

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

July—September 2016

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXIV, Issue 7

"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God."

A.A. Co-Founder, Bill W., February 1961, From: "The Shape of Things to Come", I Am Responsible: The Hand of A.A., © A. A. Grapevine, Reprinted with permission

A Word From Our Delegate

SOMEBODY....

When I attended my first meeting it was as though everything was all set up for me. Upon entering the room I was greeted and saw people talking and laughing. Something I hadn't done in quite a while. There was coffee ready and doughnuts to eat. There were pamphlets of all sorts about AA in a rack. There was a podium set up and there were three people sitting up front. All I had to do was come in and sit down. Everything was prepared as though they had been waiting for me. What a wonderful thing A.A. is for the next Alcoholic who walks through that meeting door.

I never thought that though everything was ready when I got there that somebody had to do the work. Somebody had to come early and set up the chairs and make the coffee. Somebody had to order and pick up the literature that was in the literature rack. Somebody had to come early and stand at the door to greet people. Somebody had to go to the bakery to get the doughnuts. The Secretary had to ask somebody to be the Chairperson. The chairperson had to ask somebody to be the lead. The lead shared their experience, strength and hope. They said they had to give it away to keep it. How strange is giving something away to keep something. Well that made no sense to me. Somebody told me to keep coming back. Somebody said "learn to listen and listen to learn." Then somebody said take the cotton out of your ears and put it into your mouth. Well I thought there is no cotton in my ears and I surely would not put it into my mouth. Somebody said "If you don't take the first drink you won't get drunk". Then somebody said keep coming back. I watched somebody pick up coffee cups and put up chairs. Somebody cleaned up after meeting. Somebody said we like to leave the place better than we found it.

Well I kept coming back and kept hearing these same readings at the meetings. There was a Preamble, Traditions, How it Works, Steps and then these Promises. I kept coming back and somebody kept reading them. Somebody said you need to get a sponsor and a home group. Then somebody said "If you don't have a sponsor then you are sponsoring yourself and you have a fool for a sponsor". Well that didn't seem to be a nice thing to say. But I certainly did not want a Fool for a sponsor. Then somebody said "If you don't have a home group then you are homeless." Well I didn't want to be homeless either as that didn't seem like a good thing. So I joined a group.

Somebody was the GSR (General Service Representative) for the group. They gave a brief report about

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attending a District and Area meeting. Somebody said our group has a voice in AA and we send our GSR to represent our group. I wanted to know what these other meetings were about. The GSR said come with me. So I went to the District meeting. There was somebody there called a DCM (District Committee Member) who was leading the meeting. Somebody said the DCM takes information from the GSR's to the Area and brings it back to the district. From there I went to the Area Meeting and met more of these GSR's and DCM's. I also met these Committee Chairs and Panel people.

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SERVICE JOYFULLY RENDERED

In this issue, you'll read about the Delegate's first AA meeting, the current area activities, and the growth of services at the beginning of our beloved fellowship.

In each case, the theme of service, gratefully given and joyfully rendered, is explored. Somebody was there to keep the doors open for us; to keep the lights on so we could find our way to our first meeting. That generic 'somebody' to us was a specific recovering alcoholic, working out their own gratitude for someone who came before them. They (and we) learned rather quickly the joy and satisfaction which came their way when they gave back a little time, a little money, and a lot of their effort and persistence. We learned early on that when we were trying to be helpful, our efforts were rewarded ten-fold; every moment offered in the service of others was a moment we weren't fretting over our own problems. We soon learned that others had problems as bad or worse than our own. And we noted that other people had solved the drink problem and cleaned up their past transgressions. This brought hope that we could do this too.

There is a 'job' in AA for everyone. It might be cleaning coffee pots or opening a meeting hall, without fail, week in and week out. It might be as a home group member serving as a trusted servant—secretary, chairperson, treasurer, greeter, or GSR (or their alternates). If my home group elects me to a position for which I believe I am 'ill-suited', perhaps here is a chance for me to grow in understanding, patience, or humility.

The great thing about AA is our tradition of rotating leadership. We get to try new things every two years! And we get to pass our experience, strength and hope on to a new generation of servant leaders when we rotate on to a new position.

I think of AA like a big anniversary potluck or smorgasbord. I'd like to try everything. Maybe not all at once, but I can go through the line again and sample something new. And if I miss something this year that I really wanted to taste, wait until next year. There will be even greater treats!

As we begin the summer season, people will be taking vacations and traveling far and wide. Are all of our group's service positions covered for the summer? Will our group be dependable to keep the lights on for the newcomer? Lots of anniversary dates are announced right after Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. There's no vacation from alcoholism and service doesn't take a holiday either. Would your home group consider taking a commitment at your local intergroup/central office answering phones on one of those holidays for a few hours? There's gratitude in action!

