

# INTO ACTION

“The Professor and the Paradox” by John Parr

He was college professor from Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Here is the story: Second Edition Story

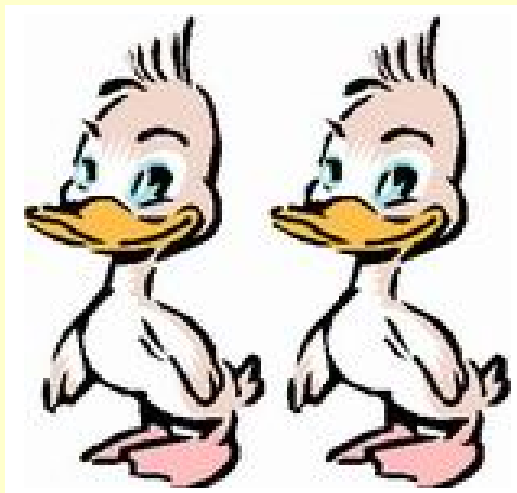
[2nd Edition: Order – 3rd, page 336]

## THE PROFESSOR AND THE PARADOX

*Says he, We A.A.s surrender to win; we give away to keep; we suffer to get well,  
and we die to live.*

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**I am** in the public information business. I use that phrase or designation because if I say I am a college professor everybody always has a tendency to run the other way. And when they learn that I am a specialist in English, they have looks of—horror for fear they are going to slip up and say ain’t. I often wish I sold shoes



*“Alcoholism is a disease of Perception - ”Clancy I.*

or insurance or fixed automobiles or plumbed pipes. I would have more friends.

My story is not a great deal different from others—except in a few specific details. All the roads of alcoholism lead

to the same place and condition.

**I** suppose I have always been shy, sensitive, fearful, envious, and resentful, which in turn leads one to be arrogantly independent, a defiant personality. I believe I got a Ph.D. degree principally because I wanted to either outdo or defy everybody else. I have published a great deal of scholarly research—I think for the same reason. Such determination, such striving for perfection, is undoubtedly an admirable and practical quality to have, for a while; but when a person mixes such a quality with alcohol, that quality can eventually cut him almost to pieces. At least it did so to me. I began drinking as a social drinker, in my early twenties. Drinking constituted no problem for me until well after I finished graduate school at the age of thirty. But as the tensions and anxieties of my life began to mount, and the set-backs from perfection began to increase, I finally slipped over the line between moderate drinking and alcoholism. No longer would I drink a few beers or a cocktail or two and let it go at that. No longer did I let months or even weeks go by without liquor.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(PARADOX - Continued from page 1)

**A**nd when drinking, I entered what I now know was the dream-world of alcoholic fantasy. Then for about five years of progressively worse alcoholic drinking, of filling my life and home with more and more wreckage, it looked as if I were going to ride this toboggan of destruction to the bitter end.

Maybe I didn't get as bad as some of the others. I must confess that I never went to teach one of my classes drunk or drinking, but I've been awfully hangover. My pattern was to be drunk at night, boil myself out to creep to work in the morning, drunk the next night, boil myself out in the morning, drunk again the next night, boil myself out the next morning. I may not have drunk as much whiskey as some, but there isn't anybody whose drunk any more Sal Hepatica than I have!

Now there are all kinds of drunks: melancholy drunks, weeping drunks, traveling drunks, slap-happy and stupid drunks, and a number of other varieties. I was a self-aggrandizing and occasionally violent drunk. You wouldn't think a little fellow like me could do much damage, but when I'm drunk I'm pure dynamite. I'm not going into any other details—the University can fire me yet!

I came to believe actually that life was not worth living unless I could drink. I was utterly miserable and sometimes desperate, living always with a feeling of impending calamity (I knew something was bound to "break loose"). And to do away with such a fear, I would try a little more drinking, with the inevitable result—for by this time one drink would set up in me that irresistible urge to take another and another until I was down or hung over and in trouble. In

the hung over stage I would vow never to touch another drop, and then be drunk the next night.

I knew at least that there had to be some changes made. I tried to change the time and place and amount of my drinking. I tried to change my environment, my place of living—like most of us who at one time or another think that our trouble is geography rather than whiskey. I even entertained the idea of changing wives. I tried to change everything and everybody, except myself—the only thing I could change.

I did not know that it was physically impossible for me to drink moderately. I did not know that my body's drinking machinery had worn out, and that the parts could not be replaced. I did not know that just one drink made it impossible for me to control my behavior and conduct and my future drinking. I did

not know, in short, that I was powerless over alcohol. My family and my friends sensed or knew these things about me long before I did.

