

The Serenity Prayer: ‘So Much A.A. In So Few Words’ BOX459 Vol. 49, No.6 / HOLIDAY ISSUE 2003

For A.A.s everywhere, the beloved Serenity Prayer is a mantra for every conceivable occasion—a cooling breeze on a face flushed with anger, a small song of gratitude for good news, a comforting guide for the bad—and reassurance that the world is unfolding as it is meant to.

Says David R. of Oakland, California: “When Route 10 is choked with trailers under a burning sun and a fenderbender has stalled traffic for miles ahead, I start mouthing the Serenity Prayer to ward off road rage, and it works.” Karen M. of Richmond, Virginia, notes that “when I have something nerve-racking to do, like asking my boss for a raise or apologizing for having messed up on an assignment, I repeat the Serenity Prayer several times and it calms me down like magic.” Chicago’s John D. affirms that the prayer “helps me in the up times as well as the down. It comes naturally to my lips when all hell is breaking loose, for sure. But I try to remember to say it as a thank you to God when the good times roll—like my A.A. anniversary or a rare weekend away with my wife.”

A.A. co-founder Bill W. said of the Serenity Prayer, “Never had we seen so much A.A. in so few words.” In *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* (p. 196), Bill relates that early in 1942 A.A.’s first national secretary, nonalcoholic Ruth Hock, showed him and others in their crowded little New York office a routine New York *Herald Tribune* obituary that ended with these words:

*God grant us the serenity to accept
the things we cannot change,
courage to change the things we can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*

Someone suggested printing the quatrain on walletsize cards for inclusion in office mailings, and thus the Serenity Prayer was on its way to becoming integral to A.A. life. It has since been translated into the many languages spoken by members around the world, aloud at their meetings and soundlessly in their hearts. For more than half a century now, the prayer has become so closely woven into the very fabric of A.A. philosophy that members have difficulty remembering it did not originate within the A.A. experience itself.

Yet despite years of delving by serious researchers and a lot of guesswork by Saturday scholars, the exact origin of the Serenity Prayer remains a mystery. What seems undisputed, though, is the claim of authorship by theologian Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, who told an interviewer that he had written the prayer as a “tag line” to a sermon of his on practical Christianity. But even Dr. Niebuhr admitted to some doubt when he added, “Of course, it may have been spooking around for years, even centuries, but I don’t think so. I honestly do believe that I wrote it myself.” With his permission, the prayer was printed on cards during World War II and distributed to the troops by the U.S.O. By then it had also been reprinted by the National Council of

Churches as well as by Alcoholics Anonymous.

In suggesting that the prayer may have been “spooking around” for centuries, Dr. Niebuhr appears to have been accurate. “No one can tell for sure who first wrote the Serenity Prayer,” Bill W. noted (*ibid.*). “Some say it came from the early Greeks; others think it was from the pen of an anonymous English poet; still others claim it was written by an American Naval officer. . . .” Other attributions have wandered as far afield as ancient Sanskrit texts and into the distinguished company of Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Spinoza. One A.A. member came across the Roman philosopher Cicero’s *Six Mistakes of Man*, one of which reads: “The tendency to worry about things that cannot be changed or corrected.”

No one has actually found the prayer’s text among the writings of these allegedly original sources. What appears to be really ancient, like the above quote of Cicero’s, are the prayer’s themes of acceptance, courage to change what can be changed, and freely letting go of what is beyond one’s ability to change. Certainly the search for origins of the prayer has been like peeling an onion, sometimes having to start the process all over again. For example, in July 1964 the A.A. Grapevine received a clipping of an article from the *Paris Herald Tribune* in which the writer reported having seen a tablet in a Koblenz, (West) German, hotel that was inscribed: “God give me the detachment to accept those things I cannot alter; the courage to alter those things I can alter; and the wisdom to distinguish the one thing from the other.”