The Ohio State Convention will be held August 19-21 in Westlake at the newly remodeled Double-Tree hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn Westlake at the Crocker-Bassett exit of I-90 West). Here is an opportunity to view new service positions up close and to ask questions. There will be a lot of excellent speakers and panels, a full Al-anon program, visits with a GSO staff member and our regional trustee. "This is an experience you must not miss."

As the summer wraps up, we look toward area panel elections this fall for Panel 67 delegate and area officers. Have you given any thought to your next service commitment? Perhaps a committee chairmanship or serving as a DCM to re-light a dark district? All those which meet the attendance requirement over the last two years are eligible and are encouraged to stand for an area service position. Discuss these questions with your service sponsor and family. October will be here before you know it.

*~Your editor,
Jeff*

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



AREA OFFICER REPORTS

(Continued from page 1)

There is always something for somebody to do. There must always be somebody to do that something.

Does your Group have a GSR? Let the voice of your group be heard. There is somebody who can be the GSR. Does your district have a DCM? There is somebody who can be the DCM. Somebody is always there to keep the doors open. Will you be that somebody? Thank God for Somebody!

Calvin L., Delegate P65/A54

Area Chairperson's Report

I am looking forward to our Area Picnic at Silver Creek Park in Summit Metro Parks June 26th. Val D. and District 11 and Akron Multi District are working hard to put this on. Please come with your lawn chair and a dish of food to share; enjoy an afternoon of fellowship.

I am very excited about this year's Founders Day. In addition, to the events, I have a sponsee from Martinsburg, WV attending with a car load of friends. I will be a helper at the Area's Grapevine table in the Student Union on Saturday. Come buy a book or just visit and say hello.

Please be sure to tell you friends about the great **Ohio State Convention** on August 19-21 at the Doubletree Hotel on Crocker Rd on the west side of Cleveland. We (Northeast Ohio) are hosting and the committees have really been working hard to make it a great event. We will be having terrific speakers and a fun program and interesting panels. See you there.

I do worry about the difficulty of getting General Service Reps (GSR) or members of AA representing our groups in Northeast Ohio. We need active folks coming to District meetings and the Area Assemblies. General Service activity does the business of AA and we need more active representation.

We have several "dark districts." So I shall start with districts near me and try to carry the message of General Service representation. Activity in General Service is another insurance policy for sobriety. If you live in Lake County, please feel free to call me (216-407-6049) or just show up at our next Assembly in July in Brunswick. See the website www.area54.org for more information. Come help keep AA strong for another 80 years.

I am grateful to be able to be of service to AA. I am amazed to have made it past my 34th year of sobriety with "God's" help.

Love and Service,
Susan R., Area 54 Chairperson

Prayer and Meditation, is it a Part of My Daily Life?

Since the beginning of my recovery journey, prayer and meditation has been explained to me as an important part of one's recovery life. The words I remember of what stated is that prayer is the way to speak to "God", and meditation is the way to listen to what "God" has to say. So, today I reflect back on my prayer life and ask myself, have I truly made a commitment to this practice, or is there room for improvement? I am praying daily for the "knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out"? The honest answer is yes; I need to improve on this spiritual practice.

According to the 11th Step chapter in 12 Steps and 12 Traditions this practice is our principal means of making conscious contact with "God". "God" according to our steps is as we understand him, so to me that means as a person sees God. Personally, I pray to my Lord and Savior, but others may pray to the power of the Fellowship or others, some other deities. The important thing to remember is that I am not "God". My

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AREA OFFICER REPORTS

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sponsor always said to me “there is a God and it ain’t you”. I do not have the power to guide my life and I need to stay connected to power that can influence my life on a daily basis. In my early days, prayer and meditation was a mainstay and was done daily. I truly felt connected to my power source. I would pray and sit still for a period of time, after reading my daily reflections or other recovery materials. Nevertheless, as I write this article, I can see how I have gotten away from my early practices. I find myself praying on the run, not reading my daily materials, or only praying when something is wrong or needs to change in my life. I need to improve on this spiritual practice because it is a vital key to my peace and serenity.

My connection to my Higher Power is paramount in life. My life runs so much so better when what I ask what “his will” is for me. So, I need to get back my early ways and take time daily to pray and meditate. Maybe, getting up a fifteen to twenty minutes in the morning to connect to God as I understand him to start my day. When my day ends, reflect where I need to apologize or improve and ask for “his guidance” to carry me through this process. So for this alcoholic, prayer and meditation is a necessary part of my daily life, and I must recommit to this spiritual practice, because “my life” depends upon it.