Finally, as with most of us in A.A., the crisis came. I realized I had a drinking problem which had to be solved. My wife and a close friend tried to persuade; me to contact the only member of Alcoholics Anonymous we knew of in town. This I refused to do. But I agreed that I would stop drinking altogether, maintaining stoutly and sincerely that I could and would solve this problem "on my own." I would feel much better doing it that way, I insisted. I stayed sober for two entire weeks! Then I pitched a lulu of a terrible drunken affair in which I became violently insane. I also landed in the City Jail.

I don't know exactly what happened on this bender, but here are some things that did happen which I was told about subsequently. First, the officers who had come out to my house did not want to take me in—but I insisted! Also, I insisted that they wait in the living room while I went back to the bedroom and changed into my best and newest suit (with socks and tie to match), so that I would look nice in jail! I don't remember the ride downtown, but when I came to the jail corridor, I didn't like the looks of the little cage they were shoving me into, so I took issue about that with three officers and indulged in some fisticuffs with all three of them at once—each one of them twice my size and armed with a gun and a blackjack. Now what kind of thinking and acting is that? If that isn't insanity, or absurd grandiosity, or some sort of mental illness, what is it? Because I yelled so loud and made so much noise, I ended up downstairs under the concrete in a place they call solitary. (That's a fine place now isn't it? for a college professor to spend the night!)

Two days later I was willing to try A.A., which I had only vaguely heard of a few months before. I called at the home of the man who started the A.A. group in my town, and I went humbly with him to an A.A. meeting the following night.

As I look back, something must have happened to me during those two days. Some forces must have been at work which I do not understand. But on those two days—between jail and A.A.—something happen to me that had never happened before. I repeat, I don't know what it was. Maybe I had made a decision—just a part of Step Three (I had made lots of promises but never a decision)--though it seems to me that I was at the time too confused and fogged up to make much of one. *(Continued on page 9)*

**INTO ACTION Editorial Policy**

INTO ACTION News is a bimonthly newsletter of District 11; NIA 20 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by and for the Members of the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by AA. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc. and/or The AA Grapevine, Inc. Submissions are edited for space and clarity ONLY. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

**www. Issue** – This section of the hard copy has Officer and Committee Personal Information which has been omitted here.

A life of reaction is a life of slavery, intellectually and spiritually. One must fight for a life of action not reaction.

--Rita Mae Brown

All men in recovery confront their reactive habits in relationships. Whether we came to recovery as a codependent or as an addict, we soon must face how much other people's behavior has been a cue for our own reactions. There is always a three-part process in any reaction. **First, the other person's behavior; second, a moment of choosing a response; and third, our reaction.** But in our spiritual slavery, we don't notice the choice stage. It feels automatic. It may feel as though "the other person made me do it."

No amount of changing on someone else's part can change us. We are becoming more responsible for our own lives and for our own behavior regardless of others around us. There is liberation in noticing the choice stage. It is tough to follow through on our choices, but when we do, it is truly a sign of a grown man. Then a remarkable thing happens - our self-esteem rises.

Today, I will pause to notice the choices I have in the moment between someone's action and my reaction.

**INTO Action: District 11's Newsletter**

**Co-Editor: David G.**

**\*\*E-mail: Soulsurgery@comcast.net**

**Co-Editor: Tim B.**

**\*\*E-mail: TimB95@aol.com**

**D**istrict 11 G.S.R. Meetings Are Held On 1st Thursday of the Month at the First United Methodist Church, 236 W. Crystal Lake Ave. Northeast Corner of Dole & Crystal Lake Avenue in Crystal Lake, Illinois.



**District Meeting 7:30 PM**

**DISTRICT 11's WEB SITE:**

**<http://www.aa-nia-dist11.org>**

**SOBERFEST WEB SITE:**

**[www.soberfest.org](http://www.soberfest.org)**

**\*\*SCHEDULE INFO CHANGES: PLEASE CALL LINDA S., 815-678-4129 OR EMAIL AT: LINDASAMOREZ@YAHOO.COM**

From Group (Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Group #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dist. #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting City: \_\_\_\_\_