Here at last seemed concrete evidence—complete with quote, author, date—of the Serenity Prayer’s source. But, no, it failed to stand the test of time. Fifteen years later, in 1979, Peter T. of Berlin told Beth K., then a staff member of the General Service Office, that the first form of the prayer had originated with Boethius, a Roman philosopher (480-524 A.D.) and author of *Consolations of Philosophy*.

There are still more claims, and undoubtedly further “sightings” will continue to be reported for years to come. Meantime a thought expressed by many is that the Serenity Prayer, whatever its ancient or modern origin, seems to have been born out of an ancient perception and a wisdom born of suffering. Except for the Lord’s Prayer and the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, no other quotation or concept, at once practical yet spiritual, has been felt in the minds and hearts of so many A.A. members on their journey in sobriety to a new way of living. Bill W. alluded to this phenomenon years ago. In thanking an A.A. friend for a plaque on which the prayer was inscribed, he said, “In creating A.A. the Serenity Prayer has been a most valuable building block—indeed, a cornerstone.”

Speaking of mysteries, cornerstones and coincidences, the building that today houses G.S.O. borders on a stretch of Manhattan’s 120th Street, between Riverside Drive and Broadway. It is called Reinhold Niebuhr Place.

December But for the Grace of God 2007

Mon. Night

Lorain

7:30 PM

Zion Lutheran Church
5100 Ashland Ave.

3rd. Rhonda
10th. Anniversary

17th. Ed B.

24th. Irvin

31st. Ken P.

Fri. Night

Faith Group

11:00 PM

1741 N Ridge Rd.

7th. Coretta F.

14th No Meeting

21th. Ask it

Basket

28th. Jeff K.

Mid-Night

Elyria Group

Sat. 12:00 PM

St Mary's Church
4th & Middle Ave.

1st. Penny B.

8th. Kim C.

15th Cris S.

22nd. Kevin S.

29th. Ask it

G.S.R./D.C.M. Meeting: The Multi-District meeting is held at **11 AM** on the **1st. Sunday** of the month. This meeting is for the General Service Rep's. (**G.S.R.**) of each Group and the District Committee Member's (**D.C.M.**). If you want to learn more about service attend this meeting. (**Jan. 6th., 2008**)

The Lorain Inter-Group Meeting is the **1st. Sunday** of the month at **12:30 PM**. It is very **Important** that all the **Secretaries** of each **Group** attend this meeting. **We urge your Attendance** (Be Informed, Be Active) (**Jan. 6th., 2008**)

Advisory Board Meeting: The meeting will be held at **6:30 PM** on the **3rd. Wednesday** of the month, at the **Inter-Group Office**. (**Dec. 19th., 2007**)

Lorain Inter-Group 50/50 Raffle Winner: Bill J. \$106.00, Sold by C/O.. Just another way you can Help support the Lorain Inter-Group

We wish to Thank all the ladies at the Key that decorated the windows at the Inter-Group Central Office for the holiday's. As usual you have done a beautiful job. Thank You and God Bless !!
The Advisory Board

• The Word of God Is Power Over Fear •

The Lorain Inter-Group is looking to fill a new position on a temporary basis, 16 hours per week. The person should have at least three years of continuous sobriety. Must also have computer skills. The clerk position will assume the duties of the Office Manager but will not do any of the purchasing. If you are interested in this position write a letter to the Advisory Board, At 577 Broadway Ave., Lorain , Oh. 44052.

Concepts 12: The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. Tradition, taking care that it never becomes the perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Step 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.

Tradition 12: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Promise 12: We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Grafton
Wed. Night

8:30 PM

Grafton Fire Sta.
1050 Novak Rd.

5th. Tammy

12th. Irvin

19th. Clint

26th. Chrissy

Elyria St.
Mary's

Sun. 8:00 PM

1741 N Ridge Rd.

2nd. Clint B.

9th. Dave C.

16th. Larry M.

23rd. Mark T

30th. Dave W.

Lorain
Consolidated

Sun. 2:30 PM

577 Broadway

2nd. Russ W.

9th. Kristi J

16th. Jorge P.

23rd. Aimee F.

