NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20 DISTRICT 10

MAY 2026

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 26 NO 4

Beyond Intentions

When I hear "personality change," I don't hear growth... I hear survival. If I don't change the way I live, I'm going to drink again. And if I drink again... there's a real chance I don't come back. That's not me being dramatic; that's me finally being honest.

I used to believe that alcohol was my problem. I thought if I could just control it, limit it, or take a break, I'd be fine. But when I actually stopped drinking, I ran straight into the truth: I was still miserable. I was still angry, still blaming people, still full of fear, and still trying to control everything and everyone. And that's when it hit me—the drink wasn't the problem. The drink was the relief. And if that doesn't change... I will go back to it.

I had a moment where everything got real quiet. No chaos, no big event... just me and my thoughts. And I saw my life for what it really was: same patterns, same reactions, same excuses, over and over. It hit me then that nothing is going to change unless I change. And right behind that thought was another one: "And if I don't... this is going to kill me." Not someday far off, but slowly... decision by decision... drink by drink. For the first time, I actually believed it. Not because someone told me, but because I could finally see where my life was headed if I stayed the same.

So, when A.A. talks about personality change, for me it means this: my behavior has to change. Not my intentions. Not what I say in meetings.

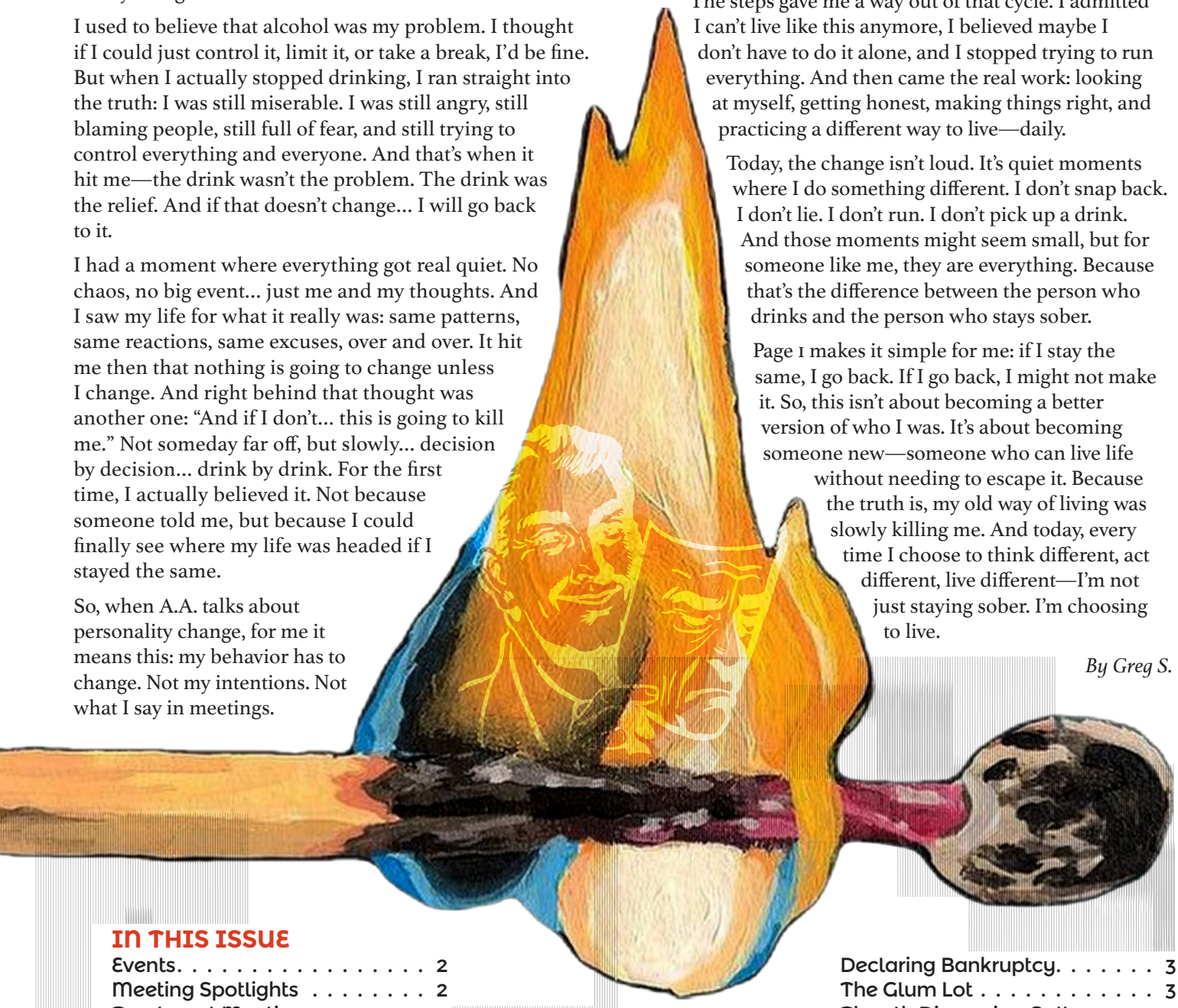
What I actually do when life hits me. Do I pause or react? Do I tell the truth or protect myself? Do I take responsibility or blame? Do I try to control—or learn to let go? Because my old behavior is what leads me back out. Every time.

