The Northeast Ohio Recorder

January, February, March, 2010

http://www.aaneoh.or

Volume XXI, Issue 5

UPCOMING

January 17 Area Assembly

2:00

January 24 and Feb 28 Mini Conference planning meeting—Beachwood Hilton 2:00

March 21 Area Committee Meeting 2

April 9-11 35th NEOH Mini-Conference Beachwood Hilton

April 11 Area Assembly Beachwood Hilton

2:00

Unless noted, Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at The 12 Step Recovery Club 1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH (on US Route 42 about 1/4 mile south of State Route 303) (330) 273-7216



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Delegate's Report

Welcome to 2010!!! We have entered into another calendar year of events to enhance your sobriety in service work. If you are a new General Service Representative you are fortunate to be serving in Northeast Ohio. You won't realize until later on, but you have joined a support system to provide you with information to carry to your Home Group like no other in the US and Canada. When I attended the 59th General Service Conference last year in Manhattan, NY, I was one of the most informed Delegates at the Conference. Why? We hold a Mini-Conference every spring (4 in Ohio!) that allows each attendee to discuss and vote on the proposed changes (agenda items) that will be aired at the annual General Service Conference in late April of every year. The 35th annual Area 54 Mini-Conference will be held this year in Beachwood, Ohio on April 9-11, 2010. Mark your calendars; this is an event you should not miss.

This is going to be a busy year for all of us here at General Service. We are going to initiate the new GSR School that we all learned about at the State Convention last year. We have many district events and picnics to be held throughout the summer, as last year's Open House Picnic and Gratitude Sunday

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Alternate Delegate's Report

I hope all had a joyous and happy Thanksgiving.

Dan F and I attended the East Central Regional Forum in Kalamazoo. We arrived Friday evening in time to attend the first timer's orientation meeting. Area 54 was well represented at this forum with two past delegates, DCMs, GSRs, Intergroup Rep and Committee Chairs.

The Regional Forums provide an opportunity for direct communication with some members of the General Service Board, AA World Service, Inc , AA Grapevine Corporate Board, GSO and Grapevine Staff, with trusted servants of the region. The Regional Forums are designed to improve communication and are intended to be sharing sessions.

One of the highlights for me was hearing from Ward Ewing, Class A (Non-Alcoholic) Trustee of the Chairman of the General Service Board. I was interested to hear his story. He has been involved with Alcoholics Anonymous for over 25 years in his parish as an ordained minister.

There were 471 in attendance, of that 258 or 58% were first time attendees. I plan to give a full report on this Forum at the January 17th Assembly Meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone. There will be Grapevine and Literature sales at this Assembly.

I was invited to attend a group conscious meeting in Lake County. It was rewarding to see their willingness and acceptance to learn the service structure. I do have plans to attend more meetings in Lake County.

I have continued to work with other dark districts and attended a meeting in District 14 in Urichsville-New Philadelphia.

Love and service, Bob D Alternate Delegate

From the Editor...

Anonymous at the Level of Press, Radio, Films...and Facebook.

An issue that gets brought up often surrounding the Traditions has to do with something that the Traditions don't even address: anonymity as it relates to the Internet. While I find the Traditions to be of the utmost importance for the survival of AA as a whole, I also recognize that they were written in an era when methods of communication were fairly limited, which consequently left some holes for the AA of today to fill in. Specific to this discussion is the 11th Tradition, which states that "our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films." I remember when I first started thinking about anonymity and the Internet. Turning to the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity," I looked for answers. The pamphlet states that websites should be considered public media, and therefore we shouldn't use our full name or images on any public site. It goes on to say that "...the level of anonymity in emails, online meetings, and chat rooms would be a personal decision."

At first glance, this seems pretty clear: no full names or pictures on any publically accessible website, but chat rooms, online meetings, and emails, are acceptable places to break our own anonymity, if we wish to. The pamphlet is trying to set up a distinction between a "private" and "public" Internet. Unfortunately, it falls well short of comprehensively defining this distinction. One could easily say that breaking anonymity on a national news organization's site is forbidden, but a break in an email to a friend is acceptable. A personal blog that is publically searchable would also fall into the "public" category.

But what about sites such as Facebook and MySpace? These widely-used "social networking" sites have their own security protocols, some of which are fully customizable by the individual users. They have their own levels of public and private, further complicating the issue. For instance, I can set my personal Facebook page to be viewed by my "friends" only, preventing anyone else from seeing the information listed. Can I break my anonymity on this level, where only my friends can see? Wouldn't this be merely the virtual equivalent of gathering all of my friends in a room and telling them I am in AA?

