

District 12 Newsletter

April 2014

Step Four

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”

LAYERS OF HIS LIFE

The Big Book helped him peel back the memories that were sweeter than he remembered



They say you can't change the past. And the Promises assure us that "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." But what if you can't remember large parts of your life?

Years of blackout drinking left me pretty foggy for a while after I had my last drink. When I began to clear up enough to pay serious attention, I listened to others talk about doing their inventory and the need to tell someone else their whole life story. These discussions usually left me a little demoralized, and I was embarrassed to tell anyone about my life.

At that time, my past was little more than a jumble of events with little order. The chronology escaped me, as did the relevance of my memories to my tormented emotional terrain. I was ashamed of how little I could recall from my daughter's childhood, so I often avoided conversations regarding family. This was unpleasant, because I wanted to tell people about my daughter, who I was very proud of and grateful for. I longed to share stories about her childhood, to join the conversations of others as they talked of their children and grandchildren. However, if I opened the door to that conversation, they might ask questions I either did not want to answer or couldn't. For instance, I did not want to tell people I had been in jail the day my daughter was born.

Other than two or three new friends who knew some of the facts, there was little of a personal nature that I cared to discuss with anyone. I was sure I would get shunned or ostracized if I told the truth.

Still pretty entrenched in self-centeredness, I failed to see that my daughter had also been robbed of a dad who could share her childhood memories. Having lost her mother because of my drinking when she was a young child, she was raised primarily by my parents, which was a particularly painful point for her. Having parents to share your childhood memories is something many take for granted, but she had been deprived of this essential life nutrient.

Something else that was problematic was my inability to recall anything of my *own* childhood before the age of 12. Regardless of how hard I tried, my attempted inventories always got lost in confusion and discouragement. I would inevitably start with a traumatic event or relationship and then get bogged down in the emotional intensity of the events of the past. Although I had a sponsor, his suggestions were well-meaning but ineffective.

One day while reading the Big Book, I was stopped by a phrase I had seen several times before: "We went back through our lives." I had persistently been trying to come forward, I thought to myself. Even my resentment list started with my early adolescence. I would try "I resent" and could get no further. "Resent" seemed such a mild word to describe the intense emotions that ranged between deep shame and blinding rage. I couldn't find "resent" in that emotional war zone.

So I decided that just for the heck of it, I would "try going back through my life." I started with the present, the most recent relationships, events and institutions. What happened was the equivalent of actually peeling the onion from the outside in, rather than trying to peel it from the core outward.

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It Works if you Work it!

One Day at a Time!

Let Go and Let God!

Get a Sponsor don't go it alone....

LAYERS OF HIS LIFE - *Continued*

The chronology of my life began to come into focus: connections, consequences, relationships — all began to make sense. Memories of my daughter's life returned, beginning with the time I first laid eyes on her until the time when she began having her own children.

My boyhood began to unfold. The Tom Sawyer style adventures still bring an amused twinkle to my eye: the first time I rode a bicycle, the times my dad took me fishing, going to church, my grandmother's farm, friends, dogs I had known, my first day of school. These and many more returned.

While memories of the many traumatic events that impacted my childhood became clear, so did the memories of the good people I had known, of my good and honorable parents, of wonderful and adventurous times. Lessons that had been lost in the maelstrom of alcoholism began to emerge.

During my Fifth Step and subsequent Step work, I became convinced many of my AA brothers and sisters have also had deeply hurtful memories. As long as I was focusing only on the pain and my derelictions, I now see that I was shortchanging myself and conducting a less than rigorously honest survey of my life.

Now my boyhood memory of seeing someone stabbed to death is mitigated by pleasant memories of other events and circumstances of the time. Those days are no longer defined solely by one act of brutal violence. Nor do other traumatic memories have the power to block earlier, more positive memories.

I am now convinced that healing is found in the light rather than in darkness. I have also learned the importance of talking in meetings about the simple mechanics of writing a Fourth Step. By taking my inventory and a solid look at my shortcomings, I developed a substantial and difficult amends list; but the unexpected and wonderful additional gifts of my "precious memories" have deepened my gratitude to God and to A.A. And I've come to believe that any attempt at inventory that does not include at least some of the positive is liable to be a morbid and depressing exercise in probing the darkness. The Steps are designed to lead us into the "sunlight of the spirit."

James L.

Pegram, Tenn

Reprinted from the Grapevine - April, 2013

**3rd ANNUAL
(BUT WE'VE BEEN AROUND 9 YEARS)**

BUNCH-O-NUTS

ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Saturday, April 26, 2014

4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M

**ST MARK'S CHURCH in WADSWORTH, IL
CORNER OF DELANEY & YORKHOUSE**

SPEAKER: Denny M.