**Northern Illinois District Eleven  
 P.O. Box 846  
 McHenry, IL 60051-0846**

**N.I.A. Treasurer  
 Northern Illinois Area, Ltd.  
 P.O. Box 246  
 Bourbonnais, IL 60914-0246**

**The General Service Office  
 AAWS  
 P.O. Box 459  
 Grand Central Station  
 New York, NY 10163-0459**

**Group Contributions ~ Mail To:**

## January/February DCM Report Submitted by Dan Michel

I want to begin with an apology to anyone who showed up for the district meeting on January 8th. We agreed to postpone the January meeting last month because it would have been held on New Year's Day. We tentatively planned on the 8th if the church would let us. However, this room was being used by Cub Scouts on the 8th, so the 15th was the next available Thursday. I sent e-mail notices to everyone in my address book, but apparently some people are missing. I recently (last week in January) sent a schedule update via e-mail using an updated address book, so if you received that mailing you will be getting everything else too. The district Secretary and I are trying to coordinate e-mail addresses of the GSR's that attend the district business meeting, but I'm pretty sure I have all the chairs in my address book now.

A bid to host the 2010 Illinois State Conference was submitted and accepted at the NIA committee meeting January 24th. It will be held at the Lisle Wyndham. I don't want to give more details right now because I am not sure of them. Dean G. headed up the bid committee, and along with past DCM Joe H. and others, is responsible for the work done to prepare the bid. Please consider volunteering your time and energy to help District 11 host this conference. The planning committee meets 3:00 the 3rd Sunday of every month at NIMC. Call me at 815-308-5812 to volunteer. Look for calls to join committees in future issues of Into Action.

We may need to find another location for our business meetings. The church secretary has informed me that there may be some remodeling going on here, and we might be in the way. Sue C. looked into using the McHenry Township Center when we first talked about making a change last spring and told me that can work out for us. The church where we meet now has said they will let us out of our "contract" whenever we want because they didn't see it as binding in the first place.

The district Treasurer has prepared a breakdown of how money was spent in the district last year so that an informed decision can be made about the 2009 budget.

A motion was made and passed in January to accept the same amounts from 2008 for the 2009 budget, pending a more detailed year-end accounting which will be presented February 5th. After speaking with the district Treasurer, I can safely say we had less money at the end of the year in 2008 than we had in 2007. The GSR's will need to determine if we can afford to send any money to NIA or GSO this year. We are supposed to keep a prudent reserve of \$1000.00 and 3 months' operating expenses which would total about \$4,500.00. We only had \$3,500.00 according to the treasurer records in January.

## Contributions 09/08 - 11/11/08

Date	Group	Amount
09/08/08	Sun am Big Book #658742 Sat Night Speaker	240.00
09/08/08	#137304	120.00
09/08/08	Freedom Farm	60.00
09/08/08	Mon Big Book, Huntley	50.00
09/24/08	Wed McHenry Women's	145.00
09/26/08	From the Book #646950	75.00
09/26/08	Mon Big Book #657321	50.00
09/26/08	Fri Nite Chowder	60.00
10/03/08	Winners & Beginners	110.00
10/04/08	Wed Women's #657343	18.00
10/04/08	Mon Night Richmond	120.00
10/06/08	Sun am Serenity #104321	50.00
10/06/08	Lost & Found #166266	50.00
10/06/08	Thur Night St. Paul's	120.00
10/12/08	Sun C.L.A.C. #104629 Big Book/Grapevine	205.20
10/12/08	#629116	60.00
10/13/08	Sat Happy, Joyous & Free	60.00
10/01/08	Clean Air M.A.C.	300.00
10/23/08	Wanderers #112	65.00
10/30/08	Mon 12&12 Huntley	40.00
11/07/08	Fri 7:30 M.A.C.	312.00
11/11/08	Woodstock Group #125619	180.00

**Table of Contributions submitted by Linda F;  
Insert by Editor.**

*(Continued on page 5)*

(DCM Report – Continued from page 4)

Contributions have been down in 2008, as I'm sure no one is surprised to find out. The treasurer tells me there will be a spike when seed money is returned from the Archives Committee-sponsored Old Timer's Brunch and when the Soberfest contribution comes in to district.

Please come out to the Brunch in Wauconda at the American Legion February 15th for good food and fellowship. Brunch starts at 9 and the speakers begin at 11. If you haven't been there before, you don't know what you are missing. It really is a good time. God bless you all and thank you for letting me be of service.

Dan Michel  
DCM District 11

## Monthly Meeting Minutes for District 11 - December 4, 08 & January 15, 09

(Editors Note: Dates and times contained in the following minutes are a reflection from the minutes taken on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> , not the date of this publication.)

