
District 41 Messenger

Issue 12

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Addison – Bensenville – Elmhurst - Lombard – Oakbrook Terrace

Villa Park – Wood Dale

The Words We Use...Craving & Compulsion

Editor Note: Early in my sobriety I discovered (or was led to) a book titled "Understanding the Alcoholic's Mind" by Arnold M. Ludwig, M.D. We found out later this was a pretty well respected book and highly favorable to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Here are some highlights which may provide some insights on why we do what we do (or did what we did).

☒ **A fundamental issue which needs to be addressed about alcoholism is why otherwise reasonably intelligent and competent men and women should find it so difficult to resist the temptation to drink** and, once that they have surrendered to it, should be unable to stop consuming alcohol before reaching the state of intoxication or stupor. What is this seemingly irresistible urge which eventually gives way to an unquenchable thirst, even in individuals who struggle to remain sober?

☒ Even when confronted with incontrovertible evidence about his excessive and harmful drinking, the alcoholic usually prefers to remain blind to reality than risk the prospect of not being able to drink. **Grandiosity, a key component of alcoholic pride, allows the alcoholic to maintain the fiction he has the ability to regulate his drinking and that his life remains under control.**

☒ For most alcoholics, **it is simpler to sacrifice body and soul for their consuming obsession than to give up the golden glow of intoxication, the sweet oblivion of drunkenness, even as their world crumbles around them.** Even though their lives are left in shambles, **alcohol still offers them the illusion of freedom and truth.** Alcohol, almost up to the bitter end, even when the effects become fleeting, can still be relied upon to help the alcoholic feel normal.

☒ It is in the mind that alcoholics conjure up reasons and excuses to drink. It is there they first entertain a decision to quit, and make choices about the future direction of their lives. It is in the mind they deceive themselves and others. **It is not the thought of quitting drink that bothers alcoholics, but the notion of never drinking again. This is almost incomprehensible.**

☒ **The alcoholic keeps tossing out banana skins which he accidentally manages to step on and then slip.** His brain keeps coming up with ingenious booby traps, arranging for bad luck to occur.

☒ The recovering alcoholic, in order to avoid shame or guilt, must find some face-saving way to relapse so that it will seem he really had no other choice, or he was tricked into doing it.

(Continued on next page)



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The idea that somehow, someday, he will control and enjoy his drinking is the Great Obsession of every abnormal drinker.

The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death. (Page 30 BB)

Hell is ...Truth Seen too Late

(Continued from first page)

▢ Being “dry” refers to stopping drinking and eliminating alcohol from one’s system but does not mean being committed to this forever. Being sober, or the state of “sobriety” is something more. It refers to the deliberate substitution of a more positive frame of mind and lifestyle for that associated with drinking. **It is possible to be dry without being sober; it is not possible to be sober without being dry.**

▢ The typical pattern after relapse follows ...once alcoholics relapse, the course tends to be a roller coaster ride of going “on and off the booze” during which alcoholics drink until they can drink no more and then remain dry until they can stay dry no longer. In their efforts to stay dry, most alcoholics manage quite well to stop drinking; they are just unable to keep from starting up again and perpetuating the cycle.

▢ Only a small percentage of alcoholics manage to remain abstinent over the long haul and of those who do, only about one-fifth achieve more fulfilling lives and make reasonable mature adjustments to society. Mostly they attribute their recoveries to their affiliation with AA.

▢ For those individuals who had been struggling futilely on their own, AA offers it collective strength and wisdom, and a remarkable sense of fellowship, as well as living inspirational testimonials from those who managed to recover. The alcoholic soon realizes he can’t fool these people. This is a group that cares, that knows, that understands, a group made up of people like him. Through identification with the group and acceptance by it, the alcoholic also comes to absorb some of its power.

▢ Alcoholics who are on their way to their bottom, perceive themselves as uglier and uglier until they can no long stand what they see. The decision to quit builds over time, ready to be implemented at some critical moment. There is a “turning point” ...a time of personal crisis, a time when the alcoholic chooses to do what he knows he must do. It is a special kind of anguish, one of realizing they have sunk below certain basic, minimal standards of decency and behavior, and they cannot live with what they have become.