The steps gave me a way out of that cycle. I admitted I can't live like this anymore, I believed maybe I don't have to do it alone, and I stopped trying to run everything. And then came the real work: looking at myself, getting honest, making things right, and practicing a different way to live—daily.

Today, the change isn't loud. It's quiet moments where I do something different. I don't snap back. I don't lie. I don't run. I don't pick up a drink. And those moments might seem small, but for someone like me, they are everything. Because that's the difference between the person who drinks and the person who stays sober.

Page 1 makes it simple for me: if I stay the same, I go back. If I go back, I might not make it. So, this isn't about becoming a better version of who I was. It's about becoming someone new—someone who can live life without needing to escape it. Because the truth is, my old way of living was slowly killing me. And today, every time I choose to think different, act different, live different—I'm not just staying sober. I'm choosing to live.

By Greg S.



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Events

SATURDAY, MAY 2ND
Elgin District 22 Treatment Committee Workshop
FOOTPRINTS TO RECOVERY AUDITORIUM
411 West River Road, Elgin, IL
Time . . . . . 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Questions . . . . . Laura S. 847-687-8379
Nate B 224-433-4456

SATURDAY, MAY 16TH
2026 Spring Committee Meeting
hosted by D61
LORD OF LIFE CHURCH
40W605 IL-38, Elburn, IL 60119
Time . . . . . 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- GSRs are expected to attend -

SATURDAY, MAY 16TH
31st Fox Valley Open
LORD OF LIFE CHURCH
40W605 IL-38, Elburn, IL 60119
Doors . . . . . 7:00 p.m.
Open Speaker Meeting . . . . . 7:30 p.m.
More information 630-287-8722

MAY 23RD
Northern Illinois Area 20 GSR School
SERENITY HOUSE
1103 West Park Avenue, Libertyville, IL
What GSR's Do. Why it Matters. How to Succeed
Time . . . . . 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Zoom ID: 336 639 694 . . . . . PW: 951691

22, 23 Y 24 DE MAYO DEL 2026
XLII CONVENCIÓN DE ALCOHÓLICOS ANÓNIMOS
DEL ESTADO DE ILLINOIS
Sede Distrito 65
SERVICIO UNIDAD AA
RECUPERACIÓN UN RÍO DE ESPERANZA, RECUPERACIÓN, UNIDAD Y SERVICIO
HOTEL HILTON
5550 N. River Road, Rosemont, IL
Information . . . . . 888-452-6943 / CODE IAA

Meeting Spotlights

As Bill Sees It
SERENITY HOUSE
1103 West Park Avenue, Libertyville, IL
Saturdays . . . . . 7:00 p.m.
Meeting needs support!

Treatment Meetings

Gateway – Lake Villa – Fridays
Men . . . 7:00-8:00 p.m. (MUST be on list to attend)
Women . . . . . 7:00-8:00 p.m.

ATP – Waukegan – Co-ed
Mondays & Fridays . . . . . 7:30-8:30 p.m.
Saturdays . . . . . 10:00 a.m.

WRS – Vernon Hills – Women
Thursdays . . . . . 7:30-8:30 p.m.
Treatment Monthly Workshop
3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 P.M.
ID 994 296 7947
Password . . . . . redbook (all lowercase)
Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair
Kevin A . . . . . bbkevin8@gmail.com, 224-201-8978

Conscious Clips

"He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations."
- St. Francis de Sales

"You can't be both the problem and the solution."
- Anonymous

"The now is what is going to transform you."
- Fr. Emilian

Do you have a meaningful quote you'd like to share? Submit it at https://district10nia.org/committees/newsletter-committee/ with the subject line "Quote"

Step 5:
Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Tradition 5:
Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose–that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. *(Long Form)*

Concept V:
Throughout our world service structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered. *(Long Form)*

Declaring Bankruptcy

Dumping out all my wrongs, deflating my ego, and reading off my list to my sponsor. These things are done in the light of day, outside a coffeehouse, nestled in the general bustle of an unfazed public. To everyone passing by, it was two guys drinking coffee and talking. I'm sure that's how it appeared. Internally however, my brain was reenacting Munch's The Scream.

