

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

October, November, December 2014

<http://www.area54.org>

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"A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches ... Nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present imagination. Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego demands of our own people -- often with the best of intention on their part."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., November 1960. From: "Freedom Under God: The Choice Is Ours". *The Language of the Heart*. Reprinted with permission.

A Word From Our Delegate

As this will be my last article serving as your Panel 63

Delegate, I want to thank all of you for your wonderful service, support and love. It has truly been my honor and pleasure to serve as a trusted servant over the past eight years. I am so forever grateful to be a part of the most loving and committed group on earth - you, the service members of Area 54 Northeast Ohio General Service.

It has been said that rotation is the heartbeat of A.A. because A.A. is made from love, and where love is you can always feel the heart. It means we are really alive. I have come to know that it is the "spirit of rotation" that not only keeps our fellowship alive, but it is also the main method we have to prevent power, prestige and personal ambition from distorting our very best intentions. Because it limits the length of individual service, it encourages the newcomer to get involved in the service structure. The spirit of rotation does not put a servant out of a job; rather it frees the servant to serve elsewhere as needed. It also ensures that the selfish ones do not hold on, and all have an opportunity to serve. Yet, there may be times when servants rotate out of office, they are honoring the principle of rotation, but not the spirit, if they still try to run the show, be it overtly or covertly.

One of the most repetitive problems that I have heard from the groups during my term has been that of servants in their home groups who seem to have an inability to let go of an office. I remember reading somewhere that this "inability to let go" can become something close to an illness. While that may or may not be true, certainly letting go (rotating), would be in the best interest of all concerned, even the reluctant servant as both the spirit and the principle of rotation will be honored. Then too, there are many servants who continue beyond the two year limit in an office because no one else will



take responsibility. So, rather than abandon these vital positions, we remain. We remain because we have made a commitment to do our best to carry our message of recovery to the yet sick and suffering alcoholic. "I am responsible when anyone anywhere reaches out for help; I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that I am responsible. Although the Responsibility Statement was not written until 1965 by former A.A. Trustee Al S. for the International Convention, may we never ever forget that in spite of the very devastating and heartbreaking news about Dr. Bob, the first thought of our co-founders was the future of the Fellowship of

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A Guide to Rotation

We'll be electing our new Area officers at the October 19th assembly. In our Area, each voting position only gets one vote, but we encourage the newly elected to attend and participate.

Appointing v. electing

At the Area, we elect a Delegate and Alternate, a Chairperson, a Recording Secretary, a Mailing Secretary, and a Treasurer. We do not elect the numerous committee chairs; they are appointed by the new officers acting as a Panel. In many cases, their decision is guided by the outgoing committee chairs, who are asked to recommend their own replacements. In some areas, committee chairs are elected rather than appointed.

What do you stand for?

Some say the decision comes down to just one question: Are you qualified? Others make it more complicated, considering their schedule, health, finances, transportation, and factors like "Which job would I prefer?" or "Who would I be standing against?" Many of us have found ourselves asking these questions right up until the last second. And in the excitement of an election, people have been known to overcommit. So it's good to give it some thought in advance. The qualifications for most jobs are in the AA Service Manual, the Area Guidelines, or the AA Group pamphlet. There are exceptions to every rule; for instance, we've seen some good GSR's who had less than the recommended sobriety time. But we've also seen people hurt by jobs they weren't ready for. So you may want to talk with past officeholders, and discuss possible commitments with your service sponsor. Family members should also be involved in your decision. Remember that the point all along is to stay sober and help others, and we can do this in almost any AA job. So, many people simply stand for whatever they are qualified for, and let the group conscience work out the details.

Wearing more than one hat

Debate goes back and forth as to whether a person should hold more than one job in AA. Nearly all would agree that it's okay to have a voting job at the District or Area level and also make coffee or fold chairs. Many would approve of being a GSR while also doing committee work, such as speaking at a PI presentation or attending an institutional meeting. But almost no one would approve of holding two voting positions at the same time, for obvious reasons. One possible guideline: "Keep the job you committed to first."

Speaking of hats—Before you attend an election at the District or Area level, be sure to read the "Third Legacy Proce-

dure" for elections, up to and including the part where we sometimes pull a name out of a hat. You can find it in the index of your Service Manual. Elections carried out in this manner are among the most enjoyable experiences in AA service work.

Who to vote for

It can be tough to decide who to vote for, especially if you don't know all the candidates personally. Prayer may help, as well as knowing the qualifications and duties of the job (ask if you don't know). Candidates typically announce their qualifications for the job, usually including their service history (other AA jobs they've performed in the past). Bear in mind that you're electing a "trusted servant", and elect someone you can trust.

Leaving a legacy

In AA we'll sometimes hear of outgoing service workers who hand their successor a grocery bag of "files" and disappear. That's not rotation, it's going AWOL. Much better to pass them your notes (including contacts, service volunteers, procedures, decisions you've made, etc.), and any actual files in a filebox. Then, "stick around but let go" – be available to help without trying to run the show. It can be harder than it sounds. This is your chance to practice being an elder statesman.