Love and Service,
Shyrl B., Area 54 Treasurer

Practicing the Program in All Aspects of My Life

The AA program saved my life and I share my experience, strength, and hope with others that they may gain something from my experiences in life and that nothing is worth drinking over. Recently my family was dealing with the addiction of someone very close to us, in my home. My husband and I shared with them the struggles and results we got due to the choices we were making and hoping

they’d see themselves in us back then because we could see them in us when we were drinking and making bad decisions. To no avail — it wasn’t working and I was struggling with why weren’t they listening to us. I just wanted to shake them and finally I remembered back when I was in my addiction and all those days my father tried to tell me what I was doing was wrong and I wouldn’t listen to him. I wasn’t ready. They’re not ready either; the bottom hasn’t been hit yet and then they left our home. A few weeks later I woke in a panic from a dream and it went like this: A mother fox was killed in my dream and she had babies and they are running everywhere in the road and here I am trying to catch all the babies in this cage and get them to safety and I could catch them all and I woke up. The dream weighed heavy on me so I called my sponsor and a few hours later after talking to her about the dream she helped me to see what I knew all along: you can’t save everyone. You save the ones you can and hope for the best with the rest. I can’t save someone who’s this close to me just like my Dad couldn’t save me, so I gave him the tools that were given to me numbers, contacts, information on meetings, detox’s and people from the program who are objective in their path for them to call when their ready (not when I’m ready) and I pray. This is why we have to work our program constantly and in all areas of our lives.

With Love and Service ,
Tina C., Area Recording Secretary

Where Did the Time Go?

It’s June—it is so hard to believe that the year is half over already. I have attended the Dayton Mini-Conference and I participated in the Area 54 Mini-Conference in Independence. In addition, there were Area 54 Mini-Conference planning meetings, and many Area 54 Agenda meetings. There were also planning meetings for the Ohio State Convention, which is being hosted by Area 54. And my regular Mailing Secretary

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66th GENERAL SERVICE CONF. ACTIONS

The following recommendations were approved by the 66th General Service Conference:

Floor Actions

1. General Service Conference delegates be provided a copy of the final approved annual General Service Office and A.A. Grapevine budgets with the pre-Conference material for all future Conferences.
2. The General Service Board develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the General Service Conference agenda Review and Selection Process, providing the area delegate members of the Conference a role in the vetting and selection of proposed agenda items through the Conference process to be brought to the 2017 General Service Conference.
3. The trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference create a plan to translate Conference background material, considering all possible methods, with a progress report to be forwarded to the 2017 Conference Committee on Policy/ Admissions that describes the process and costs.

Agenda

4. The theme for the 2017 General Service Conference be: "Supporting Our Future."
5. The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2017 General Service Conference:

Growth:

Diversity -- Outreach and Attraction
Safety -- An Important Consideration
Communication -- Today and Tomorrow

Participation:

Fellowship vs. Membership
Leadership: "I am Responsible..."
Is Your Voice Heard?

Contributions:

Spirituality and Money
Fully Self-Supporting Our Obligations
Apathy and Power of the Purse

6. The Conference Agenda Committee review the summary of the previous year's Conference evaluations and, where appropriate, make suggestions for improvement to the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference.
7. The General Service Office post to the Conference dashboard, and regularly update information concerning the status of all proposed Conference agenda items.

Cooperation with the Professional Community

8. A new section on A.A. and medications be added to the pamphlet "If You are a Professional..." with the following text:

A.A. Members and Medications

A.A. does not provide medical advice; all medical advice and treatment should come from a qualified health care professional. The suggestions provided in the pamphlet "The A.A. Member—Medications and Other

Drugs" may help A.A. members minimize the risk of relapse.

9. Text be added to the last paragraph of the first page of the pamphlet "Is there an Alcoholic in the Workplace?" to read (additions in **bold**):

*A.A. can help organizations, **corporations and businesses, regardless of size**, contact men and women who have achieved sobriety, and are willing to share their experience freely with anyone who seeks help.*

10. Several minor revisions to the pamphlet "How A.A. Members Cooperate With Professionals" be approved.
11. An introductory paragraph for professionals be added to the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol" addressing the notion that while some language in the 1958 pamphlet is dated, the issues are prevalent today, and asked that a draft introductory paragraph be brought back to the 2017 Conference Cooperation With the Professional Community Committee for review.

Corrections

12. The video to replace "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" with the title "A New Freedom" be approved.

Grapevine

13. The delegate chair for the Grapevine Conference Committee be allowed the same participation at the January A.A. Grapevine Board Meeting as all other delegate chairs at their corresponding trustees' committees.