Meeting Time: 7:30 PM  
Dec-Attendance 35; – Jan 29  
Dec-Committee Members: 12; – Jan 6  
Dec-Groups Represented: 16; – Jan 15

**Anniversaries: DEC.**-(Rick 5 yrs, Glen 8 yrs, Sue 19 yrs, Nancy 12 yrs  
**JAN** - Linda 3 yrs, Lynn 14 yrs, Carol 19 yrs, Carol 10 yrs)

**CONGRATULATIONS ON ALL ANNIVERSARIES!**

**DEC – JAN - Secretary's Report:** Written committee reports must be submitted to secretary to be included in minutes. Updates for 2008/09 District Roster distributed. Please submit any changes or updates. Thank you for your cooperation and support. Alternate Secretary still open – please bring back to groups for volunteers.

DEC  
**Treasurer's Report:** *Lynn B.*

Starting Balance	\$4604.42
Expenses	\$1363.62
Income	<u>\$1087.00</u>
Ending Balance	\$3240.80

JAN  
**Treasurer's Report:** *Lynn B.*

Starting Balance	\$3240.80
Expenses	\$ 273.35
Income	<u>\$ 602.98</u>
Ending Balance	\$3570.45



(Continued on the next page)

**“Old-Timers Brunch  
SUNDAY-February 15,  
American Legion Hall, Wauconda  
(on main St., 2 blocks south of Rt. 176)  
Doors Open at 9:00 AM  
Brunch 9AM-11AM  
Contributions \$6.00  
GUEST SPEAKERS 11AM-1PM  
“Tim S.” &  
“Mary F.”**



**“Sponsored by District 11 Archives”  
Contact Clarence J. 815-353-1160  
(Volunteers Needed 6am - 5pm)**



(Continued from page 5)

**DEC-Old Business:**

- Alternate Secretary position is open-please bring back to groups to volunteer service work.
- DCM will attend (3) area conferences. Will take dollar amount out. Will note February month for Budget. DCM will bring any add'l conferences to vote.
- 

**JAN - Old Business:**

- Alternate Secretary position is open-please bring back to groups to volunteer service work.
- **2010 State Conference - Motion by Dean to take vote in January 2009 Meeting asking Dist. 11 to consider hosting. Volunteers 25-100 needed. Guidelines printed on table to take back to groups.**

**DEC - New Business:**

- **2010 State Conference - Motion by Dean to take vote in January 2009 Meeting asking Dist. 11 to consider hosting. Suggestions made to partner with another district. Volunteers 25-100 needed. Guidelines printed on table to take back to groups.**
- **Motion made to move January 1st meeting to 8<sup>th</sup> due to holiday. January meeting moved to January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. DCM will put on website.**

**JAN - New Business:**

- 2010 State Conference – Motion made to accept proposal for 2010 State Conference to submit for approval at Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> Winter Committee meeting. All in favor.
- Motion made to accept 2009 District 11 Budget prepared by Lynn B., treasurer. All in favor. Interest made on what 2008 Actuals were.
- DCM discussed changing facility for District 11 meetings. DCM will advise update on Feb 5<sup>th</sup> District Mtg.
- Newcomer Packages discussed. DCM will get from April 09 Assembly and bring to District Meeting for GSR's to distribute to groups.

**DEC - Public Information: Brandon L.**

- Plan on attending the NIA Assembly on Saturday seeking guidance and inspiration from other PI committees on how to form a PI committee and further work for Public Information Committee.

**JAN - Public Information: Brandon L.**

- Contacted the Northwest Herald to get open meeting placed in the newspaper. Was referred to a woman there and will submit a list of open meetings for her. Thank you



**DEC - Corrections: Cheryl M., Chuck L.(alt)**

- Working with Rich H. on workshops. Scheduled on Saturday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> @Burtons Bridge.

**DEC - Hospital and Treatment: Mike R., John S.(alt)**

- We are back in South Street! Please take and fill out volunteer sign up sheet and turn them in so we can make master list. Thank you

**DEC - Cooperation with Professional Community: Tammy C.**

- No Report

**DEC - Answering Service: Tom F.**

- Received 153 calls total as follows: 90 meeting info, 5 open meeting info, 26 hang-ups, 1 wrong #, 11 refused to give a call back #, 3 wanted to talk to an AA, 4 Al-anon, 0 intervention, 3 treatment info, 1 solicitors, 3 Spanish info, 4 ride.
- 5 calls were from out of the district
- 1 were from out of state
- Response times were as follows: 0–10 minutes (81), 11–20 minutes (16), 21-30 minutes (10), and over 30 minutes (4)
- Made suggestion to bring babysitting suggestions to Groups.