Facebook has "groups" where likeminded people can "sign up" and post messages on discussion boards. There are many of these twelve step-related groups on both Facebook and MySpace. There are multiple unmoderated groups titled "Alcoholics Anonymous," one with over 9,000 members. Any Facebook member can access this group and its member list, most of whom use their full names (as Facebook requires for all of its members). One could argue that this is a public break because it falls un-

der the banner Alcoholics Anonymous. Interestingly, other Facebook groups by the same name appear to have been started as a joke, perhaps to poke fun at alcoholics, but were quickly co-opted by actual AA members and are used for discussions about sobriety. But what about the "Friends of Bill W." group that has over 12,000 members? It is public (to members of Facebook), but specifically states that it is not affiliated with any organization.

I think that the solution here has more to do with Tradition 6 than with Tradition 11. Calling a Facebook group "Alcoholics Anonymous" implies affiliation, despite disclaimers to the contrary (as offered by one of the groups). If they all were titled something like "Friends of Bill W." or "Alcoholics in Recovery," then we would be killing two birds with one stone: ending affiliation with AA and allowing group members to not worry about breaking their anonymity at a public level for merely joining the group. Each individual would be responsible for maintaining their own anonymity in these groups in group discussions, but they would no longer have to worry about their anonymity being broken just for joining the group.

A major issue here is that many of these groups are orphaned, meaning that they were set up by an individual and then abandoned, essentially leaving them unmoderated and making it impossible to change things like the name of the group and descriptive text on the main page.

The most recent edition of BOX 459 has an article devoted entirely to this discussion. It ends up saying that shared experience will help bring about resolution. There is no consensus among AA members as to whether or not social networking sites are public or private. The "Guideline" paper on the Internet released by GSO provides some clarification. It says that while social networking sites require a user to sign up, the sites are essentially public beyond the initial registration. Therefore any disclosure of our AA membership in public groups, message boards, or on someone else's "wall" should be avoided.

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Anonymous at the Level of Press, Radio, Films...and Facebook, Cont'd

Facebook has responded over the years to many users' demands for increased privacy and individual control over that privacy. This serves to benefit AA members, as well. Here are some tips I have compiled for anonymity-protected usage of Facebook:

- Don't join any group with "Alcoholics Anonymous" in its name, regardless of whether or not there is a disclaimer.
- If you choose to join a group for people in recovery, don't disclose that you are an AA member in any of the discussions you participate in. Talk in general terms about meetings, recovery, and steps, without mentioning specific names of organizations.
- If you choose to "out" yourself on your profile page, make sure the page is accessible to only your friends, and not to the general Facebook public.
- When creating an AA-related "event" on Facebook, make sure that it is private so that invitees don't have their anonymity broken when they decide to attend (Facebook posts an update to a member's page if they accept an invitation to an event).
- For extra privacy, make the guest list of an AA-related event hidden, so that guests aren't outed to anyone else viewing the event.
- Never break another member's anonymity without their permission. Don't post a message on someone's "wall" regarding meetings, sobriety, or AA. Just because you might not care if your friends know that you're in AA doesn't give you the right to break your friends' anonymity.
- When publishing pictures to Facebook, don't publish pictures from AA functions with your friends in them, unless you have their permission. Make sure that these pictures are only viewable by your friends only.
- Be cautious using anything recovery-related on MySpace, as MySpace doesn't offer anywhere near the amount of privacy control that Facebook does.

Many of us want AA to stay exactly the same as it was when it was founded, but this discussion brings out the shortcomings of this view. At the time the Traditions were published, this conversation about anonymity would be inconceivable. As our world changes and evolves, AA, too, must change and evolve. AA members must meet new challenges head-on, inside and outside of AA. Just as we tackle our own personal issues through shared experience, open-mindedness, and a willingness to change, we must meet new AA challenges the same way. AA must evolve with the times, or else it won't be prepared to meet the "certain trials and low spots ahead."

Dave S. Editor, Northeast Ohio Recorder







Delegate's Report Cont'd

were a smashing success in attracting new members to service. In the fall we will hold an election assembly as most service positions in General Service run for two years. If you were elected to or appointed by your Group or District in any capacity to serve, I would strongly suggest you attend the Assemblies or Committee Meetings so we get to know you. I attend many District Meetings and gatherings and I meet many energetic, willing, and intelligent trusted servants who never come to Brunswick. Please join us so that we can see and hear your talents in carrying the AA message.