Literature

14. The trustees' Literature Committee develop a plan that includes a systematic schedule for the annual review of recovery literature items, taking into consideration the following: content, relevance, and usefulness; and prioritized by time span since last review. The committee requested that the plan also include an annual report, to be forwarded to the Confer-

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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 NEOH 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 this issue of NEOHR is 14 pages packed with experience, strength, and hope.

Let Ron O., 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 [mail-ingsecretary@area54.org](mailto:ingsecretary@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.

Expanded Content (14 pages!) and a Color-Enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/NEOHRecorder.html>

66th GENERAL SERVICE CONF. ACTIONS

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ence Literature Committee, reflecting the results of their review and any other items for proposed updates or revisions.

15. The trustees' Literature Committee revise the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." to include information about young peoples' conferences and that the proposed text be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee for review.
16. The trustees' Literature Committee update the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." to better reflect the experiences of young people in A.A. today. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.
17. The trustees' Literature Committee undertake a comprehensive revision of the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" with a modernized presentation of both text and illustrations to reflect contemporary A.A. experience. The committee requested that a progress report or draft pamphlet be brought to the 2017 Conference Literature Committee.

Policy/Admissions

18. Mykhailo A., past World Service Meeting delegate, and Yury T. from Ukraine be admitted to the 66th General Service Conference as observers.
19. Implementation of Phase 1 of the Conference Translation Project to translate pre-Conference and Conference material into Spanish and French, as described in the 2015 Advisory Action, continue with an estimated cost of \$50,000 - \$100,000.
20. The 69th General Service Conference be held April 28-May 4, 2019 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holiday or hotel availability.

Public Information

21. A proposal for implementing a Google-for-Non-Profits account for carrying the message of A.A. to the public be developed and brought back to the 2017 Conference Public Information Committee for review.
22. A proposal for the implementation of a Twitter account for carrying the message of A.A. to the public be developed and brought back to the 2017 Conference Public Information Committee for review.
23. The English- and French-language versions of the video public service announcement "Tengo Esperanza," be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$40,000, in addition to distribution by local committees, and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2017 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.
24. The video public service announcement "I Thought" be discontinued.

1. Report and Charter

25. A new section on "Local Forums" be added to Chapter 9 (The General Service Board) of *The A.A. Service Manual*, after the "Regional Forums" section with the following text:

Local Forums

In October 2006, the concept of Local Forums was approved by the General Service Board. The purpose of Local Forums is to bring Forum information to A.A. members in remote, sparsely populated areas, urban neighborhoods or underserved A.A. communities. Any A.A. community or service entity may request a one-and-a-half or two day Local Forum. Unlike Regional Forums, the responsibility for Forum expenses such as meeting room rental and miscellaneous expenses are assumed by the Local Forum Committee. The General Service Board will send two participants, one from the Board and one from the General Service Office or Grapevine office, and display literature at Board expense. Like Regional Forums, Board participation in Local Forums requires the approval of the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums. The Regional Forums coordinator works closely with the Local Forum organizing committee to create an agenda that is responsive to local needs.

26. The following text in endnote 4 be removed from Concept XII on page 73 of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*:
 4. *Bill here, apparently inadvertently, used the phrase "in action and spirit," instead of "in thought and action," that appears elsewhere in both the Conference Charter and the statement of Concept XII.*
27. The following text be removed from the Concept XI essay on page 58 of *Twelve Concepts for World Service*:

Women workers present still another problem. Our Headquarters is pretty much a man's world. Some men are apt to feel, unconsciously, that they are women's superiors, thus producing a reflex reaction in the gals. Then, too, some of us — of both sexes — have been emotionally damaged in the area of man-woman relations. Our drinking has made us wrongly dependent on our marriage partners. We have turned them into our "moms" and "pops," and then we have deeply resented that situation. Perhaps maladjustment has taken still other turns which leave us with a hang-over of hostility that we are apt to project into any man-woman relatedness that we undertake.

It is possible for these forces to defeat the good working partnerships we would like to have. But if we are fully aware of these tendencies they can be the more easily overcome, and forgiven. We can be aware also that any sound working relation between adult men and women must be in the character of a partnership, a non-competitive one in which each partner complements the other. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority at all. Men, for example, because they are men, are apt to be better at business. But suppose we replaced our six women staff members with six men? In

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OTHER REPORTS

OYPAA HOST: Bryan L./Lauren B.