30th. Troy S.

Anniversary

• 28 years •

December 10th

Monday Night

Lorain

7:30 PM

Zion Lutheran Church
5100 Ashland Ave.

Lead: Dave C. Sr.

• Door Prizes • Pizza •

• Cake •

• Fellowship •

**P
U
R
T
Y**

• List Your Anniversaries •
Dec. 9th. Mark McC. 24yrs.
Dec. 11th. Bill C. 49yrs
Dec. 27th. Lisa P. 6yrs.
Dec. 27th. Maria M. 4yrs.

Arid Fellowship Club
1741 N. Ridge Rd.,
POOL TOURNAMENT
Starting: **Nov. 4th. Sunday**
It will run for 9 Consecutive
Weeks Each Sunday

HONESTY

During this holiday season, a time to be with family and friends, we give thanks for the healing power of love and sobriety in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

NOTE: A service piece, "Origin of the Serenity Prayer: A Historical Paper" (SM F-129). Available free, upon request from a G.S.O. staff member.

Thought for the Day: *Recharging*

The simplicity of the AA program teaches me that happiness isn't something I can "demand." It comes upon me quietly, while I serve others. In offering my hand to the newcomer or to someone who has relapsed, I find that my own sobriety has been recharged with indescribable gratitude and happiness.

Thought to Ponder : Happiness is often the result of being too busy to be miserable.

A Twelve Step Journey
Through the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous
Jan. 19, 2008
Salvation Army Hall
5204 Broadway Ave.
10am. Till 6pm.

(Lunch & Beverage provided)
 \$5.00 Donation
 Scholarships Available
 Presented by:
 Fred & Katie Ings
 For info call:
 (440)452-8948 (440)453-8948
 Email
 Fritz689@Roadrunner.com

Service Through Actions!!!!

HELP NEEDED

A.A. Men & Women
 To carry the message to other Alcoholics in the Lorain County Prisons & Jails:

Mondays thru Thursdays

Requirements:
1 yr. Sobriety
 (if you would like to help)
Please Call:
Russ Walker
440 668-6650

Compass House Alumni & Friends Breakfast
 Last Saturday of the month.
 Breakfast @ 9:00 am
 Lead @ 10:00 am
 Cost Only \$4.00

Prayer for the Day: Dear God, guide me to Do all the good I can by all means I can in all ways I can in all places I can to all people I can as long as I can.

Need A. A. Volunteers to Speak, Lead and or Assist at the Lake Point Nursing Home on Monday's 7 PM. Contact Coretta Farley. 308-1714

H O W = Honesty, Open-mindedness, Willingness.

The sign on the front of the Office needs to be changed to Lorain Inter-Group if any A.A. Group or any one member would like to volunteer to change the sign, Please call the Office 440-246-1800

***To submit information for the news letter please contact: Russ Walker or Jim Parks via: Call, *email or leave the information at the Inter-Group Office before the 25th. of each month.**

Arid Fellowship Center

Needs Volunteers to start a Entertainment Committee to help in the planing and setup of events throughout the year. If interested Contact; Kim C. , Little Nikki or Bobbie M.
 Leave a message at:
 Arid Club (440 233-4801) or
 Bobbie M. (440 537-4280)

Arid Fellowship Invites you to a Christmas Dance

December 22nd.
8:00 PM
 (Munchies Available Side Dishes Welcome)

Cost:
 \$5.00 Singles
 \$8.00 Couples
 Sponsored by
 Arid Fellowship Ctn. Inc.
 440 233-4801



At this Holiday time, may we be grateful for our sobriety and continue to extend the hand and the love of A.A. to the alcoholic who still suffers. Having left the darkness behind us, may we look toward the light of the future with gratitude and hope, sharing in the fellowship of the spirit. We wish each of you a sober and happy Holiday Season.

From the Advisory Board, Office Staff, the LiveWire Staff, and all the Committee Members.

"With God, all things are possible!"

2nd. Annual New Year's Eve Dance.