Rotating out v. rotating on

It's often said around the Area that we rotate out of a given job or service project, but we never rotate out of service. Why would we stop doing what works? "If you keep on doing what you're doing, you'll keep on getting what you're getting." If you don't have time to chair a committee or attend assemblies, maybe you can occasionally volunteer as a speaker for PI or CPC... or make one of your weekly meetings an institutional meeting. And then from time to time drop in on the district meeting, just to see how things are going, and possibly to be of service to the new kids on the block. *(adapted with permission of Area 38 Gazette, Summer 2002)*

~Your editor, Jeff

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



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Alcoholics Anonymous:

"We must remember that A.A. will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our Intergroup, activities and A.A. as a whole. It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. A.A. has given us the power to choose – to drink or not to drink – and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in A.A., and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose A.A. Strange isn't it?"

Dr. Jack Norris – 1965 International Convention Souvenir Book

It has been my experience that "accountability" is key to the position of delegate. Willingness, commitment, and acceptance are also very necessary. A college degree is not a requirement as each of us has already earned our Ph.D. (pretty helpless drunk). Like all service positions, the training is "hands on" and by the time you have it down to a science, it's time to rotate. However, *"Real Trusted Servants* don't rotate out, they rotate on." So, as I prepare to become "the wreckage of the past", it is my prayer that God finds me worthy to become a truly humble elder statesman, and that He will continue to use me where I may be of maximum service to Him, to others and to myself.

My love and eternal gratitude to you all, for this most awesome and amazing **spiritual journey**.

In Loving Service,
Ola P., Delegate, Panel 63
Area 54 Northeast Ohio



An Opportunity to Serve

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Panel 63 Alternate Delegate for Area 54. It has been an awesome experience. Being a part of the Assemblies, Workshops, GSR School, Unity Day, DCM College and Gratitude Sunday was truly a learning experience. Traveling to the other Areas and participating in their Mini Conferences to obtain their conscience on the General Service Conference's agenda items. Attending our own Area 54 Mini Conference to participate in the discussions and voting on agenda items to obtain our own conscience. Our Delegate was truly prepared to go to the General Service Conference.

There were many miles covered as I traveled the highways with our Delegate to conferences and conventions all over the East Central Region. On occasion I was asked to speak on a topic and would have to do research to be prepared to make the presentation. What a benefit to me! I learned so much about the General Service Conference process and the need for all to be informed not only about the whole Conference process (Jan.-Dec.) but also the results of the General Service Conference.

A friend of mine in the Fellowship always says that "We live in the kindness of others". Thank you for your kindness. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Thank you for showing up at the assemblies and other events. There would be no assembly and there would be no events without you. Only you can do what you do. Once again, I thank you all.

Love and Service,
Calvin L.
Alternate Delegate



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AREA OFFICER REPORTS

Opportunity

The Random House Webster's College Dictionary defines the word "Opportunity" as the following:

1. An appropriate or favorable time or occasion.
2. A situation or condition favorable for attainment of a goal.
3. A good chance or prospect, as for success.

Looking back on these past two years, I can honestly say that I have learned a little more about myself and life. Because of my involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous I can accept what I have realized. I am able to tolerate a little better where some people are in their life I now understand the term "it's ok to agree to disagree." In addition to that, I'm beginning to comprehend that it is also okay for things/situations not to proceed as planned. I am becoming more aware of this due to my participation at the service level of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am also beginning to realize that acceptance does not mean understanding the situation. Slowly I have begun to grasp the fact that things change for a reason. I am beginning to comprehend the saying that "some people come into your life for a reason for a season." For me this means that some friendships may end or just change the way they were. Perhaps that person or situation was placed in my path to help me grow to another level in life and once I have reached that particular level, it or they will change. I realize too that some people and or situations will be placed in my path for a lifetime.

I don't want to become so comfortable with

things as they are, that when they begin to change I become disappointed or distressed about it. I want and need to remain teachable. I have faith that when these situations do occur, that my higher power will place new people in my path and open new doors so that I may continue grow and learn more about myself, life, and others.

For me this is where I can relate to the promises, #9 - Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. My attitude and the way I can accept life on its terms has certainly changed. #11 - We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. Because I can understand a little more now why certain things happen or change helps me not be confused as to why it occurred. Now comes the end part which states "Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them." I realize that I must actively work for these things. For me, that means being actively involved in service (which I believe is the secret) helps me continue to grow and learn more about Alcoholics Anonymous, people, and most of all myself.

I know that there will be more challenges, more changes and, that I may lose and/or gain more friends. There will be situations that will not go as planned, but I believe I will be able to truly accept these things, and understand a little more of living life on life's terms.

For me, being a part of Alcoholics Anonymous has awarded me this great opportunity. I LOVE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS!

Yours in Love, Service & Gratitude

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Let's Go Green!

Area 54 General Service is inviting you to Go Green! Get your Area flyers, information, and an EXPANDED web-only version of the *Northeast Ohio Recorder*. All the information that comes to your USPS mailbox now can come to your inbox.

The *NE OH Recorder* you're reading now is 8 pages long—that's the page limit to keep postage weight within our budget and so that it can be folded to fit in an envelop. But we have so much more Area 54 news for you! The web version of the last issue of *NEOHR* was 14 pages packed with experience, strength, and hope.

Let Jim S., your Area 54 Mailing Secretary, know that you would like to save a tree or three (and save the area some \$Green\$) with a message at mailingsecretary@area54.org

Please note: if you do nothing, you will still get your Area mail by USPS and by email (if we have your email address) as you always have.

Jamie B., Area 54 Chairperson

The year(s) in the life of the Recording Secretary of Panel 63.