Matt G. gave a report of their recent activities. Their meeting report is as follows: They had a Decade Dance last night (April 16, 2016) and want thank everyone who came out and supported them. Since the formation of the OYPAA Host Committee they have averaged about \$1500.00 profit for each one of their events and they are trying to host an event at least once a month in order to fund their upcoming State Conference in September of this year. In between all their activities and donations, they currently have an account balance right around \$6,500.00. They just want to thank, again, everyone in the Area who has supported them. At their meeting, Lauren opened with the Serenity Prayer. Introductions were made and anniversaries acknowledged. Josh explained what OYP AA is all about. Matt G. spoke on Tradition 10 and Tony M. will be speaking on Tradition 11. Lindsey gave the Secretary's Report. Tony M. gave a detailed Treasurer's Report (as mentioned above.) Old Business: Kevin discussed some details as far as how the operation goes at the Kalahari Resort-walkie-talkies, insurance policies, etc. Matt G. discussed the necessity for a sub-committee meeting for the Area 54 Panel. Ally also discussed and gave out flyers for their upcoming event which is a Summer Kick-Off Bonfire to be held May 21st. Flyers are being made available to us here today and to the groups. It's going to be like a volleyball, games, and barbeque type of event. Matt mentioned that the In-Reach and Out-Reach activities of their committee have been phenomenal. They have people going to different Areas almost every weekend. They are trying to do as much In-Reach as possible to raise awareness and share their experience, strength and hope. Adam also discussed doing advertising for their State Convention in other Areas' Newsletters to get the word out in other to other Areas. They approved doing this by majority vote. Merchandise sales are off and running and Shut-In needs and website needs were also discussed.

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duties called for mailings in February, April and now, June.

When I was a GSR and DCM. I did not know the meetings and planning work that went on behind the scenes of the general meetings that are held for the membership. As part of my service work, I have learned about the hours, miles, and amount of time the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Alternate Delegate, and Delegate put in that are involved in the background operations, let alone all the hours that the committees are dedicating to their endeavors. For an unorganized organization, there's a lot of organization going on! Everything seems just to fall together when the gavel strikes and our meeting starts.

Now, looking forward, everyone is aware of Founders' Day. June 10-11-12, 2016. The next Area 54 event is the Open House Picnic, Sunday, June 26th, 2016, at Silver Creek Park in Norton, Ohio. And the 60th Ohio State Convention, August 19-20-21, 2016, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Westlake, Ohio.

On a more personal note, by God's grace, in May, I turned 73. In addition to maintaining my regular sobriety schedule, I volunteered my time at Glenbeigh in March and look forward to doing so again In October. I can honestly say that service work has made me feel younger. Before coming into A.A. at the age of 63 I was on my deathbed, I felt useless, with a "poor me" attitude. Thanks to good sponsorship, the Twelve Steps, service work, and a Power greater than me, I feel I have something to give back to my fellows in A.A. and Area 54.

One more thing, may I ask everyone to keep the surgical team in your thoughts and prayers to have the skills needed to do the left knee replacement I am scheduled to have done on July 18th.

Ron O., Area 54 Mailing Secretary

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, expressed through 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, GSRs, 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

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

UPCOMING DATES FOR THE AREA AND BEYOND

NOTE THE DATE

July 17 **GV Lit sales**
Area Assembly **2:00**
pm

August 12-14—St. Charles, IL
East Central Regional Conference

August 19-21—Westlake, OH
60th Ohio State Convention @
DoubleTree Westlake

September 8-11 — Concord, CA
National AA Archives Workshop

September 18 **2:00 pm**
Area Assembly

October 16 **GV Lit**
sales
Panel 67 Elections @ Assembly **2:00 pm**

November 5 — Columbus, OH **11:00 am**
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

November 20 **GV Lit**
sales
Gratitude Sunday
TBA

The AA Cleveland District Office is Moving



The AA Cleveland District Office has found new of-
 fice space and will be moving soon! While a defini-
 tive date has not yet been set, we do know we will be
 in by May 1, 2016. Our new address will be:

1557 St. Clair Ave NE
Cleveland, OH 44114

This location is conveniently located in Downtown
 Cleveland and includes:



10 parking spaces in the back

Metered street parking

Beautiful interior finish

Conference room, break room, server, office sup-
 ply rooms, 3 lavatories

We are very excited about the move and will be hav-
 ing an open house once settled in.

**Unless otherwise noted, Area Assemblies &
 Workshops are held at The 12 Step Recovery
 Club, 1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH (on 
 about 1/4 mile south of route 
 Phone: (330) 273-7216**

GSB GENERAL SHARING SESSION

The topic of the first quarter General Sharing Session was "Spirituality and Money." Chet P, Southeast regional trustee and Richard P, Northeast regional trustee presented on the topic. Andrew W, West Central regional trustee, chaired and welcomed visiting Conference delegates and Class A trustee candidates.

Chet spoke on the subtopic, "How do I 'pay forward' a spiritual experience through the basket?" noting, "Any discussion of 'spiritual' or 'spirituality' is highly personal and varied." Bill W, in describing spiritual experience, said that maybe there are as many definitions of them as there are people who have had them.

