

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

Apr / May / Jun 2019

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXVI, Issue 2

## A Word From Our Delegate

*Thank You, but we need you!*

As the first quarter comes to close, and the second begins, I would like to say sincere word(s) of thanks to the diligent workers that tirelessly serve Area 54. The works that take place begins with their willingness to perform duties that are not only required for their position, but they continue to go the extra mile(s) for Alcoholic Anonymous in Northeast Ohio. It mean longs days, time away from love ones, and extra time in communicating with others that make our Area thrive and I am truly grateful for their dedication to general service work. To make the load, lighter I call to you all join us because MORE still need to be done.



Our co-founder Bill W. discussed in the pamphlet, “AA’s Legacy of Service” (p-44) about service being vital to our growth:

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. simpler by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion. Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: “Is this service really needed?” If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A. The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole; namely, the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our Board of Trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities. Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few old-time A.A.’s, several nonalcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.’s infancy, we old-timers had been the self-appointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous.

In our service community we don’t want “a few old-timers” be the sole providers of the service that is done in our area. It’s OUR responsibility as members of A.A. to not only live and practice the twelve steps, or be apart our home groups, but we all need to engage in “vital” general service work that helps our recovery community as a whole. So, as I close please consider coming to our area assemblies or join one of our standing committees. To investigate or learn more, go to [www.area54.org](http://www.area54.org). It’s our service community and WE NEED YOU!

Love and Service

**Shyrl B. - Delegate**

**Area 54 - Panel 69**

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### ALTERNATE DELEGATE’S REPORT

**46<sup>th</sup> East Central Regional Conference of Delegates Past & Present  
Schaumburg, IL, Hosted by Area 19 – February 9-11, 2019**

I traveled to the conference with 2 past delegates, Bob D. and Ola P. and our Delegate Shyrl B. We had a GSO Staff Report from Jeff W. a member of 11 staff members of the GSO.

(Continued on page 3)

## FROM THE EDITOR

### “Selfishness” and “Self-Centeredness”

Recently, a very close friend of mine declared her understanding of the difference between selfishness and self-centeredness. Although I did not agree with her, I was unprepared to give my thoughts as to why. It just didn’t “sit right” with me. Being unprepared, I did not engage a conversation on the issue. But it has been on my mind ever since. I am concerned because my friend is very vocal and very influential with people who are early in recovery from alcoholism (she facilitates a weekly “Big Book Study” at a local treatment center).

The terms selfishness and self-centeredness are said to be the root of the alcoholic’s problem. In fact, our “Big Book” states:

Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate.

...

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so.

Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! (Big Book, 62)

The above excerpt occurs in the introduction to Step Three, which states “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.” (Big Book, 59) There is a clear connection between ridding ourselves of selfishness and deciding to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. The problem is that my friend has said “selfishness is not the problem.” She believes, and has stated, selfishness is merely our thoughts about ourselves. In contrast, she has stated self-centeredness is the problem because self-centeredness – not selfishness - is the action.

The real distinction between selfishness and self-centeredness is not that one is a thought and the other is an action. Both are thoughts *and* actions. In common usage, selfish acts involve reckless disregard for

others, whereas self-centered acts do not even consider others. In other words, when I choose to act *in spite of* knowing that my action will negatively impact another, then I am acting selfishly. When my actions are based solely on thoughts of myself with no thought of the other, then my act is self-centered. The difference is in what my thought process was *before* I took the action. Was it selfish or was it self-centered? In either case, it moves me away from God.

A self-centered person sees only himself or herself as the center of everything and does not consider what his or her actions would mean to others. Consider the classic blind person example. There was a period in my life when my best friend was a blind person, and I learned a great deal. Generally, blind people are quite independent and do not really want help from others, unless they ask for it. A self-centered person would reach out to a blind person, catch his hand and help him across the road, not really bothering to find out if that person wanted help in the first place. Only his actions count, he wants the world to think the best of him. He is not bothered about the feelings of the blind man. A selfish person would not bother to help the blind man in the first place. If he must, it is conditional (whether he has time, is not too inconvenienced, etc.).

For a respected and influential member of Alcoholics Anonymous to tell an alcoholic (especially one new to Alcoholics Anonymous) that it is okay to be selfish is not only dangerous, it is ***LIFE THREATENING***. On one hand, it is a wonderful thing to be of maximum service to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous by showing up on a regular basis to facilitate meetings for the new person. On the other hand, we must be careful that we give valid information, supported by the Big Book and Conference approved literature, rather than based on our own opinions.