Bring in the New Year Having FUN FUN FUN

December 31, 2007
 Sponsored by
 Serenity Hall
Tickets:

\$10.00 in advance
\$15.00 at the door.
 Includes Dinner
 "Smorgasbord"
A taste of all Foods
 50/50 Raffle, DJ
 Doors open at 6:00 PM
 Party until 1:00 AM
 St. Ladislaus Hall
 2926 Wood Ave
 for tickets contact:
 Tony West 440-342-5488

Children's Christmas Party

December 16th.
 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
St. John's Hall
 Rt. 57 & Homewood Dr.

Children's Christmas Party Dance

December 14th.
9:00 PM
 after Friday's Meeting

St. Anthony's
 1305 E. Erie Ave.
Tickets:
\$5.00 in advance
\$6.00 at door
 (Big 50/50 Drawing)
 any questions contact:
 Troy or Brenda (440 365-9018)

Survivors List:

Groups in need of
Support to stay afloat
 Please Attend, Contribute,
 Be Active, Help Chair,
 Be a Secretary,
 Be Responsible
Elyria St. Mary's
 Sun. 8:00 PM

Friday Night Faith
 Fri. 11:00 PM
 Arid Club, 1741 N. Ridge Rd.,
 Sheffield Township

UAW Big Book Study
 Thurs. 10:00 AM
 Pilgrim United Church of Christ
 523 E. Broad St. & Winckles St
 Elyria

We Need Your Help!!
Don't let them Close
HELP SUPPORT the groups.

Committee Chairs

Unity LiveWire Committee

Russ Walker.....327-1308
*e mail russ8859@aol.com
Jim Parks.....385-5687
*e mail parkspphoto@adelphia.net

Reporter

Bobbi Matear.....537-4280

Internet Committee (aaloraincounty.org)

Mike Smeck.....522-2163
e mail webmaster@aaloraincounty.org
Donna L.....574-3464
e mail queendlawson@yahoo.com

Schools

Ellen B.....322-5306
e mail irishmimil@comcast.net

Archives Committee

Kevin Sexton.....323-9217
e mail bigbook@alltel.net

Correctional Committee

Russ Walker.....327-1308
e mail russ8859@aol.com
Maureen Leach.....967-6305
Coretta Farley.....308-1714

District Committee

District #19a (Sheffield Lake, Avon Lake, Sheffield, Avon, N. Ridgeville, Eaton, Columbia, Grafton Meetings)

DCM. MaryAnn Schulz.....453-4115
e mail maschulz.oh.rr.com

District #19b (Lorain City Meetings and some in Vermilion)

DCM. Craig Warren.....989-2786
Alt. Edwin Tories.....989-0362

District #20a Vacant. (All of Elyria City Meetings a Carlisle)

DCM. Judy Sexton.....322-2619

District #20b (All Meetings at ARID Club)

DCM. Judy Sexton.....322-2619
Alt. Marilyn Oliver.....284-9834

District #20c (LaGrange, Penfield, Brownhelm Tnsp., Amherst, Henrietta Tnsp., S. Amherst, Kipton, Oberlin, Camden Tnsp., Pittsfield Tnsp., Brighton Tnsp., Wellington Meetings)

DCM. Donna Lawson.....574-3464

Board Of Directors

Chairperson Tom Ortiz.....315-8600
Vice-Chairperson Troy Smith.....365-9018
Treasurer Bill Post.....933-4153
Secretary Donna Lawson.....574-3464
Office Managers George Schmidt.....288-8935
Sam Hensley.....288-4942

Advisory Board Members

Tom Banks.....309-3226
Bill Jackson.....935-3251
Terri Poznako.....225-6897
Russ Walker.....327-1308
Mark Potter.....452-5946

Rents: Month of Nov., 2007

1. Blue Monday
2. Tuesday Night Central
3. P.T.O.Y.
4. Strength In Sobriety

Rents: Month of Oct., 2007

1. Lorain Consolidated
2. Tuesday Night Central
3. Mid-Week Morning Disc.
4. Mon. Happy Hour
5. Friday Men's Disc.
6. Sat. Morn. Disc.
7. Blue Monday

Phone Line Report:

Month of Nov., 2007

12 Step Calls....	11
Sponsorship....	8
Al-A-Non.....	9
Meeting Info....	212
General Info....	91
Total:.....	331

**Let Go,
Let God!!**

Financial Report

Listed below are the Profit & Loss spread sheet, the group donations and the rents for the month of October, 2007.