Chet recalled talking to long-timers "who were here before me" and began putting a dollar instead of coins in the basket in the mid-1970s. "If my sacrifice were to be on the same level as was established when I came into the Fellowship, my contribution should be approximately \$4.00 per meeting."

He noted that one definition of spiritual is that it is of or consisting of spirit; not corporeal. "Yet, how can a discussion of money be 'not corporeal' when money is the embodiment of corporeal substances?"

Chet later referenced an article titled "Self-Support" in the February 1981 Grapevine, in which the author suggested that self-support not only avoids corrupting influences but includes principles that contribute to our spiritual growth, such as self-respect, and provide us a sense of belonging and satisfaction of being part of a Fellowship that we have helped to foster and nourish.

Richard spoke on the subtopic, "Is my contribution an expression of gratitude and service, or has it become

just a habit?" "Early on," he related, "I was taught that participating in Tradition Seven is an expression of my gratitude, which is immense. I know that when I put money in the basket I am expressing that gratitude and participating in service "anything, he described, that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer", as Bill W. defines it on the first page of *The A.A. Service Manual*.

"What we have to impress upon our members," Richard noted, "is that the spiritual gain of giving is not just personal, it sustains our whole society in action carrying the message. We need effective *communication* and *transparency* to arm our service workers with the information necessary to be able to discuss those connections in a sensible way."

Open sharing followed the presentations, and an appointed committee member shared on the principal of attraction rather than promotion when introducing the concept of Tradition Seven, asking, "Are our members aware of the services they are contributing to?" One delegate spoke of the usefulness of the PowerPoint presentation included in the A.A.W.S. board report given at the 2015 Conference, as well as the two-page, "Your Seventh Tradition Contributions." These are helpful tools to communicate with the fellowship about services provided by G.S.O.

A Class B trustee noted the power of connecting the spiritual component of self-support through our own story in what services were available to us upon entry to A.A. and what services we would like to pass on to the alcoholic who still suffers. A delegate shared some

concerns that lie problem may not be inflation, but rather at the group level, where there is a lack of understanding of where and how to distribute funds.

An A.A.W.S. director asked how we can do a better job of communicating these ideas beyond the sharing session and Box 4-5-9, and a Class A trustee, while not able to contribute financially himself, spoke about how profound it was to witness the amount of services that are currently provided from A.A. members' contributions, adding, however, that relatively few members seem to participate in ongoing contributions to G.S.O.

A G.S.O. staff member shared on how self-support, through Tradition Seven, positively impacts public perception of A.A. by our professional friends and those seeking help with a drinking problem and how it works in conjunction with Tradition Six, by A.A. remaining free of affiliation with outside organizations. A delegate spoke of the spiritual difference when looking at the meaning of "contribution" versus "donation," and an appointed committee member shared that she has found it helpful to not only communicate with A.A. members about what they could be contributing through Tradition Seven but also to focus on what they are *currently* contributing to. It was also noted that we must continue to find ways to communicate with members who may not participate in the service structure.

Finally, a Class B trustee shared how the simple message from a long-timer in his early sobriety planted the seed that if he could not contribute to the basket today that one day, when he was able, he would have the opportunity to pass it on to serve the alcoholic, just like what was being done for him.

THE TRADITIONS IN ACTION



THE LEGACY of Service affirms our faith in the democratic ideal of majority decision, the group conscience, basic decency, and the collective wisdom of AA's representatives in the General Service Conference, together with the Trustees of the General Service Board of AA, both AAs and non-alcoholics. The spirit of this Legacy can be summed up best exactly as Bill wrote about it:

"We expect that our Conferences will always try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love—one member for another. In turn, this sign signifies that mutual trust should prevail; that no action ought to be taken in anger, haste, or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action should ever be personally punitive; that, wherever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or minority.

"The sum of these several attitudes and practices is, in our view, the very essence of democracy—in action and spirit."

The Twelve Traditions stand for the Legacy of Unity. The pith of the Traditions is clearly expressed in the familiar Preamble that is usually read before AA meetings (and printed on page 1 of this issue of the Grapevine). And they include suggestions concerning common welfare, group structure, organization, public relations, and anonymity. Bill's reflections upon the wisdom and humility of the Traditions are

heartwarming: "Implicit throughout AA's Traditions," he said, "is the confession that our Fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and that these defects threaten us continually. Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The Twelve Traditions are to group survival and harmony what AA's Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind."

And our Twelve Steps themselves—the Legacy of Recovery—what principle do they affirm?

