The Northeast Ohio Recorder

October, November, December 2012

http://www.area54.org

Volume XXII, Issue 8

NOTE THE DATE

October 21

Election Assembly 2:00 pm ~~~Come out and elect your Panel 63 delegate and area officers~~~~

November 18

Gratitude Sunday 12:00 pm Old North Church—Canfield OH ~~See page 11 for more details~~

April 3-4-5, 2013

NEOH-Area 54 Mini-Conference Radisson North Olmsted ~~Watch area54.org for details~~





Unless otherwise noted, Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at: The 12 Step Recovery Club, located at 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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A Word From Our Delegate

As summer comes to a close, we look forward to new challenges. This past summer was packed full of service opportunities. The 62nd General Service Conference April 22-28, 2012 in Rye Town, NY was a spiritual and moving experience. With all the agenda items being discussed, debated, voted, minority opinion, re-voted, and then finally consensus achieved. We adjourned the conference with re-dedication to do what is best for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Unity Day proved once again that our diversity does not divide us rather it defines us. The program allowed me to give my General Service Conference Report to the Area. Founders Day June 8 –10 was very enjoyable. It was a good Grapevine Service opportunity. I was able to meet a family from Hawaii, who have contacted me via email and had been referred to me by their delegate. It was a delight for me to meet them in person at the Grapevine table. The only problem was they could not put me in their suitcase for the trip home.

During all this we were in the midst of planning our state convention, which was held July 20-22. We concerned about low registration even up to the last day before the event. We are pleased to report that we had 240 paid registrations. There were some very special moments at the convention. Some these include the great participation by the Al-Anon community, our first Spanish Speaking program, although not well attended – we vow that it will not be our last. There were so great presentations that folks from other Areas asked to use them. Our guest from Baltimore, Arnold and his wife, Peggy, were so pleasant to be with. Our friend Julio E. from GSO, had a great time. Pam R., Regional Trustee gave us an update on what was happening at AAWS, e-book availability, literature sales and our financial condition. (This is in great detail in the Conference Report now available.) We have such universal participation and activities. It is hard to name everyone, but I do want to thank the Young People in AA for their presence. The Saturday Night Revue starring Ola P. with her star studded '4 Tops', Jamie and Joyce singing and not to forget the dancing. Everyone enjoyed the evening. "Fun in sobriety!" We enjoyed great ice cream and a weekend long stocked and staffed hospitality room. Quinsetta and Jill you did us proud!

Three of us took a 1200 miles plus roundtrip Aug 10-12 to the Additional Regional Forum in Mt. Vernon, IL. It was Wellington R.'s first Forum and he was

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Alternate Delegate's Report

As we approach the end of Panel 61, I would like to express my thanks to Area 54 for allowing me privilege to serve as your Alternate Delegate for the past two years. I am grateful for the many valuable lessons learned and the abundance of spiritual growth received as a result of these lessons. Although some of these lessons came as a "rude awakening", they were none the less most valuable. I have come to believe that one of the most important words contained in our Twelve Steps, aside from God, that is, is the word **practice**. Many of us when growing up, have heard it said that" practice makes perfect." Nothing is further from the truth. Practice makes progress, which for me, yields peace of mind. I must always, to the best of my ability, **practice** not only the principles outlined in our Twelve Steps but also the lessons learned along the way. Passing on what has been given to us is the focal point of our involvement in the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous and the only

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From the Editor...

As you may have noticed, the Fall issue of the Recorder is somewhat smaller. Your humble editor has been advised that the postage to send out our previously 'fatter' issues was straining the area budget. This shortened issue is in response to that request to economize. I apologize to all who submitted articles which we could not include because of space constraintts.

Which brings me to wonder what value our members put on the continued flow of important communication to and from the General Service Conference (GSC) to the members of A.A. in Northeast Ohio.

Yesterday, I received a copy of the Final Report of the 2012 GSC. These will be available at all Area functions. I invite you to pick one up for your group and share the great articles and valuable information inside. One of the reports given is an annual summary of the group and individual contributions to our General Service Board in support of the GSO for the past year. The data is sorted by area and by state with AA membership figures and 'per capita' giving. Sadly, Northeast Ohio is perennially one of the lowest contributors in support of our vital worldwide services. Why is that? Are we so enamored of our role as the birthplace and cradle of AA that we cannot see beyond the end of our own noses? Or is it that members **truly don't care** what happens outside our own homegroup to help the still sick and suffering alcoholic just a few blocks away from those church basement steps, let alone on the other side of the world?