Guest Speaker: Rich H. - Past Delegate

Pasta, Salad, Garlic Bread, and more

DOOR PRIZES

FOOD-FUN-FELLOWSHIP

BRING A DESSERT TO PASS

ALL THIS IS FREE FOR NUTTIN'

The Twelve Traditions

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Tradition Four (Long Form)

"With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount"

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

2014 NIA SPRING ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE

Hosted by Northern Illinois Area Districts 10, 11 & 12

Living in Ten, Eleven & Twelve

**MARCH 28th, 29th & 30th
HOLIDAY INN GURNEE
CONVENTION CENTER
6161 W. GRAND AVE.
GURNEE, IL 60031**

Located 1/2 mile west of 94 on south side of Grand Ave.
Rt. 132

**AA Speakers * Al-Anon Speakers * Alateen Speaker
* Alcathon * Workshops/Panels * Literature * Archives
* Banquet * Dance * Ice Cream Social**

Conference Fee: \$20.00

Banquet Fee: \$35.00

(must be registered for Conference to attend)

Rooms Available for \$89.00 per night

Get a room...Enjoy the full experience of the Conference

**More Information and online registration (PayPal only)
is available at: www.niaspringconference.com**

Women's A.A. Meeting

Monday 6:00 pm

Alano Club of Waukegan

2419 Washington St.

Waukegan, IL

Come Share Your Experience, Strength & Hope

Looking for a Sponsor/Sponsee?

Join us at the

ATP Sponsorship Panel

1st and 3rd Saturday of each month 12:45pm

Female sponsors needed!

Addictions Treatment Program

3002 Grand Avenue

Waukegan, IL 60085

District 12 Meeting

Third Sunday of every month at 4:00PM at Vista Medical Center West, 2615 Washington Street, Waukegan, Illinois 60085. All alcoholics are welcome and group GSRs are strongly encouraged to attend.

VOLUNTEERS WE NEED A COMMITMENT!!!

Lake County Work Release

Tuesday and/or Thursday

Once or twice a month

7:15 pm

Both men and women needed

For more info contact: Pete 224-381-9992

Or LaVonne 224-440-2834

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED 12 STEP WORK

St. Therese Psych Unit Meeting

Sunday 10 am Tues 7 pm

Sponsor Panel - ATP

1st and 3rd Saturdays 12:45 til 2 pm

Drug Court

1:30 pm Fridays Court 202

Mental Health Court

9:00 am Mondays Court 220

Veterans Court

1st and 3rd Friday at 9:00 am Court 220

SAP

SAP Bldg. 1:00 pm Thursdays

Detox

ATP 7:30 pm Wednesday

For Info Contact: Frank M.@ 847-336-2775

Step Study

Wednesdays @ 7 pm

St. Mark's Church

Yorkhouse & Delany Rd., Wkgn.

The District 12 Open Speaker Breakfast

Victory Hospital

(also known as Vista Medical Center East)

Cost: \$7.00

Start time is 8:30 AM

1st Sunday of every month

SAVE THE DATE!!!

DISTRICT 12 EASTER EGG HUNT SUNDAY, APRIL 13TH



LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED

\$1.00 per child
Open to all children 13 and under

Weather Permitting
Simple Refreshments Served
Every child will go home with small toys,
fun prizes, and candy.

A.A. Contacts

General Service Office: <http://www.aa.org>
Northern Illinois Area 20: <http://www.aa-nia.org>
District 12 Website: <http://www.aadistrict12.com>
District 12 Answering Service: 847-623-9660
Northern Illinois Area 20 - District 12: P.O. Box 8882 - Waukegan, Illinois 60079-8882

District 12 Officers (Confidential – this information is for A.A. Use only)

If you are interested in one of the positions listed as OPEN, please contact an officer.

Position	Chair	Phone	Email	Alternate	Phone	Email
DCM	Mike H.	847-848-4855	Mike.henneberry@gmail.com	Paul P.	224-280-0356	paulperini@att.net
Secretary	Bonnie P.	224-440-3620	bonnielori@pink@gmail.com	OPEN		
Treasurer	Ron K.	847-623-0953	ronkdist12@att.net	Sue D.	847-502-1007	susie12956@aol.com
Answering Service	Berto G.	224-280-5235		OPEN		
CPC / Treatment	Frank M.	847-336-2775		Francis K.	847-744-0793	
Corrections Grapevine	Pete O.	847-662-8737	Peter.ochoa73@yahoo.com	Lavonne G.	224-440-2834	lavonnegreen60@gmail.com
Public Information	OPEN			OPEN		
Literature	OPEN			OPEN		
Newsletter	Felicia H.	224-717-2424	felicia2657@gmail.com	Nick P.	847-872-6727	nicholas_prins@sbcglobal.net
Directory	Martin C.	773-870-4010	claussenmartin@aol.com	OPEN		
Archive	John M.		Contact through District 12 Website	OPEN		
Special Events	Terry V.	847-650-2251	enchantedattic@hotmail.com	OPEN		
District Breakfast	Jimmy F.	847-609-7354		Jimmy P.	224-538-1689	jimipinkstaff@yahoo.com
Webmaster	Beth B.	224.522-1676	pollockburke@gmail.com	Brian M.	847-736-0403	brianm959@yahoo.com