My My, times sure does fly when you are having fun! This statement really does apply to the last few years for me as your trusted servant for Area 54. There have been several eye-opening and thought-provoking occurrences that took place. During the first year, the main things that stood out were the opportunity to connect with our Area throughout the state and the region. As a panel member, you are required to attend state functions. These functions provided the opportunity to connect with other service workers or people who are interested in service. Outside of Area 54 and the East Central Region there were a lot of folks who attended service events who weren't service members but interested AA members.

Another thing that stood out was the overwhelming importance of reading AA approved literature. My service sponsor assigned the book, "AA comes of Age". This book discusses three legacies of AA, Unity, Recovery, and Service. Another book that I had to get to know was the service manual, which addresses the Twelve Concepts and the different service positions throughout the service structure. There are a lot service pamphlets and books available for interested members that can be found at the Central Office, the Area, and online. During this final year of Panel 63, the learning is continuing.

During this last year of panel 63, the fellow panel members has been helpful in guiding me through what's needed to be an efficient service worker. This guidance didn't just come from our Area guidelines and service materials, but from their experience. A plus that occurred were the mini-meetings that happen when we are traveling together. We are not a glum lot and we have fun and laugh a lot! What I realize is that service can be fun. Yes, it can be a lot work with a wealth of fact-finding information, but is well worth it. Why? The things I am learning have strengthened my recovery and the desire to keep the rooms of AA functioning according to our service structure.

So, I will end with a very familiar saying, "Come join us as we trudge the road to happy destiny" and include general service work as a part of your recovery.

In Love and Service,

Shyrl B., Panel 63 Area 54 Recording Secretary

Hi everyone, my name is Danny F. and I am an alcoholic. The Grace of God has kept me sober since April 4, 1990. My Home Group is the Serenity Big Book Study Group located in Akron, Ohio. I am now an Area 54 Past Delegate and I served our Area as your Delegate in 2009 and 2010. I want to thank Kelly for asking me to be a part of this sharing session this afternoon. I don't do this so often anymore so I hope I don't bore anyone to tears or put anyone ahead of their afternoon nap.

Well, Kelly let me tweak my topic and I am grateful for that. The topic we came up with is, "How did your Pre-Conference/Mini-Conference experience make you a better Delegate when you went to the World Service Conference?" When sitting down to write this report I first went to Chapter Six in the A.A. Service Manual. The very first sentence reads, "The Delegate has a demanding job, not only because a large amount of time and work are involved, but because it is the Delegate's responsibility to serve the U.S./Canada as a whole." That statement told me that now my whole focus was going to change. For the next two years everything I was going to learn about this Service position and everything I voted for at the Conference will affect all of our membership in the U.S. and Canada.

The first Pre-Conference Assemblies I began attending were in western Pennsylvania, Area 60. In the late 1990's their discussion on the agenda items that were to be voted on at the General Service Conference in late April in New York became a whole weekend of sharing sessions. They called the event a Getaway Weekend. They would move the Getaway weekends around the Area to stimulate local participation but they usually ended up in Butler or Dubois, places where you packed your snow shovel with your suitcase. The Planning Committees assisted the Delegate in choosing which agenda items would be discussed. On Saturday evening there would be a Banquet and an Open Speaker meeting which usually had a Staffer from the General Service Office. Then the fun would really begin! The Delegate and Alternate Delegate

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AREA COMMITTEE and DCM REPORTS

Area 54 Assembly Minutes April 6, 2014

Opening:

Jamie B. - opened the Assembly with the Serenity Prayer. Gus E. read the 12 Traditions. Dave I. read the Preamble and Michael A. read the 12 Concepts. Tradition Nine was read and discussed by Marilyn H. Concept Nine was read and discussed by Quinsetta M.

Recording Secretary

Shyrl B. - recording secretary explained the sign-in procedure for all DCM's, GSR's, Area Committee Chairs and past Delegates to establish eligibility for standing for office in our next election. Remember there is a 2-minute time limit for giving reports. March 16th minutes were reviewed. Genny M. stated a correction on Corrections Workshop held. Tina C. made a motion to accept minutes with corrections and Wellington R. seconded the motion. Minutes were accepted.

Area Treasurer:

Susan R. - reviewed the Operating Surplus /Loss vs. Full Budget for Area 54 year to date. We are right on target with our contributions. We thank the groups who have made donations. We encourage those groups who have not done so yet, please consider sending in a donation. Treasurer's report was accepted. Joyce L. made motion for report to be accepted. Robert A. seconds the motion. Minutes were approved and accepted.

Mailing Secretary:

Jim S. -Next mailing party is on April 19 at the Sahara Club in Warren, OH on route 422 @ 1pm. April 11 is the deadline for flyers, finance letters or anything else to be in the April's mailing. In the next issue of the Recorder, the voting results from our Area 54 Mini- Conference will be printed. The online version of the Recorder will have a lot more information in it, because we do not have to put it in the mail. Finally, I have talked with Nancy M. delegate from area 55 and she going to send flyers for the state convention to go into the next mailing.

Registrar:

Patti R. (Absent) **Jamie B** -Please continue to return updated information to the registrar. Patti can be contacted by phone, online or e-mail if anyone needs any assistance.

7th Tradition- Terry H. passed the baskets.

Introduction of New GSRs-Three
Introduction of New DCMs -None

AA Anniversaries recognized

Area Officer and Function Reports:

Jamie B. (Unity Day) - Jamie will be having a meeting with all committee chairs to discuss their presentation for Unity Day.

Gene A. (Open House Picnic) - ECR Trustee Bill F., will be our lead at the picnic. Everything is in place for our event. It will be held at VFW Post 4358 picnic area. The address is 29412 White Rd. in Willoughby Hills Ohio.