(Continued on the next page)

(Continued from page 6)

**JAN - Answering Service: Tom F.**

- Received 104 calls total as follows: 72 meeting info, 1 open meeting info, 10 hang-ups, 0 wrong #, 10 refused to give a call back #, 3 wanted to talk to an AA, 0 Al-anon, 1 intervention, 0 treatment info, 1 solicitors, 1 Spanish info, 2 ride.
- 9 calls were from out of the district
- 1 were from out of state
- Response times were as follows: 0–10 minutes (61), 11–20 minutes (16), 21-30 minutes (4), and over 30 minutes (4)
- Made suggestion to bring babysitting suggestions to Groups.



**DEC - Newsletter: Dave G.**

- Deadline for Feb/Mar. 09 issue of Into Action is **January 25<sup>th</sup>**!

**JAN - Newsletter: Dave G.**

- **UP-DATED: Deadline for APRIL/MAY ISSUE IS MARCH 22, 2009**
- Share committee and group news and events or submit articles of experience, strength, & hope.

**DEC - Archives: Clarence J.**

- Old Timers Brunch 2/15/09. Will get flyers out ASAP.

**JAN - Archives: Clarence J.**

- Old Timers Brunch 2/15/09. Speakers are Tim S. and Mary F. Doors open at 9 am. Starts at 9:30 am. Helpers start at 6 am. Speakers start at 11 am. Contribution is \$6. Flyers available to distribute at groups. Thank you

**DEC - Grapevine: Frank G.**

- I brought Grapevine display and set it up at Soberfest. More work can be done on the displays. We had two tables to set up out things but it was not enough. Next years' will be better! Thank You

**DEC - Special Needs: Dave S.(alt)**

- Not present

**JAN - Special Needs: Dave S.(alt)**

- Went to Winter Assembly – brought back old issues and handbooks if interested. Thank you

**DEC - Local Committee Member: Linda S.**

- MAC had no schedules on info packets to let new comers or others to find out about program (s). Plan to attend more meeting. If anyone wants to help – would appreciate it, especially in Crystal Lake.

**DEC - Workshop: Sue C**

- The workshop at Soberfest was attended by over 500 people. Chris R. did a great job in 1 ½ hours timeframe on working with others. If you would like a copy of the workshop, you may contact AMOT tapes. The cooperation from the NIA in the workshops was greatly appreciated.
- We are looking for groups or committees to do workshop this spring 2009.

**DEC - Webmaster: not present**

**DEC - Schedule Maker: Linda S.**

- Received my first meeting changes from Kristen from Area. Still waiting for changes from secretary.
- New 12x12 Women's Meeting, Fridays 7:30 pm, Johnsburg
- Scheduled time for next printing – to be determined.

**JAN - Upcoming Events**

- **Old Timers Brunch Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>**
- ISCPA - West Lane Bowling, Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, 12-4 pm (Rts.176/14)
- **ISCPA – State Conference, Feb. 13, 14, &15<sup>th</sup>, Decatur, IL. Registrations Printed**
- **Superbowl Party, McHenry Alano Club, Sun., Feb 1<sup>st</sup>. Noon-4 pm**
- **Soberfest AA Fundraiser – Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, McHenry Township Hall 7 pm**
- **Soberfest Al-anon Fundraiser – Saturday, August 1st, McHenry Township Hall 7 pm**
- **NIA Spring Assembly Waukegan, IL April 4, 2009**

(Continued on the next page)

(Continued from page 7)

### DEC - Open Mic

- Burton Bridge breakfast, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> – speaker at 11 am \$3
- Harvard Alano Club – Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> -

### JAN - Open Mic

- Soberfest Fundraiser Flyers Printed for Distribution
- Harvard Alano Club – Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> -

UP-DATED by Ed.

\*\*\*\* **The next district meeting will be held on Thursday, MARCH 5, 2009\*\*\*\***

*Respectfully Submitted, Christine Grechis, Secretary*



## Important - from our SCHEDULE MAKER

We have made corrections to the meeting schedule. We hope to post the current schedule at the district and area web sites for all to see. The change form is also there to download and fill out. Please be responsible for your meeting, and keep them up dated. I was taught it was a we program. I can't do it by myself, it won't work. Meetings need to have GSR and Alt GSR so that they are able to help in the rotation of service.