Let me share the thoughts of a good friend of mine on this subject...

How Much Does AA Mean to Me, and What Do I Give It in Return?

I can't remember exactly when I first started "doubling my dollar" at my AA home group. I know I wasn't the first in my meeting to do it. That honor, I think, went to the woman who could least afford it, a woman still deeply in debt but grateful for the profound emotional, spiritual, and financial progress she has been making in AA week after week and year after year. At some point I noticed that she was dropping two \$1 bills into the basket each week. I felt a little sheepish and ashamed that I, with more years and more financial resources, wasn't doing the same. Gradually, one or two other people started dropping an extra buck in from time to time, and then regularly. I began noticing this more, and becoming a little more uncomfortable. Week after week, I was forced to ask myself, "Why aren't I doing

that, too?"

The trend to contributions above the traditional dollar amount was helped by our frequent discussions at group conscience meetings. After years of being flush, inflation was taking its toll, and we did not have the money to easily put on some of the events we'd put on in the past. And our fund to send our GSR to the Area 54 Mini-Conference was accumulating much too slowly (a previous GSR had paid for his own way, but a group should not expect everyone to do this). And so, little by little, it became clear that all of us who could afford it, needed to do a little more. And that included me.

By tradition, my home group does not have a lot of gimmicks. We don't hold raffles, 50-50s, we don't pass the basket two or three or more times, and we don't even charge for literature (it has long been our policy to give literature away as part of our 12th-Step work). We have long felt that AA members in recovery need to squarely face the fact that we are responsible for our own recovery, and that includes paying for it. We pass the basket once, and trust that members with real recovery will meet the need. Many AA service bodies have been beating the drums for a more realistic level of self-support for years. In fact, "double your dollar" and "thrive with five" came from one of those awareness-raising campaigns.

But, fearful alcoholic that I am, I am a cheapskate, a skinflint--tighter than the bark on a tree. Doubling my dollar might be logical, affordable, and spiritually responsible; there might be no reason in the world NOT to do it; but my fear of financial insecurity kept me from actually taking the action for a long, long time. I think I gasped the first week I threw those two singles in the basket. It really was traumatic. But after a few weeks, it began to seem normal, reasonable. Within a month or so, I had become comfortable with this new level of power and responsibility in my life. I had faced the fears of "not enough" and moved forward.

I realized that even if I put \$3, \$5, or \$10 a week into my home group's basket it wouldn't even come close to paying for what Alcoholics Anonymous has done for me, and for the wonderful abundance of recovery I enjoy today.

—Anonymous

~Your editor, Jeff

We welcome your servicerelated contributions, comments and questions. Send topic ideas or complaints to: newsletter@area54.org



OFFICER REPORTS

Spiritual Awakening

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I Am Responsible. That is an amazing statement for an Alcoholic like me to make.

Before I came to AA, I was not a very Responsible Person. I always had good intentions but I could not muster the power to carry through. Yet I was under the delusion in the reality of my own mind that I was self sufficient, in control and had total responsibility for people, places, and things that were none of my business. I continued in this flawed thinking until I hit bottom and came to A A. Even today, I must be reminded that my perception may not be the reality of the situation.

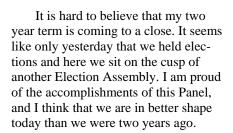
In A A I learned that I was responsible for my actions, that I was Powerless, not only over alcohol but also people, places, and things. I needed a power greater than myself. I needed a God of my own understanding. I was told that I must find him now. I proceeded to develop a relationship with God through the twelve steps of AA. These Spiritual principles, I have incorporated into my daily life. Today I know that, God brought me to Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous brought me to God.

I remember being at a Big Book meeting a year into my sobriety and reading in the Big Book that "each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God." I realized then and there that this had also happened for me. What an incredible moment. The book described what would happen and it actually happened to me. I had developed a relationship with God.

Today I have relationship and fellowship with MY GOD, the God of my understanding. He is the Creator and I am the Creation, He is the Potter and I am the Clay. He is not just the God of my sobriety. He is God of my life. I experienced a Spiritual Awakening through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Today I am Responsible. I tap into a

Power Greater than myself each day. I do this through the power of Prayer and Meditation. The Eleventh step talks about Praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry it out. I need that Power to do the next right thing. I don't always want to do the next right thing. So I need a power greater than myself to tap into.