Danny F. (August Workshop)-On August 17, 2014 we will be holding our 2nd annual Area 54 DCM College. If you missed the GSR school, you have been granted a GED, so no excuses! It is a potluck dinner so bring a dish (with something delicious in it).

Genny M. -Area 55 Mini-Conference- None of my traveling friends were able to attend, I rode down to the conference with Ola and Calvin. Once I checked and received my folder for the conference, I went to the Hospitality suite to meet my "new friends". Kudos to Area 55 hospitality committee, it receives two-thumbs up! The conference started at 7pm, with Nancy M making introductions, followed by a moving talk from Bob S, immediate past delegate (area55). Afterwards, Mary C., from GSO and Bill F., ECR Trustee gave their reports. The evening ended with Bill F. giving his lead, followed by an ice cream social. Saturday morning started with a panel on "Communicating Our Legacies", followed by two hours in conference committee sessions. In the afternoon, we spent majority of the time in the voting session. That evening, we had dinner, a skit and a speaker meeting. Mary C., from GSO was the speaker. The evening ended with another ice cream social. On Sunday morning, our Ola was the AA speaker and Nancy M., followed with closing remarks. I had a great time and I am looking forward to attending the State convention here there in July.

Calvin L. Area 56 Mini-Conference - Ola P., Jamie B. and I attended the Area 56, 30th annual Mini Conference. The conference was held at the Drury Inn and Suites North in Sharonville, Ohio. Nancy M., area 56 registrar opened the proceedings. Garwood F., Area 56 delegate, gave a summary of the agenda items that would be reviewed in the committee sessions. Clay R., GSO staffer gave his report. He talked about the various desk activities and emphasize the "spirit of rotation" that occurs every two years at GSO, with staffers receiving new assignments. It was interesting to learn that the assistant to the staff person remains at the desk. This gives stability and continuity to the desk. Saturday morning started with an Early Bird meeting at 7:00am. Laura G. Area 55 alternate delegate chaired the morning proceedings. Nancy F. spoke on "What we are here for & what is your job" and Jenny C. spoke on "Conference Procedures. Afterwards we broke up into committee sessions. In the afternoon, the committee reports and Area 56 voting took place. The banquet followed at 6:00 pm. After that, Nancy M. and Garwood F. gave first-year delegates highlights. Dave C. and Ola P. followed next with giving second-

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AREA COMMITTEE and DCM REPORTS

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year delegate highlights. Sunday festivities included an Ask-it Basket session, concluding with a general sharing session.

Area Committee Reports

Jerry P. -Literature- As presented in the treasurer's report, the Literature committee had sales of \$119.25 in the first quarter of 2014. At this weekend's 2014 mini-conference, the committee had sales of \$108. If the commemorative edition of the first Big Book was received, sales may have been greater. An order for 50 books is expected later on this month, April 2014.

Wellington R. -Hispanic Liaison- We are updating the Spanish-speaking groups' information. Group memberships have been dwindling because of outside inferences. An evaluation of Spanish-speaking members is ongoing to find possible individuals to take on leadership roles within the AA community. Finally, there is historical documentation on the first sober Hispanic Ricardo P. whose sobriety date goes back to 1946, serviced the Cleveland area, and was very important to alcoholics during the early days.

Gary C.-Treatment –We have had 193 people from the Bridging the Gap program so far this year, Additionally, there is a new treatment center that has come on board since the beginning of the new year.

Mary Ann K. -CPC- This weekend was my first opportunity to represent the CPC committee with much encouraging help from Danny F. A lively discussion was had by all, especially about changing wording on who should sign attendance papers at the meetings. I am grateful to everyone who gave me encouraging words and support and I am looking forward to next month's Unity Day.

Bob D. - Grapevine – The Grapevine is turning 70 this year and GSO will have a presentation at this year Founder's Day, June 6 and 7 (Friday and Saturday). Presentations will occur at the university and Dr Bob's house. This weekend we have about \$100 worth of sales of Grapevine materials and we thank you.

Tina C. -Corrections – I and two other corrections members travel from Youngtown to attend the Akron district correction workshop held on March 29, 2014. We heard a lot of good information from all the other County corrections volunteers. Our new volunteer @ TCC, spoke at the event and shared because of her long standing connection with TCC, she landed a summer internship with the Northeast Regional Director of the Ohio department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and will be able to assist the committee with AA being available inside the walls.

Tim H. -Archives- Our archives display was set up at the mini-conference by James T. and it will be returned to Akron. We will be holding an archives workshop-planning meeting May 25

at the Cleveland Central Office at 1pm. Please plan on attending, if you would like to participate in the national workshop that will be held here in September 2015.

DCM Reports

David W.- #10- Our regular district meeting is held on the second Monday of every month at the Trinity United Church of Christ, in Wooster, Oh. Our annual district picnic will be on August 10 at the Christmas Run Park, in Wooster, Oh, starting at 12noon. Calvin L. Area 54 alternate delegate will be our guest speaker at 2:30pm. Flyers will be available soon. Please join us for a day of fun, food and fellowship.

Gary C.- #13- We have been busy with creating the Mini-Conference report and setting up mailing for the district on self-support. There are five new treatment centers in district 13. We are looking forward to a good year.

Michael R.-#45- I am still sharing information with groups in district 45. I am also asking groups to elect a GSR for their group. Finally, I am still looking for an alternate DCM for the district. There are no new changes.

