AA District 18

Newsletter

Volume 6 | Issue 1 | January 2026 *Editor: Matt B. Tuesday Night Group, Main St. Community Center, Edwardsville*

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me…

The serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference!

Inside This Issue

Page 2 Announcements, Humor, Thoughts on Step 12
Page 2 Step 1 Thoughts and the Prayer
Page 4 AA History in January
Page 4 A Note on Spirituality from the Grapevine
Page 5 Cyber Security / Tech Corner
Page 7: 1st Promise of AA
Page 8 Tradition 1
Page 8 Concept 1 of the Concepts of Service
Page 9 Meeting Topic suggestions
Page 12: Bill W. Letter to Carl Jung

Announcements

New Women's Meeting Granite City -Saturday 1pm Click for Info

New Meeting in Granite City- Sat. 2116 Club Meeting 7pm -8pm, Closed Discussion Click for Info

New Meeting in Granite City - Thrs. Attitude Adjustments a New Way of Living Click for Info

Open Speaker Meeting 7:30pm
***District 18 GSR's *- Southern Illinois Area 21 presents a new Service Information YouTube video. Click here for GSR Training Video .**

North Alton Group Speaker Meeting
The Bridge Church, 504 E 12th St, Alton, IL 62002
Monday January 5th
Rich B.

January 18 – 2pm to 3 pm – GSR Meeting at CSO. Hybrid meeting.

Click here to download 2024-2026 AA Service Manual.

AA Service Manual

Humor Corner

I got so drunk once I spent ten minutes arguing with a coat rack.

I kept saying, "Sir, I don't want any trouble," and it just stood there, staring me down, refusing to apologize.

When it finally fell over, I shouted, "Yeah, that's what I thought!"

Then I realized... it was my own jacket. And I still felt like I won the fight.

Spotlight on Step 1

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

Step One is the doorway into recovery, and for many of us, the hardest truth we ever had to face. It asks for no action, only honesty—but honesty about something we spent years denying. As the Big Book lays out in "More About Alcoholism," countless attempts to control our drinking proved one thing: when it came to alcohol, we had lost the power of choice.

Let's begin at the beginning. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable." Ladies and Gentlemen, powerless is an absolute term. There are no ifs, no ands, no buts, no qualifications, no conditions. It is an acknowledgement of total surrender to a fact that is completely unpleasant, I can't handle alcohol. The alcoholic says, "When I drink it, I lose. When I fight it, it wins." Surrender to an inanimate object, but paradoxically enough, the alcoholic surrenders to gain victory. He loses the battle to win the war.

My friends, a moron knows how strong he is, but a genius knows how weak he is. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a conviction of mine that the depth and the seriousness with which an alcoholic will work the next 11 steps depends directly on the depth and seriousness with which he accepts Step 1.

Father Joseph C. Martin,
12 Steps of AA with Fr. Martin

This Step is not about weakness. It is about clarity. Powerlessness simply means that once we start drinking, we cannot reliably stop; and left to our own devices, we cannot keep our lives from coming apart. Unmanageability shows up in the broken promises, the sleepless nights, the fear, the guilt, and the chaos that followed us everywhere. As Bill W. wrote, no one takes Step One because things are going well—we take it because the fight is over, and the truth has finally caught up with us.

Admitting powerlessness is the beginning of hope. Step One clears away the illusion that "we can handle it" and makes space for a Power greater than ourselves to enter. It is the moment when we stop wrestling with alcohol and begin to surrender to a solution.

Every sober day we have began with this Step. It is the foundation of the entire program and the anchor that keeps us honest. When we admit what alcohol did to us, we become ready to discover what recovery can do for us.

— Drawn from Alcoholics Anonymous (Chapters 1–3), Twenty-Four Hours a Day, The Little Red Book (Step One), and Stools & Bottles.

Matt B.