Calvin L., Area treasurer



Bob has done a great job as Delegate. He has always listened to everyone and taken all input into consideration before making decisions. There have been times when there was disagreement on certain issues amongst the Panel, and we faithfully followed the Concepts in discussion, vote, and reaching a group conscience. Once we arrived at a decision, all on the Panel have supported that decision 100% even when some members might have been the minority position.

Over the past two years we have kept within our budget and all of us have been mindful that while we may be dealing with thousands of dollars, each individual dollar came from a member of Alcoholics Anonymous placing it in a basket at a group meeting. We held an Area Inventory and some great input came from the membership and changes were made where needed. We have started to send some of the mailings via email to save money. There are fewer Dark Districts today than two years ago, and that is a tribute to the dedicated DCMs who put forth the effort.

I started out as Chair with the goal to make the Assembly and Committee meetings run smoothly and fairly. It was my hope to lower some of the intimidation some feel when they come to an Assembly and don't have an understanding of Parliamentary procedure and thus say nothing despite having a strong opinion on a matter being discussed. It was my hope to create an atmosphere where a new GSR would feel free to stand at the microphone and disagree with the opinion of, for example, a Past Delegate. I can cite a few examples when a new person did just that and God bless them, for many times that opinion is the correct one. I always remember Bill's admonition to listen to that lone voice in the back going "wait a minute...".

So it is time to rotate and I thank everyone who supported me and made my job a bit easier. I thank those who made phone calls to me needing help with something or expecting me to call out the AA police. I thank those who have disagreed with me and told me so, my mind has been changed more than once. Finally, I thank my Service Sponsor, Bob M., who kept me on the beam.

Jay M. – Area Chairman

There are many sayings in alcoholics anonymous that early in my sobriety I just didn't really understand. The more I learn about myself, the more I understand them. The one that really stands out for me today is "Service is the Secret". I have learned that not only does service get me out of myself; it opens up so many other doors in life, doors that I probably would not have opened or maybe would not have opened it that wide. Service is allowing my journey in life to be so gratifying and rewarding. Service for me is another level of alcoholics anonymous that has allowed me to see life itself on a higher level, a level I never knew existed until I began participating in service. I have also learned that I must continue to take my inventory each day and learn from my mistakes. I read meditation and inspirational books each day to help me remain focused on spirituality. I recently read this from the Twenty Four Hours a Day book, and it truly confirmed my belief that service is truly the secret.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

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"Happiness cannot be sought directly; it is a by-product of love and service. Service is a law of our being. With love in your heart, there is always some service to other people. A life of power and joy and satisfaction is built on love and service. Persons who hate or are selfish are going against the law of their own being. They are cutting themselves off from GOD and other people.

Little acts of love and encouragement, of service and help, erase the rough places of life and help to make the path smooth, If we do these things, we cannot help having our share of happiness."

I love Alcoholics Anonymous. Yours in Service, Jamie A Bailey

Area Recording Secretary

Public Information

Hi Everyone in Area 54 my name is Danny F. And I serve Area 54 as your Public Information Chair. Public Information in A.A. is a means of carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the A.A. program. We carry the message by getting in touch with the media, schools, industry, and other organizations which can report on the nature and purpose of A.A. and what we can do for alcoholics. The first Public Information Committee was formed by the General Service Board of A.A. in 1956. We have an Public Information Staff position which employs a small department at our General Service Office in New York. The PI Department serves the A.A. members in the United States and Canada. Today the PI Committee Staff Chairperson just happens to be a Panel 56 Past Delegate from Area 56, in Southwest Ohio. One nice thing about getting a service Position in A.A. is that our General Service Office will supply you with the "service tools" that make it necessary to do your job. When you become a Committee Chair for one of our standing Committees here in Area 54, hopefully your predecessor will provide

you with the workbooks, literature and displays they had when they held your new service position. The General Service Office will send you a letter from your A.A Staffer congratulating you on taking the service position as well as a workbook complete with A.A. literature in order for your committee to do their work. Our Public Information work is summarized by knowing that the A.A. program works when an active alcoholic needs help, and we know the hand of A.A. will give the hope and help of recovery. However, somewhere in the background there has usually been the help of a doctor, relative, employer, teacher, or someone who knew about A.A. and where to find it. The committee encompasses contacting libraries, local television and radio stations and the print media. We speak at local High Schools in Area 54 and distribute our meeting lists to front desks at hotels, motels, and Bed and Breakfast locations. We are a small committee at present and if you would like to help us we hope to hear from you soon! Love and Service,

Danny F. (59)(54).

