

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

Apr / May / Jun 2020

<http://www.area54.org>

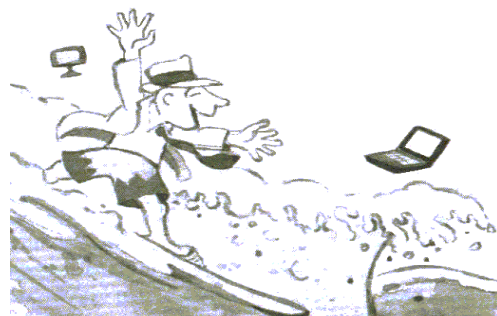
Volume XXVI, Issue 6

A Word From Our Delegate

COVID-19 and US

Hello everyone,

I hope that when this has reached you that everything with you and your loved ones is well. These times are not something that we've seen or been through before. The way we usually live our lives includes us connecting with people, our families, our friends, coworkers, and our fellowship. As we have kept everyone abreast of the cancellations that occurred because of government mandates, we find ourselves in a time when are we asking how can we still connect or how will we get the message out? Reality is we're not sure; however, we are in this process together and learning how to navigate our new normal.



As you know, the March assembly and mini conference did not happen, and, unfortunately, we will need to cancel our April assembly. The fact is that we know little of how this virus works and is transmitted. It's just essential that we, as members of the recovery community, try to follow the safest guidelines while still trying to carry the message. But I must say social distancing sucks.

I must admit I miss the opportunities that we have to talk with each other face to face. I miss the recovery connection, and I miss your hugs. In the spring, the panel travels, but that came to a halt in March. The General Service Conference has moved to a virtual conference, with the details not yet completed. So, things may have changed, but there are avenues to help us stay connected.

Over the last weeks, technology has been instrumental in staying connected. We have had ZOOM cloud meetings, online meetings, and Instagram Big Book. I believe technology, of some form, will be vital for groups and districts to share their group's conscience about the agenda items for the upcoming conference. So be on the lookout via our website: Area54.org.

As I close, just a few more items to remember. As social-distancing guidelines relax (soon), we hope to use Unity Day in May to discuss the agenda items. Work will continue on the Ohio State Convention, with the theme, The Gift of Service. We are the host area, so ALL HANDS on DECK! Please reach out and chat.

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Your servant,

Shyrl B. - Delegate

Area 54 - Panel 69

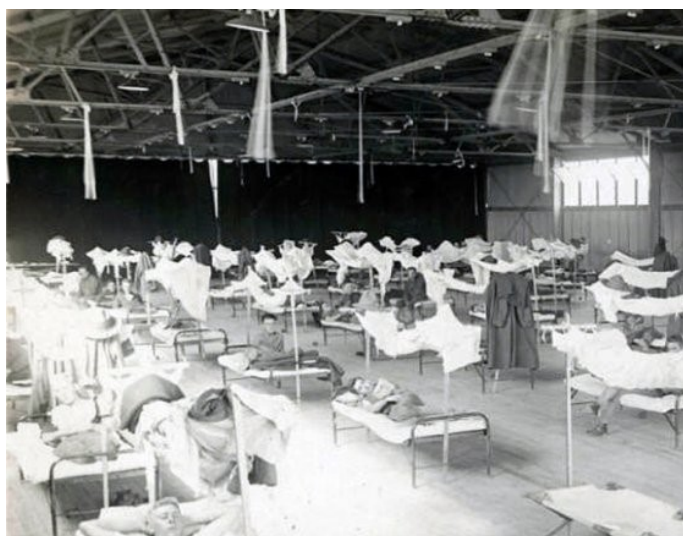
FROM THE EDITOR

Service In the Midst of a Pandemic: Fear Not.

We of Alcoholics Anonymous had to take a close look at our fears when we did our 4th Step. According to the Big Book, we should have “reviewed our fears thoroughly.” (B.B. p. 68) Early in my recovery a long-timer gave me another way to look at it. He said there was no difference between resentment, anger and fear most of the time. Each one was all about me: resentment – I did not get my way in the past; anger – I’m not getting my way in the present; and, fear – I might not get my way in the future. He was correct. Fear is all about what might happen. Even when we find ourselves in the midst of COVID-19, fear is still nothing more than thoughts of the future.