AA 1st Step Prayer

Dear Lord,
I admit that I am powerless over my addiction.
I admit that my life is unmanageable when I try to control it.
Help me this day to understand
The true meaning of powerlessness.
Remove from me all denial of my addiction.

https://www.aacle.org/twelve-step-prayers/

Another prayer for Step 1 …

Almighty Lord, who alone has power to save, I confess my weakness and the unmanageability of my life apart from You; grant me true understanding of my powerlessness, that all denial may be removed from my heart, and I may rest in Your strength alone; through Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

"When I first started in AA, I began each day asking God to help keep me sober that day, and ended each night by thanking him for another day of sobriety. I still end each day that way, as I have done almost every night during the past forty-one years. It is a routine for me, but every once in a while I pause to reflect on what it truly means. I do it every night so that God won't change his mind, as I truly believe he helped lead me from the pits of alcoholism to the AA way of life."
"A Real War Story," Alexandria, Virginia, April 2002, Voices of Long-Term Sobriety

When I first came into AA, I began to ask a HP for help to stay sober that day and ended the day with a thank you. But at times I also asked my HP for the strength to do things I feared. I had a fear of not being able to walk past the liquor aisle in the grocery store when in the past, that's all I went into the grocery store for. It was through the steps that I was reintroduced to a HP. I must never forget that it is my HP and AA that helps me stay sober each day. My service to my HP and AA is my gratitude for what I have received.

John G

AA History in January

January 1:
1943: Columbus Dispatch reports 1st Anniversary of Columbus AA
1946: The A.A. Grapevine increased the cost of a year's subscription to $2.50.
1948: "Columbus Dispatch" reported first anniversary of Central Ohio A.A. Group.
1948: First A.A. meeting was held in Japan, (English speaking.)
1988: West Virginia A.A. began first statewide toll-free telephone hotline.

January 2:
1889: Bridget Della Mary Gavin (Sister Ignatia) was born in Ireland.
2003: Mid-Southern California Archives moved to new location in Riverside.

January 3:
1939: First sale of Works Publishing Co. stock was recorded.
1941: Jack Alexander told Bill Wilson the Oxford Group would be in his Saturday Evening Post article on A.A.

January 4:
1939: Dr. Bob stated in a letter to Ruth Hock that A.A. had to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere.
1940: First A.A. group was founded in Detroit, Michigan.
1941: Bill and Lois Wilson drove to Bedford Hills, NY, to see Stepping Stones and broke in through an unlocked window.

Spirituality

April 1987

Doghouse Spirituality

By: D. B. | Fort Myers, Florida

My first prayer after joining AA was what I choose to call of the doghouse type--I was in the doghouse and needed some help from God. My unemployment checks were about to run out and I had no prospects for a job. My prayer was quickly answered by a job within walking distance from where I was living, which helped very much since I did not have a car. (I am still working with the same institution after ten years.)

From then on, my prayers became a bit more earnest because I had gotten the desired results from my first venture into direct contact with a God of my *own* understanding. Still, the tendency was to bring God into my life only when I was in the doghouse.

I tried numerous forms of meditation, including those from the Orient, with sparse results. My last doghouse directive to God was in September 1981. My wife was undergoing surgery and the possibility of cancer was very high. I constantly said the Serenity Prayer, but when the diagnosis was positive for cancer, I responded in the old way--"Why me, God!"

The long illness which took my wife's life changed my outlook on many things. My wife was a longtime member of our Fellowship, and I learned a great deal through her acceptance of her illness. I would come home exhausted from work, angry and hungry, and be met most of the time with a smile from a woman who by all rights could be filled with anger, hate, fear, and resentment. Her acceptance helped me to accept the fact that God loved her more than I did. This power of example helped me come to grips with the total statement of Step Three--"will and life over to the care of God."

January 5:

1939: Dr Bob tells Ruth Hock in a letter that AA has "to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere".
1941: Bill and Lois visited Bedford Hills again.
1941: Bill Wilson told Jack Alexander that Jack was "the toast of A. A. — in Coca Cola, of course."

January 6:
2000: Stephen Poe, compiler of the Concordance to Alcoholics Anonymous, died.

January 7:
1984: "Pass it On" was published on this Dates.

January 8:
1938: New York A.A. split from the Oxford Group.

January 10:
1940: Dr Bob tells Ruth Hock in a letter that AA has "to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere".
1940: 1st AA meeting not in a home meets at King School, Akron, Ohio.

January 12:
1943: Press reported the first A.A. group in Pontiac, Michigan.

January 13:
1988: Jack Norris, M.D., Chairman/Trustees of A.A. for 27 yrs. died.
2003: Dr. Earle Marsh, author of "Physician Heal Thyself," sober 49 years, died

January 15:
1937: Fitz M brings AA meetings to Washington DC.
1941: A.A. Bulletin No. 2 reported St. Louis group had ten members.
1941: Bill Wilson asked Ruth Hock to get him "spook book," "The Unobstructed Universe."
1945: First AA meeting held in Springfield, Missouri.
1945: First A.A. meeting held in Springfield, Missouri.
1948: Polk Health Center Alcoholic Clinic for Negroes started operations with 14 willing subjects. The Washington Black Group of A.A. cooperated with the clinic.