~James T., Editor

***Submit your service-related contributions, comments and questions, or ideas and complaints to: [newsletter@area54.org](mailto:newsletter@area54.org)***



## OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

### ALTERNATE DELEGATE REPORT

*(Continued from page 1)*

A book "Our Great Responsibility" is going to be available in April 2019. It contains 16 of the 33 talks that Bill W gave at 20 General Service Conferences. The selection of talks are from 1951 - 1970 . This is the first original book published in over 30 years.

He reported on a story in the Box 459 about the formation of the DAC (Deaf Access Committee) in 2010 in Austin, Texas. The article discusses that signers need to learn about AA and its lingo, idioms as well as Steps and Traditions. The committee's work has led to a AA Deaf Intergroup of Central Texas. Please look for this story in Box 459 for more details.

Jeff reported that work is being done to provide digital distribution for material for prisons and jails. It has been reported that jails and prisons are going paperless. Jeff reported on the ERP systems update. The office is immersed in this project that will modernize all our business systems. It is the plan that this will lead to more efficiencies, security, and enhance the support for the AA community.

We have a new publisher for Grapevine.

A new video for correction "A New Freedom" is available. It is also dubbed in French and Spanish.

Mark E, our ECR Trustee gave a detailed report of his 5 day board weekend. Mark will be at our Mini Conference and is schedule to give his report on Friday Night. Please try to attend and learn more of the what is happening now.

The East Central Regional Conference in 2019 is to be held in Milwaukee Wisconsin on October 18-20. And will held with the local Area 75's Conference. The room rate is \$103/ night. The theme is "Into Action."

2020 International Convention, to be held July 2-5 in Detroit with the theme "Love and Tolerance is our Code" The members of AA in Michigan and Northern Ohio are gearing up to be the volunteer welcome committee for this 85<sup>th</sup> birthday of AA. Registration opens September 9<sup>th</sup> 2019. Registration will be \$115 per person until April 15<sup>th</sup>. After that date the registration will be \$140 per person. Details will be on [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).

The East Central Regional Forum for 2019 will be held July 12-14 at the Sheraton Detroit Airport Hotel and the room rate is \$119/night. ECR Forum has no registration fee and is presented by our General Service Office. The East Central Regional Forum for 2021 will be held November 19-21, in Cleveland at the Doubletree Hilton in Independence. Area 54 is the host.

On Friday night at this conference a Mock Conference for the incoming delegates and a mock agenda item presented. The delegates become a committee and discuss the agenda item and choose to or choose not to recommend to the Conference Committee. I attended as an alternate delegate. The alternate delegates were asked not to speak.

Our Delegate gave her 2 minute limit Area Highlights with all the other new delegates and she did well.  
Respectfully submitted

Yours in service

**Susan R., Alternate Delegate**

**Area54 - Panel 67**

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### AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

#### A.A.'s Single Purpose

Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. There are those that predict that A.A. 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 A.A. 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 A.A., 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." (A.A. co-founder Bill W., 1955)

A.A. General Service is twelfth step work; we carry the message to alcoholics so we can have an informed group conscience. Our committees, district committee members, and general service representatives carry this message back to our groups, and, in turn, we let our delegate know what our feelings are concerning issues in A.A. Attending district meetings and area assembly allow us to gain a better understanding of how our society functions.

I have been in General Service for a few years now and at our district level and intergroups we have always struggled to get members to commit to attending service functions. Excuses abound: "Its to political, its not for me, what has New York ever done for us?" Sponsors don't emphasize the need. Just a look at the triangle and it always says Unity Service and Recovery.

My group made me a GSR when I was new in sobriety. I asked them what I had to do. They told me to go to the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

### AREA CHAIRPERSON REPORT

(Continued from page 3)

district meeting and report to them what we are doing. Then come back and give a report on what they're doing. After I attended a few district meetings the district people asked me if I wanted to go to the Area Assembly, and I started to attend the assemblies on a regular basis. If you're in general service or if you've never attended a district or area meeting take a chance and attend one; it can't hurt you. And bring a friend. Our singleness of purpose will always prevail in all of our meetings - especially the home group - in carrying this message to the alcoholic who still suffers, which is the primary purpose of A.A.

Yours in Service

**Tim H. - Area Chairperson**  
**Area 54 - Panel 69**

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### AREA RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT

This weekend was the 44th Annual - Area 54 - NEOH Mini-Conference Frank R. (GSR/Sobriety First) picked me up at 1:00pm. Upon arrival I assisted with the Registration Set-up and then the conference commenced.

Patrick C., Conference Coordinator, gave report on the recent and upcoming events at G.S.O. Saturday we broke into committees. I found P.I. and International & Regional Forums quite interesting. After reports were turned in, then voted on the Agenda items presented. Saturday evening, after dinner, "Snow White and the 7 Character Defects" was entertaining. Patrick C. shared his experience, strength and hope. Sunday was devoted to our various Delegates, Alternate Delegates, and Past Delegates who answered Ask-It-Basket questions. All-in-all a very enlightening weekend was shared by all Attendees.