Jim S.(alternate DCM) -#8- Thomas M., DCM has updated all 29 groups in the district! Thomas was grateful to be able to attend this year's mini-conference. He has all of the updated materials ready to give to our Area registrar.

James A -#38- Now that the climate conditions are becoming favorable, the goal is to contact as many groups in the district for updates. In addition, there is a plan to hold an official district meeting in September of this year. More information to follow about the exact date and time.

Callie T. -#43 in LSMD- My first DCM report. We are working on the annual picnic for LMSD. Currently, I am working with OYPAA committee. I would like to talk with the mailing secretary about how to get OYPAA's information into the mailings. I am also looking forward to updating all of the group's information in my district.

Intergroup Liaison Reports:

Genny M. -Cleveland Central Office- We had the intergroup meeting on March 27, ending with an oral presentation given by Bob McK, area and central office archivist, on Roland H. Our corrections workshop had a visitor from Lodi, inquiring about a database on the correction "Bridging the Gap" program.

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Want more? An Expanded, Color-enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/>

RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our A.A. 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.

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Friendship, Wholeness, and Happiness

Following my friend John L.'s piece on Tradition 10 in the "Now and Then", Nov. 2003, I thought to share some remarks I had prepared for our Unity Conference in July 2003. They are intended to suggest how the Twelve Traditions form an indispensable part of A.A. as a whole and to provide a basis for further discussion and a better understanding of each of them.

The Traditions had become a spiritual extension of my personal program of recovery from alcoholism. Selfishness, self-centeredness, is indeed the root of my troubles. In trying to understand and live by the Traditions in (and outside of) A.A., I move out of the cave of self toward a concern for others. This benefits all of you, my friends, as well as me. Out in the sunlight, I see that all though we need one another, I need A.A. more than it needs me: "...personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." And so we begin with the end in mind.

In his last A.A. talk Dr. Bob said: "Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service'." In commenting on Step Twelve, Bill W. wrote: "Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program of our daily lives. When the Twelfth Step is seen in its full implication, it is really talking about the kind of love that has no price tag on it....therefore the joy of good living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step."

To me, this is the "new freedom" from "the bondage of self" and the "new happiness" of "benefiting others" we have been promised. Having had a spiritual awakening, and realizing, as also promised, that God is the author of these goods, we see that being truly "...happy, joyous, and free" is our Creators intended purpose of our lives. So therefore it is the end, the final cause or reason for being, of our A.A. program and the society which is united and actuated by its principles.

Viewed in this light, as we realize the promises, Step Twelve is where we begin to carry the benefits into action for the rest of our lives. For love is an action word, the practice of giving one's self through deeds that serve others. In principle, as our co-founders indicate, the entire A.A. program is in our Twelfth Step. Not only does it include the preceding steps, the word "we" implies the Unity of our fellowship, hence the Traditions which foster it. To carry this message and practice these principles connotes our Service Structure, and accordingly the Concepts for its effective operation. As the end or purpose of A.A. is the new freedom and happiness for each and every member, it is the life principle of our movement; the Steps, augmented by the Traditions and Concepts, are the means toward our God-given end.

Thus we seek Unity, the overarching oneness, of our A.A. program. Consisting of those three distinct but intricately related parts we call Recovery, Unity, and Service, we have a whole way of life to help alcoholics grow into whole

and happy human beings. Remove any one of these Legacies, and the "design for living" the Master Architect guided our founders to build would collapse. There would then be no sanctuary of love in which future generations of vagrants could seek salvation from alcoholism.

So it is that there are two vital aspects to A.A. Unity. The Unity of our Society of recovered alcoholics in action, which the Traditions preserve, stems from and crucially depends upon our common commitment to the Unity of our Program. As the Big Book states: "The tremendous fact for every one of us is that...we have away out on which we can absolutely, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action." Mindful of the proverb that "A house divided against itself cannot stand", Tradition one affirms that "the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has." Once I would have agreed to associate with you only to advance my self-interest. I knew you were doing the same with me. Thereby, you and I formed an artificial "we", based on selfishness, that fell apart as soon as conflict over our rights caused one individual to have no use for the other. In A.A. we discovered that the "we" naturally proceeds the you and the I, rather than being derived from them by convention. We transcend the usual distinction between self and other, moving toward genuine friendship.

Without the force of laws and government, we are persuaded to abide by the principles in the Steps and Traditions, at first because life itself depends on it, until ultimately we conform because we actually enjoy doing the right thing to help one another live the good life. Strange as it seemed before we experienced it, doing our duties, as opposed to insisting on our rights, became upper most in our minds.

This is the activity of friends in the oldest and fullest meaning of the term. It is "the Fellowship of the Spirit." As Dr. Bob tests: "I have regained my self-respect and the respect of my colleagues... I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others" out of "sense of duty" and because "it is a pleasure." As Bill W. puts it: "We commenced to make many fast friends and a fellowship has grown up among us of which it is a wonderful thing to feel a part. The joy of living we really have."

When we think about our own experience, I believe we can agree that friendship is what holds our A.A. society together. It is friendship that reduces the individual's attachment to the materialistic interest of self, which causes factional conflict, in favor of a spontaneous sharing of the spirituality associated with good character and moral virtue. The friendship of good people based on virtue, which encompasses the pleasure of being useful to one another, results in the identification of ones own good with the good of friends. "The things of friends are common," according to the ancient adage, and harmony or "concord seems to be something similar to friendship." Having stated the theme of Unity in the first of them, the rest of the Traditions show us, point by potentially dangerous point, how to foster and maintain our common Unity of friends in actual practice and thus assure A.A.'s future.