January 17:
1919: 18th amendment, "Prohibition," became law.

Tech Corner / Cyber Security Tips

Many cybersecurity problems start with small, everyday situations that don't feel dangerous at first. Imagine an elderly woman using public Wi-Fi at a coffee shop. She checks her email, logs into her bank, and pays a bill. What she doesn't realize is that **public Wi-Fi is not secure**, and anyone nearby with simple tools could quietly capture her information. The danger signs are subtle: the Wi-Fi network is open, requires no password, and doesn't show a lock symbol in her browser. To avoid this risk, she should **never access banking or sensitive accounts** on public networks. A safer option is to use her phone's hotspot, a home Wi-Fi connection, or a trusted VPN. Cybersecurity doesn't require advanced skills—just awareness. Whenever a network is public, assume others can see what you type, and protect your personal information by connecting only through secure, private channels.

Grapevine Daily Quote

"If faith without works is dead, willingness without action is fantasy."
"Short Takes," Cheverly, Maryland, February 1985

I have a willingness to earn money, so I go to work. I have a willingness to eat, so I prepare my meal or go to a restaurant. When I fail to take action on either of those, I will have no money nor food to eat. If I wish to remain sober, I must maintain a willingness to practice these principles in all my affairs. If I don't, my sobriety will slowly 'slip' away.

John G

January 19:
1940: First A.A. group met in Detroit, Mich.

1943: Canadian newspaper reported eight men met at "Little Denmark," a Toronto restaurant, to discuss starting Canada's first A.A. group.
1943: 1st discussion for starting AA group in Toronto.
1943: Wilson's returned from 1st major A.A. tour started in Oct 24 1943.
1999: Frank M., A.A. Archivist since 1983, died.

January 20:
1954: Hank Parkhurst, author of "The Unbeliever" in the first edition of the Big Book, died in Pennington, NJ.

January 21:
1951: A.A. Grapevine published memorial issue on Dr. Bob.
1954: Hank P who helped Bill start NY office dies in Pennington, New Jersey.

January 23:
1961: Bill W. sent an appreciation letter, which he considered long-overdue, to Dr. Carl Jung for his contribution to A.A.

January 24:
1918: Bill Wilson and Lois Burnham were married, days before he was sent to Europe in WW I.
1945: 1st black group St. Louis
1971: Bill Wilson died in Miami, Florida, only weeks after sending a postcard to Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa, saying he wanted to live long enough to see Hughes become President.

January 25:
1915: Dr. Bob Smith married Anne Ripley.

January 26:
1971: New York Times published Bill Wilson's obituary on page 1.

January 27:
1971: The Washington Post published an obituary of Bill Wilson written by Donald Graham, son of the owner of the Washington Post.

January 30:
1961: Dr. Carl Jung answers Bill's letter with "Spiritus Contra Spiritum."

Step 1 Thoughts

We'll be able to see everything that we need to in order to see what our problem really is, and we'll be able to see where we are absolutely powerless over alcohol and our lives have become unmanageable, and really that's Step 1. Step 1 If we're going to boil it down to just one word would be powerless. Then when we can see that powerless condition,

Then obviously the answer to that is going to be power and remember Ebby told Bill it has to be the aid of a power greater than human power. So through Chapters 2, 3 and 4, we're going to be able to see that power, and we're going to get some new information about spirituality so we'll be able to come to believe that maybe that power could help us also.

R., Linda. Joe and Charlie: The Big Book Comes Alive . UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.

God *does* have a plan, even though I don't know what it is. That used to frustrate me. I wanted clarity, certainty, and advance notice so I could feel safe. But sobriety has taught me that knowing the plan isn't my job—trusting the One who has it is. When I don't know what's coming next, my old instinct is to control, worry, or rush ahead. Today, I'm learning to walk by trust instead of sight. God's plan unfolds one step at a time, usually through ordinary days and small acts of faithfulness. I don't need the whole picture to stay sober—I just need to keep doing the next right thing and trust that I'm being guided, even when I can't see the road ahead.

O God, help me trust You when I don't understand the plan. Give me patience, faith, and willingness to walk forward one step at a time. Amen.

