wake up feeling that I was broken.** Something was wrong with my wiring. I couldn't make a connection. Last night was a blur and I could remember the bits and pieces of the evening, but it was all shadows...recollections of going somewhere, doing something, vague faces, dark places, a sinking feeling of knowing I did something wrong but not being able to recall the details. **What lies did I have to tell today to cover the drunkenness of yesterday?**



**People could see it in my eyes – my drunkenness.** They would notice a slight retreat, a sense I had shut down on some level. In that living fog of alcoholism there was always the nagging thought ...God Help Me... I Can't Stop This. And my alcoholic mind said **"You can have one more, just one last drink, and then you can make it better."**

*Sobriety  
Delivers  
Everything  
Alcohol  
Promised*

For comments, suggestions, contributions ....please contact the editor.

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*Editor Note...A few excerpts placed from "Drinking: A Love Story"*