On behalf of all of the Panel 59 Trusted Servants who serve in our Area we all wish you a safe, sober, and higher-powered 2010! The Grace of God got us this far now let's show him what good works we can do for him and AA!

Love and Service, Danny F.(59)(54)

Area Officer and Committee Reports

Treatment Facilities/Bridging the Gap Committee

I received the following report from Bridge the Gap (District 10):

Here is an update on our progress in the Bridge the Gap program at STEPS treatment facility. I finally was able to get scheduled for two of their groups after meeting with the staff regarding our AA program. They have been very cooperative and desperately want our cooperation. Now with the Mental Health bill being voted down, treatment is hurting more than ever. The first 2 sessions have been very successful. I was able to show the Hope DVD and pass out a lot of AA literature. Also, I was able to explain in detail our meetings in District 10. The clients had a lot of questions regarding the program and positive feedback as well. STEPS is very thankful for the Bridge the Gap program and this information is critical to the clients recovery. I did get one contact sheet back and I will be talking to the person. I also will get with someone in the Doylestown area to follow up with the person as well. I will keep you updated on any new information.

> Regards, Jeff B

I have been very slow processing my Bridging the Gap: Requests for Temporary Contact and have had great deal of guilt and anxiety, but I have been encouraged to pick up the pieces and keep at it.

I do want to report that while at a treatment facilities meeting, I met an alumnus who BTG connected with a temporary contact. Now the alumnus and another sober alumnus led by long timer of 23 years, Harvey H., are reaching out and helping with the Fremont area including a request in Bradner.

In Lake county, the BTG contacts are Sarah P in Mentor and Rob S. in Painesville; in Lorain, Opal A. has stepped up.

I still need "the Heights" in Cleveland to be covered. If you are from any of the eastern Cleveland Suburbs and can want to help transition persons from treatment to AA meetings, please email me at srobin-son@fairpoint.net or through the Area54.org website.

I have just received a mailing from GSO with the 11/19/2009 Lists for BTG Area Contact and TF Area Contacts.

A goal in 2010, is to have Committee meetings to meet and accomplish our responsibilities to the Treatment Facilities, and to more efficiently respond to the BTG Temporary Contact Requests.

The first TF/BTG Committee meeting will be at 1:30 pm, January 17, 2010 (This is an half-hour before the Assembly Meeting.) The purpose will be to outline our 2010 goals as a

committee and address the immediate TF/BTG needs.

Respectfully, Susan R. TF/BTG Chair

Literature Update

There are several new items in the literature catalog that have been released this last year. Some are so new they won't show up in this year's catalog, but you can still order them through the area or your local intergroup office. We now have a Young People's poster which was approved in concept in 2008. The new 2009-2010 General Service Manuals are out, too. Your area Literature Committee recently acquired a set of twelve illustrations from "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" pamphlet - these are 8 1/2 by 11 inches in size and suitable for framing for your home group display or to donate to your local clubhouse. The much anticipated video, Hope - Alcoholics Anonymous, after some unanticipated delays in production, has been released and we have two copies for sale. Several other audio and video products have also been produced this year, re-mastering old items in a cleaner format. Please contact me for more information and come to the Assembly in January for a complete view of our available inventory.

In love and service, Jeff Y. Literature Chair

Area Officer and Committee Reports, Cont'd

Archives

The idea for organizing a historic collection of the fellowship's records came from our cofounder, Bill W, in the early 1950s. Being concerned that "the history of Alcoholics Anonymous is still veiled in the deep fog," and knowing that the office correspondence was loosely maintained in the drawers at the General Headquarters, Bill set out to preserve our historic records. He said, "It isn't hard to prepare a fact sheet of what happened. The hard thing to lay hold of is the atmosphere of the whole proceedings and anecdotal materials that will make the early experience live on." Bill asked his secretary, Nell Wing, to start collecting files. Slowly, both Bill and Nell started to educate AA members as to why it is of great importance to save the records. That is why it is important that we collect, save, and categorize our Area records and that we return other records to their proper area and intergroups. We must preserve our history for generations to come, one day and one panel at a time.

In love and service, Tim H, Archives Chair.

Mailing

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving! Gratitude Sunday was wonderful and many kudos to District 10 for the great job. I also want to thank the Cleveland Northcoast Multidistrict for hosting the last folding party and to District 37 for hosting the mailing party to put together the mailing you have in your hands. It is a great opportunity for service and getting the GSRs in your District to interact with others from around the area.