Matt B.

Highlighting the 1st Promise of AA:

"We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness."

Promise One speaks to the heart of what every alcoholic longs for but rarely names: relief. Not just relief from drinking, but relief from the restless torment inside—the fear, shame, guilt, and loneliness that drove us to the bottle in the first place. Early on, many of us believed sobriety would feel like punishment, a gray world stripped of joy. But the experience of thousands in A.A. shows the opposite. When the obsession to drink is lifted, a new kind of freedom begins to take root, one that comes from honesty, willingness, and a daily trust in a Power greater than ourselves.

This freedom is not simply about being free from alcohol—it is freedom to live. To show up for our lives, our families, our responsibilities. To make choices not based on fear or craving, but on clarity and purpose. Along with that freedom comes a new happiness—not the quick, artificial high we once chased, but a steady, quiet sense of belonging and usefulness.

Promise One reminds us that recovery is not about deprivation; it is about discovery. We step into a life that is larger, kinder, and truer than the one we knew in our drinking. And as we live the Steps, that freedom and happiness deepen, becoming the foundation on which the rest of the Promises unfold.

Matt B.

Spotlight on Tradition 1:

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."

Tradition One is the doorway into all the others. It reminds us that though we each come to A.A. with personal pain and personal stories, we stay sober because we stand together. The early members learned quickly that a lone alcoholic—no matter

Bottom

I remember the bottom not as a single crash or dramatic collapse, but as a long, slow sinking that felt endless. Day by day, something in me was wearing away. I was still breathing, still moving through the world, but I was fading fast on the inside. I showed up physically while everything that made me human—hope, feeling, connection—was quietly slipping out the back door. I wasn't even panicked anymore. I was numb, and that numbness felt final.

The chaos of my drinking had once been loud and obvious. There were consequences, broken promises, and moments of shame sharp enough to sting. But at the bottom, even those signals went quiet. Pain dulled. Fear softened. Shame lost its edge. What replaced them was a hollow stillness that scared me more than any hangover or fallout ever had. When you reach that place, drinking stops feeling reckless and starts feeling inevitable. It's no longer about getting drunk. It's about disappearing slowly and not caring whether you come back.

I woke up one morning with the unsettling realization that I didn't know how I felt about being alive. Relief and disappointment felt the same. That's when I understood I had crossed a line. I wasn't fighting anymore. I wasn't even losing. I had checked out.

My first spiritual awakening didn't arrive in some dramatic or religious way. There were no answers, no sudden clarity, no sense of being fixed. It came as a single word, pushed out through exhaustion and fear: "Help." That was it. No conditions. No bargaining. No promises I knew I couldn't keep. Just honesty, stripped bare.

And something shifted—not all at once, not in a way I could explain, but enough to matter. The room didn't change, but I did. The weight eased just enough for me to breathe differently. Saying "help" broke the isolation I had built around myself. It admitted that I couldn't do this alone, and more importantly, that I didn't have to.

Looking back, that moment was the beginning of everything. I didn't suddenly find faith, peace, or sobriety. What I found was willingness. A crack in the wall I had sealed myself behind. From that crack came the next step, and then another. I didn't stop drinking that day, but I stopped running. And for someone like me, that was the first real miracle.

Matt B

how sincere—was in dangerous territory. Unity wasn't a luxury; it was survival.

This Tradition teaches us that the group must come before individual preference. Not because our voices don't matter, but because the strength of the whole is what protects each of us. When personalities clash, when tempers flare, or when opinions differ, Tradition One calls us back to the center: What best serves A.A.'s purpose? What preserves our unity?

Unity is not the absence of disagreement. It is the choice, over and over, to stay connected despite disagreement. It is the spirit of cooperation, tolerance, and patience—qualities many of us never practiced until sobriety demanded them.

When the group is healthy, the newcomer finds hope. When the group is stable, the shaky member finds support. And when the group stays unified, each of us has a place to continue our recovery, one day at a time.

Tradition One reminds us that together we can do what none of us could do alone.

Matt B.

I got so drunk I tried to swipe right on a stop sign.

I stood there nodding, like, "Yeah… you seem serious."

When it didn't react, I told it, "Wow, ghosting already?"

A car honked and I waved back politely.

That's when I realized I wasn't on my phone.

I was flirting with traffic control.