For Bill, they centered on the priceless value of every *individual* human being as an image of his Creator and as a potential instrument of His will, no matter how befogged his mind or how far destroyed his body by the ravages of alcoholism. None of us who are sober today in AA could have heard, in the desperate final moments of our last hangover (while guilt, remorse, and nausea wound our nervous system into tremulous, sweaty knots), any words sweeter than Bill's steady faith that "AA's Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole."

Many of us, upon first seeing those words, asked ourselves the question "Can it be *just that simple?*"—and then heard a voice inside us answer "Yes."

Bill's application of AA principles to ever-changing circumstances was another of his remarkable talents. Day in and day out, letters would arrive at his desk asking for his "last word" on a matter of AA policy. And, in answer after answer, Bill would fall back upon the basic principles of AA's three Legacies, tempered by wisdom, humor, perspective, and regard for the feelings of others.

One warm example occurred in 1968 when a well-meaning AA wrote to Bill, in deep concern, about

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an influx of youthful hippies or flower children to local AA groups, along with their distinctive manner of dress, sexual mores, and other unorthodox behavior, including the use of drugs. The writer feared that this particular invasion might be “a very real threat to our wonderful. God-given program.”

Bill’s reply was typical of his use of AA principles to meet new challenges.

“Your letter about the hippie problem, so-called, was mighty interesting to me. I doubt that we need to be alarmed about this situation, because there have been precedents out of the past. All sorts of outfits have tried to move in on us, including communists and heroin addicts, prohibitionists and do-gooders of other persuasions.

“Nearly all of these people, who happened to have an individual problem with alcohol, not only failed to change AA, but, in the long run, AA changed them. I have a number of them among my closest friends today, and they are among the best AAs I know.

“You also have some people who are not alcoholics, but are addicts of other kinds. A great many AAs have taken pity on these people, and have actually tried to make them full-fledged AAs. Of course, their identification with alcoholics is no good at all, and the groups themselves easily stop this practice in the normal course of AA affairs.

“Thoughtful AAs, however, encourage these sponsors to bring addicts to open meetings, just as they would any other interested people. In the end, these addicts usually gravitate to other forms of therapy. They are not received on the platform in open meetings unless they have an alcohol problem, and closed meetings are, of course, denied them. We know that we cannot do everything for everybody with an addiction problem.

“There has also occurred lately a new development centering upon hippies who have LSD or marijuana troubles—not so much stronger stuff. Many of these kids appear to be alcoholics also, and they are flocking into AA, often with excellent results.

“Some weeks ago, there was a young people’s convention of AAs. Shortly thereafter, four of these kids visited the office. I saw one young gal prancing down the hall, hair flying, in a mini-skirt, wearing love beads and the works. I thought, ‘Holy smoke, what now!’ She told me she was the oldest member of the young people’s group in her area—age twenty-two! They had kids as young as sixteen. I was curious and took the whole party out to lunch.

“Well, they were absolutely wonderful. They talked (and acted) just about as good a kind of AA as I’ve seen anywhere. I think all of them said they had had some kind of drug problem, but had kicked that, too. When they first came around, they had insisted on their own ideas of AA, but in the end they found AA plenty good enough as it was. Though they needed their own meetings, they found interest and inspiration in the meetings of much older folks as well.

“Perhaps, as younger people come into AA, we shall have to put up with some unconventional nonsense—with patience and good humor, let’s hope. But it should be well worth the attempt. And also, if various hippie addicts want to form their own sort of fellowship along AA lines, by all means let us encourage them. We need deny them only the AA name, and assure them that the rest of our program is theirs for the taking and using—any part or all of it.

“For these reasons. I feel hopeful and not a bit scared by this trend. Of course, I’m no prophet. I may be mistaken, so please keep me posted. This is a highly interesting and perhaps significant development. I certainly do not think it ought to be fought. Instead, it ought to be encouraged in what

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we already know to be workable channels. In affection. . . Bill.”

BILL’S old desk is clear today. His voice is as lucid as ever, on tape, in books, in filing cabinets. He still has much to tell us.

Two of Bill’s familiar concerns about AA’s future bear repetition here. The first concerns the destiny of AA; the second concerns the memory of Bill himself in the unfolding of that destiny.

Of our Fellowship, he said, “Beyond a Higher Power as each of us may vision Him, AA must never, as a society, enter into the field of dogma or theology. We can never become a religion in that sense, lest we kill our usefulness by getting bogged down in theological contention.”

And he made the caution still clearer: “As a society, we must never become so vain as to suppose that we have been the authors and inventors of a new religion. We will humbly reflect that each of AA’s principles, *every one of them*, has been borrowed from ancient sources. We shall remember that we are laymen, holding ourselves in readiness to cooperate with all men of goodwill, whatever their creed or nationality. . . .