Bob D. - Wisconsin Rapids, WI

Area Committee and DCM Reports

(Continued from page 7)

Tim H. -Ashtabula Intergroup- We provide conference-approved literature and non-conference approved mediation books to members and groups in the Ashtabula area. We recently had a perch fry that generated \$400 for the intergroup office. We will also be having a golf outing in August, in Kingsville to benefit the office.

Alternate Delegate's Report – Calvin L. – Mini Conference- It was a great event! We were honored with a lot of out of town guests. Some of these guests were; Michelle Grinberg, Class A trustee from Area 73, Bill F. , Class B trustee and Tracey O from GSO office. We had 150 registrations and 96 banquets. It is also nice to have guests from Area 56 attending our April assembly. Again, all had a great time. Additionally, would like to mention about the upcoming Ohio State Convention/ECR Conference occurring July 25-27, 2014 in Perrysburg, OH at the Holiday Inn French Quarter. The theme is "Service: Alcoholics in Action, from the coffee pot to world service." The registration is \$20. Please plan to attend.

Delegate's Report- Ola P.- It has been a wonderful weekend and we have had a great Mini-Conference and I am thankful for all of our out of town guests . I want to welcome the service member of Area 56 who stayed over for our assembly. It is all about learning from one another and I thank them for joining us. On February 1st, Calvin and I traveled to the Delegate-Past and Present Convention in Schaumburg Illinois. There were five past delegates from Ohio and that was great to see. **A.A.W.S. highlights** - There is a new hire, David R., licensing manager who will oversee the translating of the Big Book and other licensing functions. The commemorative 75th edition of the Big Book reports that as of the pre-order date in February 2014, there were 100,000 pre-orders.. Digital publishing sales are seeing an increase in sales. **Tracey O-**I just received an email from Phyllis, general manager from GSO, "We are looking stories from groups and members about how they are going to celebrate the 75th edition of Big Book ".

Old Business – None

New Business

Jerry P. Literature- would like to make a motion to order more anniversary Big Books. Wellington R. second the motion. Gene A. – After much discussion about a prior motion made in a prior assembly in January, **Jerry P.'s motion was withdrawn.**

What's on Your Mind?

Tina A. – Youngstown districts, 7, 8 & 48 is having their annual chicken roast in Waddell Park.

Diane K.- We need a new screen and how soon can one be purchased? Susan stated we have budget for equipment and new screen is up for a purchase approval this weekend.

Jim S.-The address for the next mailing is 2345 Youngstown Rd in Warren Ohio, 44484

Greg J.-The paper we received in the mail about the conference topics, we are not addressing at the mini-conference.

Robert A. - Cleveland Multi-District will be meeting next Saturday from 12-2 at 3000 Euclid Ave.

Genny M. - Wanted to mention from her report about the Lodi inquiry about finding a database on correction.

Danny F. - looking for a copy of voting results from our conference to send to someone. Thanks.

Gene A. - We are working the best we can to get information to other groups.

Bob McK. - I made copies of those questions and gave them to my group to let them know about AA everywhere.

James A. - Looking for anyone who has done a group inventory.

Beverly F. – Asked a question about the seven-minute recording and is that available for sending group celebration about the Big Book. The body stated those recordings are only for the Grapevine stories.

Joyce L.-Needs address for state convention hospitality. The Lorain multi-district have voted to send their surplus to the next state convention.

Joy A. - Would like to know what can be done or how to allow other released felons help carry the message behind the walls. Tina C., area corrections chair spoke that it depends on the institution. Some institutions will not allow convicted felons to be around other felons. There is information available.

Motion to adjourn was made by, Gene A. and Wellington R. seconded, and motion was passed, followed by the Responsibility Pledge and the Lord's Prayer.

SUPPORT OF A.A. SERVICES

SELF-SUPPORT OF THE WORLD SERVICES OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The A.A. spiritual principle of self-support enables us to pursue our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic with a shared sense of responsibility for our lifesaving work and without interference or financial dependence on outsiders. From our Fellowship's earliest days, the expenses of the General Service Office, and the world services provided by it, have exceeded the amount derived from contributions of A.A. groups and members. As a result, providing these needed services has necessarily been supported in part by income from the sale of A.A. literature. It is the policy of the General Service Board that income from literature sales should only be in amounts required to allow continued provision of vitally needed services and maintenance of a Reserve Fund. We hope that the day will come when A.A. groups and members, through their contributions, will be able to fund fully the services provided by the General Service Office. If that is achieved, revenues from literature sales will only be needed in amounts necessary to cover the actual costs associated with literature production and to maintain a Reserve Fund.