Spotlight on Concept 1 of Service

Concept One reminds us that the ultimate authority and power in Alcoholics Anonymous rests not with trustees, delegates, boards, or committees—but with the A.A. groups themselves. Bill W. called this "the heartbeat of our democracy," because it affirms that A.A. belongs to the fellowship as a whole, not to any leadership body.

The groups are the foundation. They are where the message is carried, where the hand of A.A. is extended, and where recovery becomes real and personal. Concept One simply places into formal language what A.A. discovered through experience: those who serve at the world level do so because the groups have asked them to—not because they possess any authority over the fellowship.

This Concept also teaches responsibility. If the groups are the final authority, then the groups must stay informed, participate in discussions, support their GSRs, and take an interest in A.A. as a

Life in recovery has taught me that I don't need to feel motivated to do the right thing. There are days when I wake up flat, tired, or uninspired, and my mind tells me it's okay to coast or cut corners. But sobriety isn't powered by motivation—it's built on commitment. When I take the right actions even without enthusiasm, something shifts. The feelings usually follow. Showing up, being honest, and staying connected on the low-energy days matters just as much as on the good ones. Consistency, not inspiration, is what keeps me sober and growing.

O God, help me stay committed today, even when I don't feel motivated. Strengthen my willingness, guide my actions, and keep me moving forward one step at a time. Amen.

whole. The health of our world services depends on the engagement of the groups themselves.

Concept One is a reminder that A.A. leadership is service, never rule. Trusted servants carry out the will of the groups, ensuring A.A.'s message is preserved and extended, but never altered by personal agenda or control.

At its heart, Concept One protects the spiritual character of A.A. It ensures that the still-suffering alcoholic remains our primary focus, and that the fellowship remains rooted in humility, participation, and shared responsibility—principles that have kept A.A. strong for decades and will continue to guide us into the future.

Matt B.

Some suggestions for Meeting Topics

1. **Admitting Powerlessness Over Alcohol**
   The beginning of surrender and honesty.
2. **Unmanageability: What It Really Means**
   Looking at the internal, not just the external, consequences.
3. **The Gift of Hitting Bottom**
   How defeat opens the door to recovery.
4. **We Cannot Do This Alone**
   Step 1 and Tradition 1 both point us toward unity and connection.
5. **Putting Our Common Welfare First**
   Tradition 1 — unity as the foundation of recovery.
6. **How Unity Saves Lives**
   Why Tradition 1 protects the Fellowship from "me-first" thinking.
7. **Letting Go of the Illusion of Control**
   Step 1 as the freedom of releasing self-will.
8. **The First Promise: "We Are Going to Know a New Freedom and a New Happiness"**
   How surrender leads to hope.
9. **From Chaos to Clarity**
   Recognizing unmanageability as the turning point.
10. **We Need Each Other to Recover**
    How Tradition 1 supports healing, sponsorship, and fellowship.

If you've ever switched liquor stores because "the cashier was starting to ask questions," you just might be an alcoholic.

If your idea of meal planning was matching the alcohol to whatever food might happen, you just might be an alcoholic.

An Ode to Sobriety

The sun comes up, I greet the day,
No foggy brain gets in my way.
My shoes match now—imagine that—
No stumbling dance with this or that.
I tie the laces good and tight,
And walk on steady, feeling right.

My phone stays clean of drunken texts,
No morning dread of "What comes next?"
I scroll in peace, no need to fear
Some wild message I sent last year.
Just memes and friends and quiet cheer—
A far more pleasant atmosphere.

My fridge holds food, not liquid plans,
No secret stash in pots or pans.
I cook real meals, I wash my plate,
I'm almost feeling… grown-up. Wait—
Who knew that life without a brew
Could taste this good and shine this true?

And so I trek this sober road,
A lighter heart, a smaller load.
I chuckle at the way things were,
The chaos I once called "a blur."
Now joy walks with me every day—
A clearer mind to light the way.

Matt B.

11. **Honesty With Ourselves and Others**
    Step 1's spiritual requirement and Tradition 1's communal strength.
12. **The Freedom of Surrender**
    Experiencing the new beginning promised when we stop fighting alcohol.

October 1, 2025

Drinking had stopped being fun. I drank to survive. I believed I might die without the next drink. Two fifths a day, plus pints hidden around the house for when the shakes hit at 3 am.

It got bad fast. Three or four months of that, and one morning I woke up unable to walk, seizing, hallucinating, wetting myself, terrified. As someone who worked in medicine, I knew: detoxing alone can kill you.