(Continued from page 1) **DELEGATE**

not shy about asking questions of the GSO staff. It was a great experience for all of us. It was my longest 1200-mile meeting. In Mid-August, we held a workshop with presentations from DCMs, Committee Chairs and Panel Members. In the middle, we broke for a great pot luck lunch. It was very informative for those who may be considering standing for a service position during the elections in October.

I will be doing two more Conference reports: one in Lorain and one in Youngstown the first week of September. If you or your group or district, would like to have a Conference Report, please feel free to contact me at 216.408.9020.

See you in September at the Area Assembly, September 16th at the 12 Step Recovery Club in Brunswick.

I welcome and encourage anyone willing to stand for a service position, please talk it over with your family

and realize that the time commitment that is involved with it. Also please feel free to talk to panel members about their experiences. We need committee chairs too and feel free to talk the chairman of a committee you have been active with and discuss you interest. We are all delegates in training. General Service has been a bright light in my sobriety.

With love and service, Bob D., Delegate Area 54, Panel 61.

(Continued from page 1) ALTERN. DELEGATE way to express genuine gratitude, is to always endeavor to do likewise. "Pass it On"

Attitude

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play the one string we have, and that is our attitude...

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you.....

We are in charge of our ATTI-TUDES! (by Charles Swindoll)

Because our Fellowship is a spiritualized society, our destiny is with God, we trust Him in His wisdom as to what the future holds for all of us.

In Loving Service, Ola P. – Alternate Delegate, Panel 61

DISTRICT NEWS

Cleveland North Coast Multi-District Report—July 15, 2012

On behalf of The Cleveland North Coast Multi-Districts 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 45 I am very pleased that we will have the opportunity to host the 56th Ohio State Convention Ice Cream Social both Friday and Saturday night. Also, there is the upcoming Annual CNCMD Family Picnic, which will be held on Saturday August 4, 2012 @ Forest Hill Park (Cleveland Heights Side) we will begin at 12 o'clock noon. And the speaker for that event will be one of the early members of the Multi-District Martina S. We will also be preparing for our next workshop presentation which will be the History of AA. That date will be Saturday, October 20th 2012. There is a very clear interest in General Service participation and new GSR's are coming in every month.

Quinsetta M. CNCMD Chairperson

DCM Report/D-34

There are two groups that were both located at St John's Cathedral located at E.9th and Superior, League Park and Mistletoe, both very old groups that are presently not functioning and are soon to be removed from the AA Cleveland Meeting Schedule. The Ignatia's Way AA Group located at St. Vincent Charity Hospital recently celebrated their third year of keeping the doors open. The more I go to the meetings I see that there are many groups that don't understand AA's Singleness of Purpose, AA's Spirit of Rotation, or the meaning of Self Support. However, we the trusted servants will continue to bring accurate information.

Love & Service,

Quinsetta M., DCM District 34



STEP FIVE, INSIDE TRADITION FIVE, INSIDE CONCEPT FIVE

A few years ago while visiting another group; the theme being discussed that night dealt with resentment. After others had spoken; the chairperson asked if I had anything to add. I began quoting the Big Book, page sixty-six; but before finishing the quote, the chairperson interrupted me saying, "This group does not use the Big Book," instructing me to leave. Before he excused me, he further stated; "we know all about you and your kind; and A.A. will be fortunate to be rid of your old ways of doing things." After the meeting some members of the group asked if we could go to a coffee shop and talk about the group's primary purpose. Speaking from my experiences in A.A., and what my first sponsor taught me, we shared deep into the night.

O'Brian S. sobered up in Detroit Michigan in 1941, his sponsor, Archie T., whose story, "The Man Who Mastered Fear" appears in the Big Book, taught O'Brian. The "Akron Bunch" (a term O'B used to describe Dr. Bob, Bill D., Ernie G., and the others who came up from Ohio) would add their experiences to his. It was these experiences O'Brian passed on, and hopefully, the primary purpose that all members and groups would pass on as well. What did these members pass on to O'Brian and then to us?

What was their primary purpose?

Recently, faith became the topic of discussion with various members stating their views at our home group. While discussing faith some members spoke about their religion and how that had helped with their acquiring faith. A member speaking from his own experience had said that religious terms or subjects might have kept him from staying in A.A. and gaining the recovery path he enjoys today! His thoughts forced me to stop and ask myself- are our discussions at the sponsorship level, the group level, or the service level about our primary purpose or not? How much of O'Brian's experiences passed on to you and I should we discard for the new A.A. way of doing things, the new paradigms? Did the old way hurt A.A.? Did their primary purpose drive people away; thereby hurting the new lives they were hoping to help?