**Beverly F. - Area Recording Secretary**  
**Area 54 - Panel 69**

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### Area Public Information Chair Report

#### AA on NPR

A producer for the National Public Radio program "Sound of Ideas" read an alarming statistic about alcoholism rise amongst women, presumably this item taken from the WebMD website:

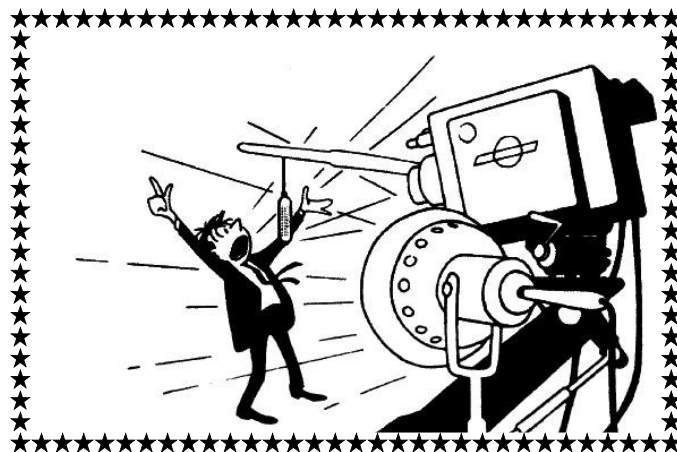
Female alcohol use disorder in the United States increased by 83.7% between 2002 and 2013, according to a 2017 study sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

She asked her reporter, Meredith Garretson, to help put together a program on alcoholism. Ms. Garretson called the General Service Office in New York to get a member to speak on behalf of AA. GSO connected her with Racy J., their staff member with the Public Information (PI) assignment. Racy in turn called Bob M., chair of the Northeast Ohio PI Committee and asked him to pursue this. Bob asked Jamie B., then area delegate, to do this because she has a great speaking voice, extensive knowledge of AA, and great respect for AA's principle of personal anonymity at the general public level.

Jamie was joined on this panel by a director from Recovery Resources and a physician from Rosary Hall. St. Vincent Charity Hospital. Their segment of the 11/29/18 "Sound of Ideas" program starts 20 minutes into this link: <https://www.ideastream.org/programs/sound-of-ideas/blockland-solutions-conference-alcohol-addiction-seeking-asylum>. Interesting statistics presented were that each year alcoholism kills about 88,000 Americans—roughly **16,000 more than opioids**. Also 6 Ohioans die each day from alcoholism-related auto accidents.

Some of us get alarmed when we hear AA mentioned on radio or other public media. We're an anonymous society, not a secret society. The tradition that begins "Our public relations policy" is direct proof that we actually have a public relations policy. The media have been among our greatest friends throughout our existence in helping us to carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic. We owe a big thank you to "Sound of Ideas" for this program!

**Bob M. - Public Information Committee Chair.**  
**Area 54 - Panel 69**





## MINI-CONFERENCE VOTING RESULTS

On Saturday afternoon, March 30, 2019, the Area 54 mini-conference attendees sat in 'mock' conference to consider the results of committee deliberations that morning. Here are the voting results of that session which included real agenda items from this year's General Service Conference, to take place May 19-25 in New York City.

### Agenda

A. Review presentation/discussion topic ideas for the 2020 General Service Conference. [Committee took no action]

B. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2020 General Service Conference [Committee took no action]

### Cooperation with the Professional Community

B. Consider request to remove text "*They may help arrange hospitalization*" from the pamphlet "*Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community*." Recommended by committee [10 in favor, 1 opposed]; Passed by Conference 42 in favor, 3 opposed

### Corrections

A. Consider request for a review of all corrections related literature in order to make the language more modern and inclusive. Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 51 in favor, 10 opposed.

### Finance

B. Review the Conference-approved level of \$5,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board [Committee took no action]

C. Review the Conference-approved maximum annual contribution of \$5,000 to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member. [Committee took no action]

### Grapevine

A. Consider the list of suggested AA Grapevine book topics for 2020 or later. Recommended by committee [4 in favor, 2 opposed]; No action needed by conference.

C. Review progress report on AA Grapevine Workbook revisions [Committee took no action]

### Literature I

B. Review progress report on the development of the pamphlet on A.A.'s *Three Legacies*. [Committee took action]

C. Consider requests to develop a *Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous*. Recommended by committee [7 in favor, 2 opposed]; Passed by Conference 48 in favor, 15 opposed.