And then something cut through the fog: *people in AA can help me.* I remembered what saved me the first time. I knew they would understand me. I knew they could help me climb or crawl my way out. ***I remembered***.

But first things first—I had to detox. It was bad. I am convinced in hind sight, I would have died that day.

I don't remember the first two or three days in detox. I remember the hallucinations. I remember them trying to discharge me, and me saying, "You can't send me home!" The doctor asked why. I said, "Because I can't walk!" He didn't believe me—until he tried to help me stand. I nearly collapsed. Back to bed.

The next morning, a brand-new walker appeared at the foot of my bed.

I left detox and went to rehab. Ten days on a walker. Terrified I'd damaged myself for life. Then I walked for a week with a cane. Before I left, I was walking 3 miles a day, on my own power. I stayed 27 days. Eventually, I walked out under my own power. Even now, sometime later, I still have moments, when I list to the left, as I walk down a long hallway. But, I am sober.

I found a home group. I got a sponsor. I made 120 meetings in 90 days. I worked the steps. I finished Step Nine on my six-month sober anniversary. I'm sponsoring others. The Ninth Step Promises are coming true—daily.

Matt B.

Grapevine Daily Quote

"We all know whose inventory we take in AA, right?"
"Tradition Ten," Manhattan, New York, May 1971

Some habits seem to be left over from my drinking days, like taking others inventory. I have learned that it gives me no great pleasure to do so and only serves one purpose, to boost my ego. When I catch myself taking their inventory, I ask my HP to remove the thought immediately and let them be. Easier said than it sounds, but I'm working on it.

John G

Different isn't wrong—it's just different. I spent a lot of my life judging people, situations, and even myself because things didn't look the way I expected them to. In sobriety, I'm learning that difference doesn't automatically mean danger, failure, or mistake. It often just means unfamiliar. When I loosen my grip on rigid expectations, I find more room for understanding and peace. Other people don't have to think, feel, believe, or live like I do for me to be okay. Accepting difference keeps me teachable and grounded, and it protects my serenity. I don't have to agree with everything to respect it, and I don't have to control it to feel safe.

O God, help me accept differences with humility and grace today. Open my heart, quiet my judgment, and help me walk in patience and understanding. Amen.

Matt B.

God Was Always There

I look back now and see that God was working in me long before I ever reached for Him, long before I even believed I needed Him. In those dark nights when my body shook and my mind slipped into places that weren't real, I thought I was alone. I thought the trembling, the terror, the shadows only I could see were signs that everything in me was coming apart. But now, with clearer eyes, I can see He was already moving toward me in every one of those moments.

When fear rose like a wave and my thoughts raced so fast I couldn't catch my breath, He was there—not in a loud, dramatic way, but quiet and steady, holding me together when I had no strength of my own. When the world felt violent and my soul felt like it was splintering, He stepped into the chaos I created and refused to leave.

Even the guilt and shame that wrapped around me like chains didn't drive Him off. I whispered, "help me," barely able to form the words, and He answered in ways I didn't

recognize at the time—through people, through moments of calm, through the simple fact that I was still here. His mercy didn't wait for me to get sober, get better, or get it right. It found me exactly where I was.

Now the darkness that once held me has cracks of light running through it. Peace sits where panic used to live. I'm learning to stand again, not because of anything I accomplished, but because grace kept reaching for me. God did for me what I could never do for myself—and He was doing it long before I ever knew to ask.

Matt B.

January 23, 1961 — Bill W. Writes to Dr. Carl Jung

On January 23, 1961, **Bill W.** wrote a letter of appreciation to **Carl Jung**, acknowledging Jung's indirect but crucial role in the birth of **Alcoholics Anonymous**.

A Haiku to my Disease

Bottle tilts, world spins,
Laughter fades to hollow ache—
Darkness drinks me down.

A haiku to Sobriety!

Morning light returns,
Hands once shaking now at peace—
Grace walks me back home.