The 2010 mailing schedule is included below, and as you can see the column for mailing party hosts is blank. We need 5 Districts to step up to the plate and be of service. The parties take 3-4 hours depending on the number of people. Talk to your Districts and get on the schedule!

In service,

Jay M., Mailing Secretary

Recorder Deadline	All items to Mailing Secy	Print	Folding Party	Host for Folding Party	Mailing to Post Office	Contents
-	Following January As- sembly	Weekend of 2/13	Weekend of 2/20	??	22-Feb-10	MC Registration MC Agenda Items Theme Questions Finance Items Ohio State Conv Flyer
Mini-Conf	One week after MC	Weekend of 4/24	Weekend of 5/1	??	3-May-10	Apr May Jun Recorder Open House Flyer Finance Items Ohio State Conv Flyer Unity Day Flyer
Unity Day	30-May-09	Weekend of 6/5	Weekend of 6/19	??	21-Jun-09	Jul Aug Sep Recorder August Workshop ECRC Registration ECRF Registration Ohio State Conv Reg Finance Items
August workshop	Labor Day	Weekend of 9/11	Weekend of 9/18	??	20-Sep-10	Oct Nov Dec Recorder Gratitude Sunday Finance Items
Gratitude Sunday	4-Dec-10	Weekend of 12/11	Weekend of 12/18	??	20-Dec-10	Jan Feb Mar Recorder 2010 Trifold Schedule Finance Items MC Early Bird

Services Provided by our General Service Office

Ever heard an AA member ask "What has GSO ever done for me?" Here's just a few things...

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- Responds to inquiries from members, groups, committees outside U.S./
- refers to country G.S.O./Service Office where one exists.
- Provides shared experience on starting new A.A. groups in countries where A.A. is getting started; refers to nearest G.S.O. when appropriate.
- Responds to inquiries from professionals overseas where no service office exists.
- Upon request, provides contacts for members relocating/traveling overseas.
- Supervises the International Directory.
- Provides A.A. literature upon request where no local offices exist and there are limited resources.
- Maintains communication with country G.S.O.'s/Service Offices and responds to requests for shared experience.
- Coordinates the World Service Meeting (WSM) held every other year including G.S.O. planning meetings.
- Provides pertinent information on translations of A.A. literature and assists with new translations by providing copyright/reprint guidelines.
- Upon invitation, travels overseas to service events, conventions, zonal meetings, etc.; meets with professionals as arranged by local A.A.s.
- Distributes circulating folder of country G.S.O. bulletins/newsletters for staff review.

Publications and Literature

- Edits, designs and publishes all A.A. Conference-approved literature, video, audio and special needs items in three languages: English, Spanish and French.

- Edits, designs and publishes all A.A. Conference-approved literature, video, audio and special needs items in three languages: English, Spanish and French.
 Processes all literature orders.
 Handles customer inquiries regarding orders.
 Maintains small in-house shipping department.
 Manages outsourced warehousing and shipping companies.
 Oversees translations/licensing of A.A. World Services copyrighted material.
 Research and development for new publications and new formats.
 Publishes the following:

 Box 4-5-9.
 G.S.O. Quarterly Report.
 A.A. Directories and Lists of Domestic and International offices.
 Markings.
 About A.A.
 Sharing From Behind the Walls.
 Loners and International Members (LIM) newsletter.
 International Convention souvenirs.

 Sends publication updates to local offices, Conference members on new literature, pricing changes, etc.
 Manages day-to-day Web site upkeep and design.
 Supervises and provides the following:

 Welcome letter and informational packet on A.A. literature for newly listed Area/District/Other Literature Committee Chairs.

 Coordinates the following:

 Recovery Conference-approved A.A. Literature.
 Bimonthly Box 4-5-9 publication for the Fellowship.
 A.A. literature display package for conventions/conference/roundups.
 Works closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees*
 committee, coordinates recovery literature that falls under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference approved literature.
 Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about two times a year to Literature chairs. this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference

- **Supervises and provides the following:

 o Welcome letter to newly listed Area/District/Other Corrections/
 H&I/BTG Committee Chairs; Corrections Kit to Area Corrections Chairs; Corrections Workbook to District/Other Chairs.
 o Corrections Literature Discount Package Order Form and Corrections related service material.
 o Distributes the video "Carrying the Message Behind These Walls."