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Donations</u>	
1. Rent	\$ 675.00	1.....	\$ 604.35
2. Columbia Gas	\$ 432.00	2.....	\$1,658.07
3. All Service Telephone	\$ 140.88	3.....	\$ 404.83
4. Ohio Edison	\$ 126.73	4.....	\$ 518.36
5. Century Telephone	\$ 92.28	5.....	\$ 521.04
6. House Managers	\$1,487.14		<u>\$3,706.65</u>
7. Pay Cor Fees	\$ 58.23		
8. Live Wire Printing	\$ 49.00	<u>Donations/Rent</u>	\$3,706.65
9. Windstream Yellow Pages	\$ 18.30	<u>Expenses</u>	\$3,211.76
10. Printer and cable	\$ 132.20		
	<u>\$3,211.76</u>	<u>Gain Oct. 2007</u>	\$ 494.89

When making Donations to the Lorain Inter-Group, Area 54, Multi-District, or the General Service Office in New York. PLEASE put your Groups General Service number on the Donation. You can find your Groups General Service number in the meeting schedule or on the internet at aaloraincounty.org under A.A. Meetings. Please put your Area & District numbers on the donation, it also helps to identify your Group. Make all checks or money orders payable to Lorain Inter-Group. If you don't have a General Service number under your Groups information in the meeting schedule you can contact your District Committee person listed in the LiveWire to help you get registered.

Donations for the month of October, 2007

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Blue Monday | 14. Attitude of Gratitude Oberlin |
| 2. Oberlin Women's Closed Group | 15. Wellington Thursday Night |
| 3. Monday Night Lorain | 16. Amherst Thursday "Who Me" |
| 4. Elyria Men's Stag | 17. Oberlin Group |
| 5. Elyria Monday Closed Disc. | 18. Friday Night Amherst |
| 6. LaGrange Monday Night | 19. Elyria Friday Night |
| 7. We Care Tuesday Morning | 20. Vermilion 12 X 12 Discussion |
| 8. Vermilion Tues. Night Group | 21. Conscious Contact Group Oberlin |
| 9. North Ridgeville First Step | 22. Serenity Hall |
| 10. Stepping Into Sobriety Group | 23. Amherst Saturday Group |
| 11. Mid-Week Morning Disc. | 24. Mid Night Elyria Group |
| 12. Grafton Wed. Night | 25. Saturday Morning Discussion |
| 13. Arid Lunch Bunch (Carlisle) | |

Donations for the month of November, 2007

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Serenity Hall | 10. LaGrange Monday Night |
| 2. Elyria Sunday Night | 11. Blue Monday |
| 3. Thursday Women's | 12. Wellington Friday Night |
| 4. Carlisle Lunch Bunch | 13. Mid-Week Morning Disc. |
| 5. Grafton Wednesday Night | 14. P.T.O.Y. |
| 6. Oberlin Group | 15. Strength In Sobriety |
| 7. Tuesday Early Morning | 16. Stepping Into Sobriety Group |
| 8. Amherst Saturday Group | 17. We Care Tuesday Morning |
| 9. Lorain Intergroup 50/50 | 18. CBS Big BookStep Study |

As you let go of the past and move to a new plateau spiritually, it will affect every area of your life. Expect change on every front, and be prepared to make decisions that will release you into new realms of experience and blessing. Yield to the Spirit, and God will take you higher. Do not be afraid to make the changes that present themselves to you, for God is with you.

"You Have Already Succeeded When You Dared To Try"