▢ At bottom, the alcoholic no longer struggles to maintain the illusion of self control. He is disgusted with himself. He has lost the fight. He feels defenseless, vulnerable, and utterly helpless, desperate for guidance and relief and ready to entrust himself to an outside force.

▢ There is one general condition necessary for continued success, and that is the issue of personal resolve or commitment. Sobriety is unlikely to occur if the individual undertakes it in a halfhearted, ambivalent way. It involves total effort.

▢ If alcoholics wish to remain abstinent, they must want to do so more than anything else in the world. Sobriety must come first in their lives, at times ruthlessly so, even if it means changing important interests, habits, and relationships which have been established over the years. A slip is more than a mistake. It is a reflection of a deep seated desire to drink again, a rejection of the importance of sobriety. Whether they admit it or not, they have already committed themselves to get drunk again, to re-experience the golden glow of intoxication. The reason these alcoholics who relapse have difficulty stopping after the first drink is simply because they don’t want to stop.



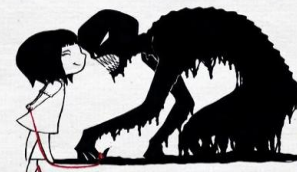
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HAPPENS
IF I DON'T
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**I AM ONE DRINK AWAY
FROM NEVER BEING
SOBER AGAIN FOR THE
REST OF MY LIFE.**

WoodenUrecovery.com

**You wake up every morning to fight
the same demons that left you so tired
the night before, and that, my love,
is bravery.**



District 41 Committee Elections and Reports

In November, GSRs from our District conducted elections for various committees. The results of the elections and available reports are in this newsletter. There are still many open positions available.

Sadly, out of some 82 meetings, only 41 groups contribute financial help and only a handful of meetings are willing to choose and send a GSR to D41 meetings for the purpose of keeping our Fellowship functioning.

That's Not My Job

This is a story about four people named: **Everybody**, **Somebody**, **Anybody** and **Nobody**. There was an important job to be done and **Everybody** was sure that **Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got angry about that, because it was **Everybody's** job. **Everybody** thought **Anybody** could do it, but **Nobody** realized that **Everybody** wouldn't do it. It ended up that **Everybody** blamed **Somebody** when **Nobody** did what **Anybody** could have done.

**This is Our Alcoholics Anonymous District. This is Our Alcoholic Anonymous. This is Our Fellowship.
WE ARE RESPONSIBLE ...all of us.**

If you are interested in becoming a GSR and /or helping our district committees please email us at **district41email@gmail.com**

OPEN COMMITTEE POSITIONS IN DISTRICT 41

▣ **Alternate Corrections Chairman** ...working with incarcerated alcoholics.

▣ **Grapevine** ...promoting the Grapevine publication.

▣ **Local Committee Member** ...staying informed and distributing information regarding district to members and General Service Office.

▣ **Accessibilities** ...aiding disabled members to find suitable groups which will accommodate them.

▣ **Cooperation with Professional Community and Public Information practices** ...coordinating and distributing literature and information to M.D.s, Nursing Practitioners, Local Community Groups such as Senior Fairs or H.S. Fairs etc.

▣ **Workshops** ...planning and providing Workshops for the benefit of our district and cooperation with joint workshops with other districts.

OR ...volunteer your time to assist Dist41 projects.

GSR Meetings

Monthly GSR Meeting is held on the third Thursday of every month at 7 pm in the Rear Room of the Anona East Club.

At any given moment you have the power to say: this is not how my story is going to end.

WebTech 2016

We launched our new website recently with the address remaining the same...dist41.aa-nia.org. One gem of the new site is the Meeting Guide (linked with AA-meetings.com) which allows a search of meetings in all of DuPage by city, day, and time. The Meeting Guide is also available as an app for smart devices (iPhones, Android, etc) The meeting sites and the calendar offer location maps.