H. Review progress report on the update to the pamphlet "*Young People and A.A.*" [Committee took no action]

J. Consider request to revise the pamphlet "*The A.A. Group*." [Not Recommended by Committee]

### Literature II

L. Review progress report regarding language on safety and A.A. for inclusion in Living Sober and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship." [Committee took no action]

M. Consider revising the Foreword to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Recommended by committee [6 in favor, 2 opposed]; Passed by Conference, 53 in favor, 2 opposed.

N. Consider suggestion to add “Non alcoholics may attend open meetings as observers” to the end of the open meeting side of the Primary Purpose (blue) card. Recommended by committee [8 in favor, 1 opposed]; Rejected by Conference for want of substantial unanimity, 33 in favor, 28 opposed (No motion for reconsideration after minority opinion heard)

O. Consider request to update the pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated.” Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference (No motion for reconsideration after minority opinion heard).

**Policy/Admissions**

B. Review report from G.S.O.’s general manager on General Service Conference site selection. [Committee took on action]

G. Reconsider the 1986 Advisory Action regarding a simple majority vote by the full Conference. Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 37 in favor, 5 opposed.

**Public Information**

D. Review draft language addressing anonymity and safety proposed for the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity.” Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 57 in favor, 1 opposed.

E. Consider request to update language in the flyer “A.A. at a Glance.” Recommended by committee [9 in favor, 1 opposed]; Passed by Conference, 51 in favor, 2 opposed.

**Report and Charter**

B. The A.A. Service Manual, 2018 - 2020. Review progress report from A.A.W.S. Publishing Department on the redesign of The A.A. Service Manual. Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 58, 1 opposed.

**Treatment and Accessibilities**

A. Consider revising the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” to include related corrections activities. Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 54 in favor, 2 opposed.

B. Consider adding a story from an A.A. member who is deaf to the pamphlet “Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers. Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 56 in favor, 1 opposed.

C. Consider updating the pamphlet “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic – Never too Late.” Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 60 in favor, 3 opposed. Motion for reconsideration failed (23 in favor, 32 opposed)

D. Discuss the concept of posting anonymity-protected interviews on aa.org with military professionals about their experience with A.A. E. Review draft of proposed Remote Communities Kit. [Committed took no action]

F. Review contents of Treatment Committee Kit and Workbook. [Committee took no action]

**Archives**

A. Consider request to add the 1940s home movie of the co-founders and their wives to the video “Markings on the Journey.” Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 61 in favor, 1 opposed.

B. Review Archives Workbook. [Committee took no action]

# UPCOMING DATES FOR THE AREA AND BEYOND

## NOTE THE DATE

May 19

Unity Day Workshop

Lit

June 7-9 - Akron, OH

Founders' Day

Gv

Grapevine sales on Saturday only 6/8

June 23 - TBD

Area Open House Picnic

## OUTSIDE OUR AREA

May 4 - Columbus, OH

Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

May 19-25 - New York, NY

69th General Service Conference

Gv = Grapevine sale days

Lit = Literature sale days

**EXCEPT AS NOTED, Area Assemblies & Workshops begin at 2:00 pm and are held at The 12 Step Recovery Club, 1480 Pearl Rd. (in Brunswick Plaza), Brunswick, OH 44212. The club is on US Route 42, about 1/4 mile south of State Route 303. Phone: (330) 273-7216**

### Mini-Conference Voting

(continued from page 6)

### International Conventions/Regional Forums

B. Consider a broadcast of the 2020 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony, similar to the anonymity-protected delayed Internet broadcast of the 2015 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony. Recommended by committee [unanimous]; Passed by Conference, 50 in favor, 2 opposed.

C. Discuss ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first-time attendees [Committee took no action]

### Floor Action

Discuss ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first-time attendees. [After discussion, Conference took no action]

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## SAVE THE DATE

23rd National A. A. Archives Workshop  
"Our Footprints to Hope & Recovery"



September 5-8, 2019

Detroit, Michigan

Hotel St. Regis  
3071 W. Grand Boulevard  
Detroit, Michigan 48202  
Telephone: 313.873.3000

Special Room Rates  
Single Queen: \$99 Single King: \$109  
Double Queen: \$129 King Suite: \$149  
Parking: Daily \$10 - 24 hrs. \$20

Reservations by phone: 313.873.3000 - Code: 2019 NAAAW  
Reservations online: [www.hotelstregisdetroit.com](http://www.hotelstregisdetroit.com) - Code: NAAAW

**Presentations • Workshops • Panels • Displays**

What is a Repository • Collecting & Preserving  
Collection Scope & Policy • Ethics & Spirituality in Archives  
History Presentations by Areas 32, 33, 34 & 86  
Story Telling - Bring Your Letters  
Footsteps to Grapevine & La Vina  
Early Bird Meeting • Hospitality Area • Banquet

City of Recovery Tour - Detroit A. A. Historical Sites (Thursday Morning)

## 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.

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