“There are those who predict that Alcoholics Anonymous may well become a new spearhead for a spiritual awakening throughout the world. When our friends say these things, they are both generous and sincere. But we of AA must reflect that such a tribute and such a prophecy could well prove to be a heady drink for most of us—that is, if we really came to believe this to be the real purpose of AA, and if we commenced to behave accordingly. Our society, therefore, will prudently cleave to its single purpose: the carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled

us to do well in one area, we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody.”

In these paragraphs. Bill asks us simply to preserve our humility as a fellowship.

Much the same humility was infused into Bill’s confidence that Alcoholics Anonymous would continue into the future—and continue in health—without him.

Once he wrote: “It seems proved that AA can stand on its own feet anywhere and under any conditions. It has outgrown any dependence it might once have had upon the personalities or efforts of the older members like me. New, able, and vigorous people keep coming to the surface, turning up where they are needed. Besides, AA has reached enough spiritual maturity to know that its final dependence is upon God.”

For those of us who might wish to see our Bill regarded by posterity as a saint in the pantheon of modern gods, now is the time to reflect carefully upon his humility and wisdom. For, in truth. Bill was not a saint. He would have recoiled—and did—at the suggestion. He was a plain man.

His words of warning apply as much to sweet memories of him as they do to other beloved ghosts of our own pasts who settle in our recollections today: “Nothing can be more demoralizing than a clinging and abject dependence upon another human being. This often amounts to the demand for a degree of protection and love that no one could possibly satisfy. So our hoped-for protectors finally flee, and once more we are left alone—either to grow up or disintegrate.”

So long, Bill.

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these positions could the men possibly relate themselves so uniquely and so effectively to our Fellowship as the women? Of course not. The women can handle this assignment far better, just because they are women.

28. Endnote 10, on page 59 in *Twelve Concepts for World Service* in the Concept XI essay be revised by the Publishing Department with language noting that two paragraphs (above) have been removed from the Concept XI essay and are available upon request from the G.S.O. Archives Department as a reference to A.A. history.
29. *The A.A. Service Manual* be revised per existing schedule after the 2016 General Service Conference and that a new edition be published biannually (i.e., every two years), beginning in 2017 at a savings of approximately \$45,000 - 50,000 in alternate years when a new edition is not published. The next edition of *The A.A. Service Manual* is to be published in 2018 (after the Conference), the subsequent edition in 2020 (after the Conference), etc.
30. The category title "Online Meetings" be changed to "Online Meetings/Online Groups" on page vi and vii in the A.A. Directories.

Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities

31. The term "Special Needs" be removed from the name of the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure. The new name of the committee will be the Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities.

Trustees

32. The following slate of trustees be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2016, following presentation at the 2016 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Class A Trustees

Leslie S. Backus, B.A.
Terrance M. Bedient, FACHE
Hon. Christine Carpenter
Hon. Ivan L.R. Lemelle
Peter Luongo, Ph.D., LCSW-C
Nancy J. McCarthy
David M. Morris, C.P.A.

Class B Trustees

Thomas A
Richard B
Carole B
Joel C
Joe D
Bill F
Yolanda F
Scott H
William N
Chet P
Richard P
Bob W
Cate W
Albin Z

33. The appointment of the following slate of officers of the

General Service Board be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2016, following presentation at the 2016 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

ChairpersonTerrance M. Bedient, FACHE
First vice-chairpersonBob W.
Second vice-chairpersonChet P.
TreasurerDavid M. Morris, C.P.A.
SecretaryBill F.

34. The February 2016 appointment of the following officers by the chair of the General Service Board be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2016:

Assistant Treasurer Donald W. Meurer
Assistant Secretary Eva S.

This appointment process is in accordance with the General Service Board Bylaws.

35. The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. World Services Corporate Board in April 2016, following presentation at the 2016 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Richard B. William N.
Beau B. Richard P.
Joe D. Eva S.
Homer M. Greg T.
David N.

36. The following slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board in April 2016, following presentation at the 2016 General Service Conference for disapproval, if any:

Lynda B Yolanda F
Carole B Ivan Lemelle
Ami B Paz P
Joel C Albin Z
Josh E

37. If a vacancy for a regional trustee occurs prior to September 1 in the first year, then an election for a three-year term would occur at the following General Service Conference (GSC) for the affected region. If a vacancy for a regional trustee occurs between September 1 in the first year and August 31 of the third year then the delegates from the affected region would be given an option to hold an election for a six-year or five-year term, or leave the position vacant, depending on when the vacancy occurs. Regardless of whether the term was for three, five or six years, the regional trustee would be expected to serve two years on one of the two operating corporation boards.

Archives

No recommendations.

Finance

No recommendations.

International Conventions/Regional Forums I

No recommendations.