Approved by the General Service Board February 3, 2014

MEMBER SERVICES & STATISTICS

	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Actual
Cost of Service per member per year	\$6.32	\$6.66	\$6.84
Cost of Service per group per year	137.01	143.67	146.96
Number of members reported	1,384,699	1,388,727	1,389,602
Number of groups reported	63,845	64,414	64,694
Percentage of groups contributing	42.4%	42.4%	42.5%
Contributions per member per year	4.52	4.72	4.97
Contributions per group per year	96.95	101.80	106.75
Cost of services NOT covered through Contributions that must be made up by using literature profits - per member per year	1.80	1.94	1.87

The Great Debate

One long evening I sat in the barroom for many hours arguing with a person, whom I had known for years, over the price of a bushel of soybeans. Neither of us owned a single soybean, let alone a bushel, nor had we plans to acquire any. My personal expertise had been gained by shoveling a great number of the slippery round things during the summer I had worked in a grain elevator years before. I don't know where my opponent studied. My wife, as a bystander, remembers this discussion quite well as one of the silliest things she ever heard. My own recollections are more vague, but I know that this argument had no winner. Although we were loud, vociferous, and pounded on the bar, no one really had anything at stake, nothing to win or lose. This argument was just for fun; its purpose only another reason to drink.

Although this is the most ridiculous argument I can remember, it was far from an isolated incident. No matter of dispute could be bypassed without an opinion. Politics, religion, medicine, the weather, sports, the relative merits of a beer (once discovered and exploited by a major brewery as a commercial - "less filling-tastes great") were all legitimate topics at one time or another. They might all have been debated in a single evening of bubbles, babble, and brawl.

Throughout, I considered myself to be very open-minded. I knew my opinions were not especially important and I was nearly always willing to take either side in the discussion.

Sometimes I would switch positions in mid-discussion, supporting what I had condemned only a few sentences before. I doubt if anyone really knew where I stood on anything. Most of my fellow drinkers did not seem to be concerned about this apparent insanity. (I suspect that most were as committed to the causes they supported as I was.) Winning was never very important, but not losing was critical.

Sometime later when I came to Alcoholics Anonymous, I was confronted with an invitation to be truly open-minded. In the 12 X 12 this invitation is followed by the sentence. "Just resign from the debating society and quit bothering yourself with such deep questions as whether it was the hen or the egg that came first." Resign! It was like discarding a life time of effort. I had been reared in a family where argument was communication of the first order; how could I give it up?

For months I virtually refused to read the newspaper, watch the television news, and argue. The most difficult part of the process was that I was forced to rediscover what my honest opinions were. Early in the process I was nearly convinced that I could not distinguish between right and wrong (legal insanity). Happily, I discovered that I still had a conscience and that I could come to believe.

I had been sober just over six months when I walked into my first area assembly. People were haranguing each other, strenuously and excitedly, over a matter of a few dollars. The chairperson was ignored; thoughtful deliberation went out the window. Just wonderful — I was home! Hot dispute was alive and well.

Since AA unerringly attracts many like me, our Fellowship could easily become the biggest debating society that ever was. Newcomers to our business meetings and assemblies, not so delighted as I was, sometimes think it is but they are mistaken. This is not the vigorous, but insubstantial, posturing of tavern debate. Here it is important that we seek out the best answer in carrying the message, and we use the methods we know best. Tradition Ten is the difference. Open our discussions to outside issues and we could never resist the snares of controversy. It would be short-lived debating society, as our tendencies to be disagreeable would quickly doom this fellowship.

Confined to internal issues, the squabbles within our fellowship can still become heated. Knowing what we still could be-but for the grace of God-let us be thankful for what we are. We argue, but it is with conviction and courage about a subject that is of paramount importance to us, our life giving fellowship. We become vociferous, because we want desperately to arrive at the best possible decisions for this fellowship. So long as the struggle remains internal, avoiding public controversy, we can do no lasting wrong.

Tom C, Past Editor "Now and Then", from Area 74

A.A.W.S. Arrives at a Position on Big Book Study Guides

Increasing numbers of requests come to A.A. World Services for permission to reprint the Twelve Steps and other parts of the Big Book in "study guides" and other interpretive material. Some come from treatment centers that try to give instruction in the A.A. program to their patients. Other requests originate within A.A. After several months of study by a committee appointed for the purpose, a policy was adopted. The members of the committee unanimously recommended that permission should not be granted to reprint portions of basic A.A.

Here is what some A.A.W.S. directors said.

One trustee-director wrote: "The individual A.A. member does not need another person or institution to think for him or her - in fact, this could be a very bad thing. Part of the beauty and magic of A.A. is that persons from all walks of life, with varied backgrounds, may benefit from the Big Book, the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts, from their own points of view. Placing guidelines on paper seems to say, 'This is the way - the only way.'

"The authors of this priceless material knew what they were doing. Their words require study, not interpretation."

Another trustee-director enlarged on this line of thinking as follows: "As it is now, to the extent A.A. takes positions, it is in our literature, etc. and if it isn't there, A.A. does not have a position. This is clear and simple, and we should keep it this way.

"I am of the opinion we should not prepare interpretive or study guides ourselves. Since we feel that alcoholism is a self-diagnosed disease, it follows that recovery is a program of self-action. Our literature, our program, the Steps, the groups, and the meetings all facilitate self-diagnosis and self-action within the A.A. environment.

"I see our literature, particularly the books, as *being* study guides. It's all there. I see the meetings, particularly closed meetings, as the interpretive workshops. Often, comments at meetings have gotten me back to the source documents for further study or have shed additional light on the printed word. I almost have the feeling that the words are living, changing, growing.

"One of our slogans is 'Keep it simple.' I believe our books are just simple enough to stand as they are and just complex enough to live and grow."

A third trustee-director said, "My knowledge of recovery has been received in the Fellowship through the experience of one drunk sharing with another, not on an instructive basis or in a classroom atmosphere. I believe we in A.A. communicate with each other in a language of the heart."