 *Provides periodic mailings (activity update reports) about 3-4 times a year to Corrections/H&I/BTG chairs.

 *Responds to requests from Corrections committees for shared experience and contacts.

 *Coordinates the following:
 o Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) for members in correctional facilities.
 o Forwards prerelease contact requests to local corrections committees.
 o Quarterly Sharing From Behind the Walls publication for inmates.
 o Every other year, sends informational letter to wardens and corrections professionals in U.S./Canada.
 o Working closely with Publications Department and corresponding trustees' committee, coordinates literature and videos that fall under the purview of this assignment and per Advisory Actions applicable to A.A. Conference-approved literature.

 *Responds to letters from inmates.

 *Communicates the need for outside C.C.S. letter writers.

 *Provides limited complimentary A.A. literature to inmates, upon • Supervises and provides the following:

 o Welcome letter to newly listed Area/District/Other Corrections/
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 • Responds to letters from inmates.
 • Communicates the need for outside C.C.S. letter writers.
 • Provides limited complimentary A.A. literature to inmates, upon

Group Services

- Supervises and provides the following:

 o D.C.M. and G.S.R. kits for newly listed D.C.M. and G.S.R.s

 o A.A. Group Handbook for newly listed groups.

 o Information/literature packages for starting new groups.

 o Service Material (SM) and SM lists, upon request.

 o New Group Forms; Change of Group Information Forms; new Central/Intergroup Office Forms.

 As member of Intergroup/Central Office Seminar Policy Committee and ligiting to local offices participates at the Annual Central/Intergroup Semiliaison to local offices, participates at the Annual Central/Intergroup Seminar; provides quarterly mailings (activity update reports) to Central/ Intergroup Offices.
 - Responds to requests from local offices for shared experience and from local

- As secretary to General Service Conference Committee on Report and Charter, prepares agenda, background and minutes/report.
- Coordinates G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site; A.A. Directories and Central/ Intergroup lists; supervises revisions and updates to The A.A. Service Manual and A.A.

Guidelines.

- Distributes circulating folder of local office bulletins/newsletters for staff
- Maintains assignment documentation/history on Web site, Central/ Intergroup Office, Report and Charter, Service Material and Web site.

Stay tuned for more in the next issue...

Upcoming Events...

Area 54 Northeast Ohio General Service Mini-Conference April 9-11, 2010

Only around 93 delegates and 21 trustees get to attend the General Service Conference in New York every year, so 35 years ago, the Mini-Conference was created to give the rest of us a taste of what the conference is like. Participating members are assigned to a committee where they discuss and two too on the actual agenda items that the delegates will be addressing at the Conference in New two York. After the committee meetings conclude, all participants discuss and vote on all of the agenda the items.

The Mini-Conference serves many important purposes. It gives participants an idea of what the conference is actually like, provides a better understanding of the agenda items that will be discussed and voted on by the delegates, gives all members from the area a chance to voice their group's (or their personal) conscience on issues of importance, and, perhaps most importantly, informs our delegate of Area 54's conscience on each agenda item.

The Mini-Conference also provides great fellowship, a hospitality room, marathon meetings through the night, and a guest from our General Service Office in New York City. All AA members are encouraged to attend and participate, not just GSRs. Go to www.area54.org to download the through the registration form, look for one in your area mailing, or pick one up at an AA meeting.

See you in April!!



The 2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme "A Vision for You." A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels.

Convention registration and housing reservations opened on September 1, 2009. Also, all GSRs should have received registration packets in the mail. You can also go to www.aa.org for online registration and more info.

The registration process is slightly different than the previous convention. Rather than having a hotel lottery, all registrants will be able to reserve hotel rooms on a first come, first serve basis. After you have registered, you will be emailed a registration code, which you can then use to book a hotel room. While you still don't have a choice of which hotel you will stay in, about 8,000 of the 10,000 rooms blocked off for the convention are located within walking distance of the convention center, which means you have an 80% chance of getting a nearby room (chances are even greater if you register early!).

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RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our AA experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, as He may speak in our group conscience, is our sole Authority. World Service is the heart of our Third Legacy. Our meetings are informative and educational. They are held so that the Committee Members, GSR's and all interested members may be better equipped to carry the message of World Service back to their home groups and individual members, thus giving a better understanding to our purpose, our hopes and our work.

Confidential Contact List

Your Trusted Servants Committee 59

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Visit us at http://www.aaneoh.org

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