The site is divided into 7 main categories: Home; New to AA?; Meetings Info; Info for The Professional; District 41 News (The Messenger); Calendar; Event Flyers Submissions; and Contact Information and resources.

The *National AA Technology Workshop* help to guide the choices made in building the current "responsive" website in WordPress, and in adding the third party plugins for the meetings and the stats.

AA technology is advancing rapidly. Statistical analysis is a part of my responsibilities. We are averaging 10 new visitors per day, adding up to 300 new visitors per month with 37 views per day, adding up to some 1110 views per month.

In Service,
Jeane MC
D41 Webtech

The Back Page

Thank You to Committee Chairs and Volunteers who fulfilled their two year terms (and those who will continue in their service). What follows is a brief summary of District 41 activities.



Good, sober is.

Archives ...Terry M. had taken on the monumental task of the Archives committee. Last November three districts (41,42 ,43) reviewed the current history on file of AA groups/meetings in DuPage County. Information was sadly lacking. We will soon be collecting meeting records and memorabilia, recording long timers stories and collecting a history of our current meetings. If you are “the keeper” of your group’s history please share it with us. We also have a questionnaire which may help in jogging memories.

Treatment Centers ...many of AAs in the district chair Open meetings at the Hinsdale Behavioral Center and Good Samaritan Hospital for out-patients. Also, some members provide bed-side visits to patients in the Detox Unit at Good Sam.

CorrectionsPink Can collections have resulted in thousands of dollars to provide literature to correctional facilities. Meetings are held at the DuPage County jail with wonderful results. Brian L. has been instrumental in reviving this service opportunity.

Cooperation with the Professional Community ...Walt has been a stalwart in taking our message to community organizations and individuals. He’s managed the Haymarket Summer Symposium, Addison Trail H.S. Wellness Day, Willowbrook H.S. Wellness Day and the Lombard Senior Fair, as well as many other opportunities. At various times these events were manned by a crew of 18 volunteers who gave many days and hours to assist. With more volunteers many more of these events could be scheduled.

Answering Service ...Our district has an answering service which connects callers almost immediately with a “real alcoholic” volunteer from our district, and this we do 24/7, 365.

Workshops ...Workshops are presented often during the course of the year with topics such as the 4th step inventory, service opportunities, working with corrections, and many others.

Literature ...Ensuring literature is available across a wide range of entities.

>>>>>All of our committees and volunteers have the singleness of purpose in keeping our district informed and functioning. Please join us. Balance the AA triangle of Recovery – Unity – Service.

District 41 Messenger is published quarterly by District 41 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to inform district members of service opportunities, events, and experiences relevant to carrying the AA message, in and through service. Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express or reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, District 41, or the editor. This newsletter is a confidential document. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc. It is meant for use in the AA community.

Editor’s Note: The words of guidance in this newsletter 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 some 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 “Understanding the 12 Steps” by Terrence Gorski. “Emotional Resilience” by David Viscott, Ph.d “The Spirituality of Imperfection” Kertz & Ketcham and, of course, The Twelve & Twelve and The Big Book.

Results of D41 Elections

DCM ...Lora B.
Alt. DCM...Open

Secretary ...Tom M.

Treasurer ...Deanna J.

Accessibilities ...Open

Answering Service ...Elpi E.

Archives ...Terry M.

Bridging the Gap
...C.J. and John C.

Corrections ...Brian L.

Grapevine ...Open

Literature ...Dana S.

LCM ...Open

Newsletter...Mike O.

Treatment ...Open

Webmaster
...Jeanne Mc with Lee K.

Workshops ...Open

(Editor Note) Information on upcoming workshops, reports, contacts, and other information can be found on our D41 website. It is the responsibility of GSRs (Group Service Representatives) to provide flyers and information to their groups. If you do not have a GSR for your group please choose your representative so they may attend the monthly meetings on the Third Thursday of every month (except July).

For comments, suggestions, contributionsplease contact the editor.
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When We Take a Step ... a Bridge Appears