The board has adopted the following policy statement: "The A.A. World Services Board of Directors feels strongly that permission should not be granted to outside publishers or other parties to reprint A.A. literature for the purpose of study guides or interpretive or explanatory texts, etc. If such interpretive or study guides are to be prepared, they should be published by A.A. World Services, Inc.

"The board recognizes, however, that A.A. is a program of self-diagnosis, self-motivation, and self-action and that the use of study guides, courses, classes, or interpretations is therefore not generally appropriate. The program is spiritual rather than academic. Hence, it is preferable that the individual member or prospect interpret the literature according to his own point of view. For these reasons, the board does not plan to publish study guides or interpretations of A.A. literature at this time."

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OHIO STATE CONVENTION REPORT

(Continued from page 5)

would come to the podium and then select each Committee along with their prospective agenda items. They would receive input and sharing from the audience and rehash each agenda item as they went along. I attended these sharing sessions which were now well into the evening and I must admit, after about 45 minutes to an hour of this diatribe the room's attendance began to diminish. I found myself yawning and would usually attend an Alkathon or go to bed.

In August 2001 I returned to Northeast Ohio for a business venture and this time I was sober. In years past my Father and I had started a business in 1977. I managed the Office which was located in Akron and left Ohio in 1983. These were the "good" and the beginning of the "bad" years in my drinking career. Isn't it funny how we alcoholics all had "drinking careers"! My drinking career lasted fifteen years. I refer to them as the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly! The first five years were good. The next five years my illness really progressed and they became bad, and the last five years were just plain ugly! They were roller coaster drinking years and if I picked up a drink it was "Destination Unknown". If you put me behind the wheel of a car I became a "lethal weapon"! I now know it was but for the Grace of God when I got sober in Florida and I was twelfth stepped by two retired AA members who were active in service in their Home Group and at the District and Area levels.

I attended my first Area 54 Mini-Conference in April 2002 in Ashtabula, Ohio. Because of work I could only attend the Saturday and Sunday sessions. What a difference this Conference was! One of the District Committee Members attending the Conference told me that in Northeast Ohio they really try to emulate what happens in New York by holding a mock Conference on Saturday afternoon. The following month in May I became an Alternate Chair of the Area Treatment Committee because the Committee Chair got a job working weekends. In 2003 I was instructed at the next Mini-Conference how to Chair a Mini-Conference Committee and see the "Process" at work. I have probably attended eighteen or twenty Mini-Conferences in my lifetime and let me assure you each one those Conferences pay dividends! Ladies and Gentlemen let me tell you that when an Ohio Delegate finally gets to the General Service Conference in New York each spring they are probably the most informed and have received the best training. I was selected to be on the Delegate's Finance Committee and I Chaired that Committee the second year I went to the Conference. In 2010 I was also elected to Chair the Delegate's Past and Present mock sharing session. I had to come up with an agenda item that was real or imagined, and take it into a Delegate Committee Session on a Friday evening. We shared and voted with Substantial Unanimity how we were going to present the agenda item to the Conference. On Sunday morning we had another mock Conference and I presented that agenda item to the Past Delegates. So to wrap this up in a box, in each of the two years I was Delegate, I saw five mock Conferences. I saw four at each of the Ohio Mini-Conferences, and one mock-Conference at the Delegates Past and Present which is held each February.

When I got to the General Service Conference my first year, I believe the Committee's began voting on their Committee's agenda items on Wednesday evening. When the Committee Chairs would begin with each agenda item the voting members would then line up to the microphone for their two minute comments. I can still remember saying to myself when I heard sharing coming from the floor, "I heard that in Toledo" or "I heard that in Columbus". I always had to keep in mind that I was not voting what Area 54 voted or what Ohio voted, I was there to cast my vote yea or nay, for the whole of AA.

If you are an AA member and you really want to know what the definition of an informed Group conscience is, come out to the East Central Region or Ohio and attend one of our Assemblies. I guarantee you will come out of that meeting saying; "That Irishman was right and God was really in that meeting too!"

Reports from the 64th General Service Conference

A.A. GRAPEVINE—STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

	AVERAGE CIRCULATION	77,126	73,401	(3,725)
	Online	5,175	4,561	(614)
	2013 ACTUAL	2014 BUDGET	INCREASE (DECREASE)	
Magazine Income	\$2,242,363	\$2,132,851	\$(109,512)	
Direct Costs: Magazine	<u>764,674</u>	<u>750,733</u>	<u>(13,941)</u>	
Gross Profit on Magazine	<u>1,477,689</u>	<u>1,382,118</u>	<u>(95,571)</u>	
Other Publishing Income	776,976	787,557	10,581	
Costs of Goods and Delivery	<u>261,149</u>	<u>266,556</u>	<u>5,407</u>	
Gross Profit on Other Publishing Items	<u>515,827</u>	<u>521,001</u>	<u>5,174</u>	
Total Gross Profit	<u>1,993,516</u>	<u>1,903,119</u>	<u>(90,397)</u>	
COSTS AND EXPENSES				
Editorial Costs	633,798	687,117	53,319	
Circulation and Business	904,466	926,280	21,814	
General and Administrative	<u>150,547</u>	<u>207,290</u>	<u>56,743</u>	
Total Costs and Expenses	<u>1,688,811</u>	<u>1,820,687</u>	<u>131,876</u>	
Interest Income	<u>10,500</u>	<u>11,800</u>	<u>1,300</u>	
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	315,205	94,232	(220,973)	

AA GRAPEVINE CIRCULATION: 1974-2013