Now for some history O'B passed on: Although "A Letter of James," along with many other books and pamphlets dealing with spiritual growth may not be required reading in Alcoholics Anonymous today; at one time it was. These books and pamphlets may or may not have driven new members out of A.A., but may have kept them in too!

Step Five had its place in

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STEP FIVE, INSIDE TRADITION FIVE, INSIDE CONCEPT FIVE

(Continued from page 5)

A.A. beginning with the "Drunk Squad's," the term used to describe the alcoholics and their families going to the "Oxford Groups"! They would read the James' letter before every meeting. Then would discuss its' spiritual significance within their "new found way of life," free from alcohol. The topics within the James letter ranged from fortitude, wisdom, trials, temptations, anger, to wealth. After the letter was read different members would share. Taking a topic, they would speak on showing how they were being helped; first by allowing others to help them recognize their flaws, and then how the flaws had hurt others and themselves, learning how to make restitution for these hurts, and finally sharing the experience and passing it on.

O'Brian would share the words Ernie, or Bill D., or Doc, or Archie shared with him to me. If time permitted, O'B would then go to the Big Book, turn to a page and add where Annie (Docs' wife) or Lois (Bills' wife) or Sam Shoemaker, or any of the others who came to the meetings and helped contribute to the manuscript that became known as the book, "Alcoholics Anonymous." O'Brian's greatest gift was passing on, to others, his own experiences. This amassing sharing became the basis for our fifth step and fifth tradition.

Every time sharing is done

within our groups; it must be remembered, the person who is sharing is sharing the unique flaw within themselves that had made their life unmanageable. Conversely, it also created the very knowledge that they could not control their flaw. It had to be surrendered to a healing power. Again- the power of the group derives its power from the flaws of the members. This sharing has become "our primary purpose"!

All power in Alcoholics Anonymous comes from this sharing of flaws. Words like "bleeding deacon" has a special place in A.A.; but Gods' wisdom must never be locked out. Allowing all members their own expression, God's wisdom will be expressed.

The oldest member and the newest member need to be heard. The historic wisdom of A.A. comes from the blending of these views.

Throughout our history in A.A. we have been blessed with the wisdom of God. It has come as the results of our flaws. This thin line between a spoiled child demanding their own way and hearing the fainting words of wisdom is not always clear and visible. This wisdom is generally brought through the service structure beginning with the groups, then the districts, the areas, the General Service Conferences, and

finally the corporate boards.

The primary purpose for the member is taking his or her recovery to the corporate boards through their groups. However nothing can proceed without the member first taking and learning their own bit of wisdom within their group.

The definition of a group can be blurred within A.A: the T and T Group, my home group, is a registered group within our service structure, but individuals going to our meetings (the T and T Group meeting on Tuesday and Thursday) may go to groups other than the T and T Group. Is the "group conscience" of the T and T Group altered by individuals voting at more than one group if these members vote at more than one group? How many meetings can a group have? Can each meeting have their own GSR? What is group autonomy versus meeting autonomy? Who decides these issues?

Neighboring groups may have similar problems; can the district help them or is this a violation of the fourth tradition?

There may be individual A.A. members wishing to meet and not call themselves an A.A. group. Are they held to a different standard than registered groups? Members meeting online, members meeting on conference calls, members meeting

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STEP FIVE, INSIDE TRADITION FIVE, INSIDE CONCEPT FIVE

(Continued from page 6)

on special weekends; the list can go on and on. Do all these groups fall under the principles of our fifth tradition and fifth concept?

Wherever members of A.A. meet, in any form or function, they need a clear understanding of our fifth concept. The "Right of Appeal" is the cornerstone of a spiritual way of living.

Can anyone ever imagine, a member, seen as "an employee,' of the corner store of A.A. group number 1234? This member would be required to perform certain tasks. After passing an exam and being promoted to the next grade of service; this employee or member became more valuable to the group (corporation). This value, used to control those under them in the structure would help form the unity under which they operated. The "unity" of the group controlled by seniority of the membership could demand strict allegiance to "our way of doing things". The right of appeal, closely guarded by the oldest member, would be nonexistent. Of course this scenario is farfetched, but the value of "right of appeal" should be guarded. Who was guarding the group that would not allow the Big Book to be quoted?