We have tried to list all meetings on the Chicago directory and we can't because we need the GSR's name, address, phone, and email. If your group decides they want to be in the Chicago directory go to [www.chicagoaa.org/meetings](http://www.chicagoaa.org/meetings) and fill out the online meeting change form for your group. Suggestion and criticism is of no use, until it gets to the people who print it. We appreciate them both. If you are GSR or Alt and would like me to send you a update meeting schedule so that you can help proof read before it goes to print or just have the newest one. Email me at [schedulemaker@ymail.com](mailto:schedulemaker@ymail.com)

Thanks

Linda Samorez  
Schedule Maker

# 20th Annual McHenry Soberfest



## FunRaiser SATURDAY MAY 16, 2008

Doors Open at 5:00pm  
AA Speaker at 7:00pm

**"David G."**

From Johnsburg, Il..

McHenry Township Hall

3703 N. Richmond Rd.

Johnsburg, Illinois

Info: Jay D.-224-392-4248 or Michael K.-815-477-1869

Or contact us at: [www.soberfest.org](http://www.soberfest.org)

## 2009 Soberfest Meetings

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM:

HOME STATE BANK

4401 Prime Parkway, \* McHenry, Ill

(SW Corner of Rt. 31 & Prime Parkway)

MEETINGS: February 18; March 4 & 18; April 1, 15, 29; May 6, 13, AA Funraiser 16<sup>th</sup>; July 29; August 1-Al-anon Funraiser, 5, 19; September 9, 23; October 7, 14, 28; November 4, 18, Event 20-22.



(PARADOX - Continued from page 2)

Maybe it was the guiding hand of God, or (as we Baptists say) the Holy Spirit. I like to think that it was just that, followed by my own attempt to take the Twelve Steps to recovery. Whatever it was, I have been in A.A. and I have been dry ever since. That was more than six years ago.

A.A. does not function in a way which people normally expect it to. For example, instead of using our "will power," as everyone outside A.A. seems to think we do, we give up our wills to a Higher Power, place our lives in hands—invisible hands—stronger than ours. Another example: If twenty or thirty of us real drunks get away from home and meet in a clubroom down-town on Saturday night, the normal expectation is that all thirty of us will surely get roaring drunk, but it doesn't work out that way, does it? Or talking about whiskey and old drinking days (one would normally think) is sure to raise a thirst, but it doesn't work that way either, does it? Our program and procedures seem to be in many ways contrary to normal opinion.

And so, in connection with this idea, let me pass on what I consider the four paradoxes of how A.A. works. (A paradox, you probably already know, is a statement which is seemingly self-contradictory; a statement which appears to be false, but which, upon careful examination, in certain instances proves to be true.)

1. We SURRENDER TO WIN. On the face of it, surrendering certainly does not seem like winning. But it is in A.A. Only after we have come to the end of our rope, hit a stone wall in some aspect of our lives beyond which we can go no further; only when we hit "bottom" in despair and surrender, can we accomplish sobriety which we could never accomplish before. We must, and we do, surrender in order to win.

2. We GIVE AWAY TO KEEP. That seems absurd and untrue. How can you keep anything if you give it away? But in order to keep whatever it is we get in A.A., we must go about giving it away to others, for no fees or rewards of any kind. When we cannot afford to give away what we have received so freely in A.A., we had better get ready for our next "drunk." It will happen every time. We've got to continue to give it away in order to keep it.

3. We SUFFER TO GET WELL. There is no way to escape the terrible suffering of remorse and regret and shame and embarrassment which starts us on the road to getting well from our affliction. There is no new way to shake out a hangover. It's painful. And for us, necessarily so.

I told this to a friend of mine as he sat weaving to and fro on the side of the bed, in terrible shape, about to die for some paraldehyde. I said, "Lost John"—that's his nickname—"Lost John, you know you're going to have to do a certain amount of shaking sooner or later." "Well," he said, "for God's sake let's make it later!" We suffer to get well.

4. We DIE TO LIVE. That is a beautiful paradox straight out of the Biblical idea of being "born again" or "losing one's life to find it. When we work at our Twelve Steps, the old life of guzzling and fuzzy thinking, and all that goes with it, gradually dies, and we acquire a different and a better way of life. As our shortcomings are removed, one life of us dies, and another life of us lives. We in A.A. die to live

Used with permission from AA World Services, Inc.