Step 5: admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

I'm in the Principal's office. I've been pulled over. I'm in sick bay. I'm waiting for my allowance back into the flow of the everyday. As I sit and wait, I stare back at the rubberneckers and long to be among them, cruising coolly by, thinking, "poor bastard", and then going about my day. But today I have papers to present; announcements and admissions to make.

Then I'm told that my bads aren't that bad, and that's good. We all get stuck on certain things that eat away at our serenity and sobriety. The program's teaching me to be on the lookout for my specifics.

That's the miracle of this program: I needed to be plucked out of the mainstream every once in a while, just to be reminded that I'm special and not special all at the same time.

- Paul W.

Hope Limbos, *Concrete Nest*, mixed media

The Glum Lot

"Come to AA for the coffee; stay for the emotional whiplash."

"When they said 'life on life's terms, I didn't realize life had so many terms."

The 4th Dimension Gallery

From time to time, we will be using this space to showcase the visual artists in our district. Our goal is to highlight the talented, sober individuals who have been "rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence" and are expressing that new-found freedom through their art.

Whether it's a painting, a sketch, or a photograph, we want to feature the work you've created in sobriety. If you have a piece of visual art you'd like to share with the fellowship, we want to see it!

Photography Tips for Your Submission: To ensure your work prints clearly in the newsletter, please follow these simple steps:

The Wall is Best: Hang your art on a neutral-colored wall at eye level. Avoid laying it on the floor or a cluttered table.

Find Indirect Light: Natural light is your friend. Aim for a bright room, but stay out of direct, harsh sunlight to avoid washed-out colors.

Kill the Flash: Please turn your flash off. It creates glares and "hot spots," especially on glossy canvases or framed glass.

Stay Level: Stand directly in front of the piece. If you tilt the phone or camera, the art will look distorted or "bent" in the photo.

Ready to submit? Please e-mail a high-resolution photo of your work to **newsletter@districtionia.org** and include your name as you'd like it to appear, the title of your piece, creation date and medium used.

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Upcoming District Meeting: Sunday, May 24th
St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL
5:30 p.m. Traditions MTG 6:00 p.m. Hybrid MTG
Submissions due: Friday, May 15th
1. Go to district10nia.org. **2.** Click "District Services and Committees", then "Newsletter". **3.** Provide name, email or phone, in case of questions. **4.** Type/Paste your content. Click "Select". That's it! Any A.A. may contribute.
WEBSITES district10nia.org aa.org aa-nia.org aagrapevine.org
DISTRICT 10 P.O. Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048
NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20 P.O. Box 808, Streamwood, IL 60107
GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE James A. Farley Station, P.O. Box 2407 New York, NY 10163 **AA.ORG/AA-CONTRIBUTIONS-SELF-SUPPORT**
Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions of A.A., NIA, District 10 or Conscious Contact volunteers.

NEW D10 ZOOM MEETING
ID 861 1954 7045
PW DISTRICT10

D10 Updates

There are eight (8) open positions that need to be filled. If you are interested in learning more about a position, please join us at the next D10 meeting.

Looking to serve on D10 committee? Information on duties and responsibilities for committees can be found here: district10nia.org/committees/

D10 contributions from 2/18/26 to 3/18/26: **$1,121.49**

D10 Summer Picnic will be held August 9th – more information to follow!

D10 Fall Breakfast will be held October 11th – more information to follow!

Looking for District 10 meeting minutes? Visit https://district10nia.org/minutes/

Looking for delegate and/or Area 20 committee reports, updates and agendas? Visit aa-nia.org/delegate/ and aa-nia.org/agendas/

DETOX FACILITY AVAILABLE

Gateway Foundation in Lake Villa
Admission hours:
Mon-Fri . . . . . .8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sat. . . . . 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
FOR BED AVAILABILITY . . .847-356-8205 X.3391

Publicize an Upcoming District Event:
district10nia.org/publicize-an-upcoming-district-10-event/

Heard something powerful at your last meeting?
If a share hit home and could lift others too, nudge that member to send it our way! Our newsletter thrives on the strength of your stories. newsletter@district10nia.org

I AM RESPONSIBLE,
when anyone, anywhere reaches
out for help, I want the hand of A.A.
always to be there. And for that:
I AM RESPONSIBLE.

Sponsorship: A Collective Reflection...
Our series on sponsorship continues, and we want to hear from you. As you read the responses in March's issue, did a particular experience resonate with you, or perhaps prompt a different reflection? We are seeking a wide range of feedback, including views that may differ from those published, to ensure a well-rounded look at this vital part of our program. We welcome your honest reflections and experiences. Submissions due by May 15th

NEW P.O. Box for Area 20 7th Tradition Contributions:
Payable to:
NIA Ltd. P.O. Box 95174 Palatine, IL 60095