A Devotion for the Christian in Recovery

Verse

Psalm 37:3–4 "Trust in Yahweh, and do good. Dwell in the land, and enjoy safe pasture. Also delight yourself in Yahweh, and he will give you the desires of your heart." (WEB)

Meditation

As we walk this path of recovery, we learn that trust and delight are not emotions we force—they grow as we learn who God truly is. The psalmist calls us first to trust in Yahweh and to do good, grounding our lives in His care. Many of us once chased desires that left us empty or harmed us deeply. In recovery, the heart often discovers that God reshapes desire itself. As we dwell in His presence and lean into His goodness, our hearts begin to want what brings life rather than destruction. To "delight in Yahweh" is to rest in His character, to savor His mercy, and to find joy in His nearness. Over time, this delight changes us from the inside out. God does not merely grant old wishes—He gives new desires, holy ones, aligned with His love

Bill believed this letter should have been written decades earlier. In it, he thanked Jung for helping articulate a truth AA would later confirm experientially: **that chronic alcoholism is not cured by intellect, willpower, or therapy alone**, but may require a *transforming spiritual experience*.

How Jung Influenced AA — Without Ever Intending To

Roland Hazard: The Missing Link

The connection between Jung and AA runs through **Roland Hazard**, an American alcoholic treated by Jung in the early 1920s. After extensive psychoanalysis failed, Jung told Hazard something extraordinary for a psychiatrist of his stature:

His case was medically hopeless — **except through a spiritual experience**.

Jung used the Latin phrase ***spiritus contra spiritum*** — "spirit against spirits" — meaning that only a profound spiritual awakening could displace the obsession to drink.

Hazard later found sobriety through the Oxford Group, then carried that message to **Ebby Thacher**, who in turn carried it to Bill W. This chain makes Jung **a theological ancestor of AA**, even though he never worked directly with Bill or AA itself.

Why This Matters - AA's Core Insight, Confirmed

Jung's conclusion reinforced what AA later enshrined in:

- **Step Two** ("a Power greater than ourselves"),
- **Step Three** (surrender),
- and the emphasis on **spiritual awakening** rather than mere behavior control.

Bill explicitly acknowledged in the letter that Jung's honesty helped break the illusion that alcoholism could be managed by self-mastery alone.

This was not mysticism for its own sake — it was **clinical realism**.

Matt B,

. This verse invites us to live in quiet trust, confident that God is shaping our hearts and guiding our steps toward what brings true joy.

Gracious Lord, who teaches us to trust and delight in You, shape our desires according to Your will. Give us strength to walk in goodness, joy to rest in Your care, and hearts that long for what is pleasing in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Matt B.

Morning Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the dawn of a new day. I pray that You would give me strength this day to remain sober and free from the temptation to drink. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

Evening Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the close of this day. I thank You for another day of sobriety, kept by Your grace and mercy. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

I got so drunk I tried to order an Uber by shouting "TAKE ME HOME!" at a streetlight.

When it didn't respond, I tapped it like a broken touchscreen.

A cop walked by and asked what I was doing.

I said, "My ride's glitching."

He said, "That's a lamp post, champ."

I replied, "Well… it *said* it was processing."

More Partially Coherent Ramblings

That space between Christmas and New Year feels like life buffering. The decorations are still up, the excitement has powered down, and everyone's pretending they'll become a new person in a few days. I just call it Tuesday-with-leftovers.

Recovery makes this stretch honest. No pressure to celebrate harder. No countdown to numb myself one last time. Just quiet mornings, reheated coffee, and the luxury of not needing an escape hatch from my own thoughts. My old plan was to drink my way through this lull like it was an awkward silence. Now I let it be awkward. It passes.

These days don't need meaning or fireworks. They're proof I can sit with myself and not panic. One ordinary, sober day stacked on another—right here in the in-between—is already enough.

Matt B.

More Partially Coherent Ramblings

The days after Christmas feel like the emotional hangover of the holidays—except this time, I don't have the actual hangover. The decorations stay up, the cookies linger, and everyone moves a little slower, as if the calendar itself needs a nap.

Recovery makes this stretch strangely peaceful. No damage control. No apologies sent by text. No quiet shame hiding under leftover pie. Just ordinary days returning, one by one, and me returning with them.

These in-between days remind me why sobriety works: nothing dramatic is happening, and that's the miracle. Life isn't sparkling or tragic—it's steady. I drink my coffee, do the next right thing, and let the noise of the holidays fade without needing to numb it away.

Turns out the real gift wasn't Christmas at all. It's waking up afterward with my life still intact—and my peace still mine.

Matt B.

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN FEBRUARY, or are you interested in contributing an article to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa-district18.org, by JANUARY 21, being mindful of our Steps and Traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always welcome and appreciated, and may be sent to info@aa-district18.org !!!

THANK YOU for subscribing to our newsletter!!!

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.