## Some AA Paradoxes:

---from weakness (adversity) comes strength

---we forgive to be forgiven

---we give it away to keep it

---we suffer to get well

---we surrender to win

---we die to live

---from darkness comes light

---from dependence we found independence

---from pain comes perseverance

---patience is learned impatiently

---I searched for happiness and it eluded me, I gave it away and found it within myself.

---I can't be humiliated without my permission

---I was always building a reputation and filling my desires; God is teaching me about character and accepting what I deserve.

--- What we have long thought to be extremely complex turns out to be Sesame-Street-Simple, and what first appears to be offensively simple contains complexities that we never imagined. (Step 1)

## Heard Around the Tables District 11's Wisdom and Witticisms

- ⊕ Cicero said, "if you pursue good with labor, the labor passes and the good remains, but if you court evil through pleasure, the pleasure passes and the evil remains."
- ⊕ If you see a newcomer that's really hurting, please be nice to him. Show him where the coffee is and give him a Big Book, let him sit with you. It might be my brother. If you'll do that for him, I'll be available for your family members if (when) they need us.
- ⊕ F A I T H = Finding Answers In The Heart  
F A I T H = Father Always In Thy Hands
- ⊕ If you work the steps, you can't stop the promises!
- ⊕ Humility is the ability to say grace before eating crow.
- ⊕ Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th.
- ⊕ People may fail you, but the program won't.
- ⊕ Praying is asking God for help, meditating is listening for God's answer.
- ⊕ Think, Think, Think' past the first drink"
- ⊕ If it's free, it's advice. If you pay for it, it counseling. If you can use either one, it's a miracle!"
- ⊕ "The difference between me and God is that God never plays at being ME
- ⊕ The topic for the discussion meeting was: am I responsible for the effect my drunken behavior had others?
- ⊕ A new person shared this thought: I may not be able to do good to someone today, but at least I can try to do them no harm.

### Overheard:

- ⊕ **Sponsee:** How many really great AA speakers do you think there are?
- Sponsor:** I really don't know, but I'm guessing that it's at least one LESS than you think!

## Trippin' Over Your Tongue?

A short collection of tongue twisters heard at meetings.

- ⊕ Step Eleven: "Sought through prayer and medication to improve our conscious contact with God..."



**May 21-24, 2009**  
The 51st ICYPAA will be held in  
downtown Atlanta, Georgia at the  
Atlanta Marriott Marquis over  
Memorial Day Weekend

### Additional Information

*info@icypaahost.org*  
*www.icypaahost.org*  
Todd: 770-364-7765  
Lauren: 404-444-4555  
Walker: 678-768-5222

## Northern Illinois Area 2009 Spring Conference

Hosted by District 42

Dates March 6, 7, 8, 2009

At Westin Yorktown Lombard Hotel –  
Lombard IL /

Room reservations 1-888-627-8517  
Single/Double Room \$119.00 plus tax

70 Yorktown Shopping Center,  
Lombard, IL 60148

### Contacts:

- Barbara G. 630-201-2174
- Hugh K. 630-963-0438
- AL-ANON-Kathy W. 630-439-6491
- AL-ANON-Shirley K. 630-910-3651

**SITE:** <http://aa-nia-dist42.org/2009spring/>

*Spring into Service*

# NIA SERVICE ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

*Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may not remember, involve me and I will understand.*

**When? Saturday March 28th  
8:30 AM-12 Noon**

**Where? St. Gilberts Church 301 E Belvidere Rd ,  
Grayslake, IL 60030-2444**

**Who?** Everyone trying to identify ways to effectively serve your Group and/or Committee especially incoming GSR's and Committee Chairs and their alternates.

The following link will take you there:  
<http://www.mapquest.com/mq/5-lMaT>

For more information call Dean G. @ (815)236-1362

## ILLINOIS STATE CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN AA 2009



*Key to Life... (pg. 124 BB)*

**FEBRUARY 13, 14, & 15 2009**

Hosted by Decatur

For **\$82 + Tax** Hotel Reservations contact

Decatur Hotel & Conference Center (217) 422-8800 (Reserve rooms by 1/22/09)

4191 W US Hwy 36 Decatur, IL

Send Registration to:

ISCYPAA 2009

P.O. Box 792

Decatur, IL 62525

For more information contact Pam B. (217) 963-2557 or Rod K. (217) 521-4139

# THE ALCOHOLIC PARADOX

BY Austin R.