Whether it is a group, a district, an area, the General Service Conference, or trustees or directors on the corporate boards, each member should be treated with the same respect and dignity afforded every other member. When any member of A.A. at any level of service is kept from expressing his or her views with threat of losing their place at the table of recovery, each and every member needs to rise up and ask themselves:

"What part of fortitude, wisdom, trials, temptations, anger, or wealth these perils mentioned in James' letter has brought us to this dire place?"

It saddens me to say, the group I attended that night died, but other groups, while not demanding that particle view of A.A. may restrict different points of view, and not grant "Right of Appeal". Why is the right of appeal so important for our survival?

The inventory process at our personal, group, area, and fellowship level are important, not just for the newcomer, some not even born. These inventories assure the same haven of recovery we found. Each of us, whose opinions though lacking support today, may carry the seed in which future members may find recovery.

We may have lost the fortitude to stand up for the minority, because the view expressed demands that we expand our "spiritual understanding" of Alcoholics Anonymous. While extolling our virtues to-day, we may have thrown away wise examples from our past. Each trial our groups, our districts, our areas, our General Service Conferences are exposed to make each one stronger, thus better to serve the whole.

At every level we are besieged with the temptation to believe we have found the perfect answer for our fellowship. Our anger comes from others not seeing the wisdom we offer. The difficulty in our recovery comes not just by dealing with our personal anger, but also by not dealing with anger from others. Forgiveness heals all anger.

Nothing will destroy A.A. more than wealth. This topic will be discussed with step, tradition, and concept seven.

ELD Ishpeming, MI

(A Panel 29 delegate to the General Service Conference from Area 74, ELD shares his experience, strength and hope on a Step, Tradition, and Concept in every issue of the Northeast Ohio Recorder. We invite your response to this invited commentary.)



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 61

Bob D., Panel 61 Delegate
PO Box 8, 50 N. Maple St.
Orwell, OH 44076
(216) 408-9020
delegate@area54.org

Ola P., Alternate Delegate
4480 Granada Blvd. #22
Warrensville Hts., OH 44128
(216) 662-8906
e-mail: altdelegate@area54.org

Jay M., Area Chairperson 378 Sullivan Ave Akron, OH 44305 (330) 631-2604 e-mail: chair@area54.org

Calvin L., Treasurer
3571 Riedham Rd
Shaker Hts, OH 44120
(216) 334-4594
e-mail: treasurer@area54.org

Jamie B., Recording Secretary
3254 Redwood Rd.
Cleveland Hts., OH 44118
(216) 932-8016
e-mail: recordingsecretary@area54.org

Joel T., Mailing Secretary
4633 Apt. #5 Deer Creek Ct
Austintown, OH 44515
(330) 646-3490
e-mail: mailingsecretary@area54.org

Visit us at http://www.area54.org

Committee Chairpersons 2011-2012		
Archives	Tim H. 1944 Jefferson-Eagleville Rd. Jefferson, Ohio 44047	(440) 415-2960 archives@area54.org
Archivist	Kevin S. 289 Colgate Ave. Elyria, OH 44035	(440) 323-9217 archivist@area54.org
Correctional Facilities	Tina C. 29 South Maryland Youngstown, Ohio 44509	(330) 318-9168 cf@area54.org
Cooperation with the Professional Community	James T. 19104 Maple Heights Blvd. Maple Hts., OH 44137	(216) 322-7005 cpc@area54.org
Finance	Diane K. 5 Chippenham Court Rocky River, OH 44116	(440) 333-5432 finance@area54.org
Floor Management	Robert M. 1367 Grantleigh Rd. South Euclid, OH 44121	(216) 691-1605 floormgmt@area54.org
Grapevine	Steve B. 347 Lucca St. Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 347-1120 gvchair@area54.org
Group Services	Jerry P. 856 Comanche Trail Macedonia, OH. 44056	(216) 883-6095 groupservices @area54.org
Literature	Terry H. 2961 Essex Rd. Cleveland Hts., OH 44118	(216) 406-4089 literature@area54.org
"Northeast Ohio Recorder" Newsletter	Jeffrey Y. 1076 Woodview Rd. Cleveland Hts., OH 44121	(216) 496-7594 newsletter @area54.org
Public Information	Danny F. 2380 Suncrest Drive Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio	(330) 253-5036 pi@area54.org
Registrar	Dan M. P.O. Box 173 Chardon, OH 44024	(440) 853-6768 registrar@area54.org
Special Needs	Roosevelt T. 400 Locust St Apt 804 Akron, OH 44307	(330) 459-1559 specialneeds @area54.org
Treatment Facilities	Gary C. 1530 Victor Ave. Youngstown, OH 44505	(330) 787-0927 tf@area54.org