The alcoholic, of course, is many things, as we all know. He is the world's supreme paradox. He drinks, not because he would, but because he must. He does not drink for pleasure, he drinks to pain, yet he drinks. He will mortgage the wealth of the future to pay off the debts of the past so he may drink up the non-existent present. He is the only one in nature, I think, who seeks stimulation in a sedative, only to find that it acts upon his nerves as excited misery. He seeks to inflate his puny little ego in the provocative wine of Bacchus and succeeds in shriveling his soul in the bitter gall of remorse. He escapes desperately to free himself from facts of reality and runs headlong into the prison of fantasy.

Success is just as fatal as failure to the alcoholic. He will drink with exhilaration to success and to sadness and misfortune. He drinks to get high in the evening, knowing how low he will be in the morning. When the alcoholic smilingly gets to the first drink he can get, he is transported to heaven and when he is unable to get the last drink he can pour, he is transported to hell.

The alcoholic, like most people, thrills to the beauty of life and then how frequently he seeks the ugliness of existence. When he is sober he craves to be drunk. When he is drunk he prays to be sober. Such is the weird paradox of the alcoholic that the only way he can feel better is to drink that which makes him feel worse. He starts out on his drinking, no matter who he is, with all the dignity of a king, and winds up his drinking like a clown.

So he goes his incredible, incomprehensible, paradoxical way, leaving in his wake his human wreckage, that which he does cherish most. Down the road of alcoholic oblivion he stumbles and staggers, until he either finds himself at the door of AA and the halfway house, or death intercedes.

## Professor and the Paradox Brief Bio of John Parr...

40. The Professor and the Paradox -- John Parr, Tuscaloosa, Alabama  
[2nd Edition: Order – 3rd, page 336]

Heading: *"Says he, 'We A.A.s surrender to win; we give away to keep; we suffer to get well; and we die to live.'"*

According to a talk John gave on Founders Day 1978 in Akron, he entered A.A. in February of 1949.

He was born in Atlanta, Georgia, and had a thick southern accent. He described himself as having always been shy, sensitive, fearful, envious, and resentful, which in turn lead him to be arrogantly independent, a defiant personality. He believed he got his Ph.D. degree principally because he wanted to either outdo or defy everybody else. He published a great deal of scholarly research, perhaps for the same reason.

He finished graduate school at the age of 30, and taught English at the University of Alabama for 21 years. That is where he was working when he entered A.A. He later taught at Kent State University in Ohio. (He joked in a talk he gave in 1978 about teaching Shakespeare with a southern accent, and having taught freshman English to Jim Neighbors, television's Gomer Pyle. Had he known Neighbors was going to make so much money, he would have sat in Neighbors' seat and let Neighbors teach the class.)

He began as a social drinker, in his early twenties, and did not experience any problems with drinking until well after he finished graduate school. But as the tensions and anxieties of his life mounted, and the set-backs from perfection began to increase, he "slipped over the line between moderate drinking and alcoholism."

John said "there are all kinds of drunks: melancholy drunks, weeping drunks, traveling drunks, slap-happy and stupid drunks, and a number of other varieties." He was a self-aggrandizing and occasionally violent drunk.

His crises came when, during a drunk, he became "violently insane" and landed in the City Jail. Soon after he was ready for A.A.

John gave very humorous talks. For example, he said in his 1978 talk that he did not know why his story was removed from the third edition, perhaps the New York office thought he had died.

He also joked about how having your story in the Big Book could sometimes cause problems. He told how after he had talked at a state A.A. convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, he overheard a man say that he was a fake, a liar, and a thief. The man thought he had stolen every word of his story out of a story in the Big Book which the man had just read the night before.

He discusses four paradoxes in his story. (A paradox, he explains, is a statement seemingly self-contradictory; a statement which appears to be false, but which, upon careful examination, in certain instances proves to be true.) The four paradoxes are, (1) we surrender to win, (2) we give away to keep, (3) we suffer to get well and (4) we die to live.

John updated his story for the January 1968 A.A. Grapevine. In the update he said that in A.A. we don't just quit drinking. "We learn to change our self-centeredness, to stop running away from things we don't like, and to remove or at least adjust our emotional shortcomings. We do these things by taking seriously and honestly our Twelve Steps, the nearest thing to a 'cure' for alcoholism that anybody has yet discovered. We learn to do these things not by just memorizing the Steps (though that is a good idea), but by attempting to live and act them each day or our lives. And eventually, often when we least expect it, we discover that as a result of all this we are happy and contented and full of thanksgiving -- something I once knew (or thought I knew) I could never be, without drinking."

*Special thanks to Charles K. of California for some of the information on John Parr.*