I have also heard many people claim that there are “good” fears and “bad” fears. In my view, that is misleading - almost as misleading as those (especially among mental health professionals) who claim that some “types” of selfishness are “good” things. The problem centers around choice of words. Am I afraid to put my hand in a burning fire? No! I know what will happen if I put my hand in a burning fire, regardless of my expectations. Some would say “that’s just common sense.” But someone once said to me, “Common sense ain’t so common!” **Caution, not fear!** Some of our religious fellows say, “Fear the Lord,” or “fear God.” Really? Am I afraid of God? The Hebrew word rendered “fear,” from the source of many who have that belief is **יָרָא** transliterated “yirah.” A better English rendering is probably “respect,” or “to hold in awe” but that’s a whole other conversation.

On October 11, 1918, the headline of *Variety* read, **“Epidemic Shows No Signs of Immediate Abatement.”** The picture below was taken in January 1920. It shows a field hospital on Long Island, NY.



The picture below was taken on March 31, 2020.



It shows a field hospital in the middle of Central Park, NY, standing at the ready. Perhaps as a nation we have learned not to regret the past nor shut the door on it. As members of AA we know a little about that. We also know if we ask God “to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be, [a]t once, we commence to outgrow fear.” (B.B. pg. 68)

Language matters, and if I speak the “language of the heart” (love) I will not act or fail to act out of some form of fear. Rather, I will serve to the fullest of my capabilities exercising caution and respect – not selfishness and self-centeredness. When I cancel a meeting or move it online or when I make a phone call instead of a person-to-person visit during a pandemic, whether it be H1N1, COVID-19, or whatever comes next, I am still serving. But I have respect for the seriousness of the disease, and I act – or not – out of caution. Being of maximum service is fluid. Sometimes the maximum level that I am able to serve is taking your phone call or leading your Zoom meeting. If you ask me to come over, well, maybe not right now! But rest assured, “We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit... May God bless you and keep you – until then.”

Love and Service,

James T.
Editor, Northeast Ohio Recorder

Submit your service-related contributions, comments and questions, or ideas and complaints to: newsletter@area54.org



OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

ALTERNATE DELEGATE'S REPORT

With life changing dramatically, I have really had to work to make sure I do something to keep sober each day. I have been fortunate to have some work to do. But last week, I had to resort to cleaning my house. I am a poor housekeeper as my ex-husband explained years ago. I have come to the conclusion that I am dealing with some depression and anxiety about our future. With this thought, I began my next thought with the Serenity Prayer. Before I started writing this report, I read online a story in the Grapevine and got the hope I needed.

We must keep supporting all our AA entities financially. Even with our reduced incomes, we are the only ones who support Area 54, our Districts, Intergroup Offices, and General Service Office. The federal government will not bail us out. **We are the only ones who will bail AA (all of its entities) out.**

I attended the Area 55 Mini Conference March 6 and 7 in Bowling Green, Ohio. The conference has a Friday Night Session and an All Day Saturday Session only. It was hosted in a very large church building and there was plenty of room to have committee meetings to discuss the agenda items. I enjoyed their mock conference very much. I am concerned that we here in Area 54 did not get that chance to share our opinions on these agenda items.

We as a panel decided that we could use Unity Day, Sunday, May 17 to create an opportunity to discuss 2020 agenda items. With the Virtual General Service Conference postponed, we can share our opinions with our delegate. I hope that we will be able to meet May 17th to review and discuss some of these agenda items. A summary of the agenda items will be in this Recorder's mailing. [If we are not able to meet in May, be sure your opinions, your sponsee's and/or your sponsor's opinions are shared with our delegate.] See you May 17th and be sure to bring your viewpoint.

The month of June is just around the corner. Founders Day 2020 has been cancelled. We should be able to have our Open House June Picnic June 28th. I thank you in advance to those who volunteered to host it. If you need anything from me just let me know.

I am disappointed that the International Conventional was also cancelled.

We need to have our July Assembly on July 19th. Please try to attend if you can. Come and let us know

what is happening in your districts, groups and your committees. Let us know how we can help.

The 2020 Ohio State Convention is scheduled for August 21 - 23. See the flyer included with this mailing. ALSO, there will be a **1pm State Planning Meeting July 19th** before the Assembly. Please be sure you are on a committee to make this the best state convention ever. We will need everyone to help with something. I have a feeling this even could help us all to get our batteries recharged.

I send to you my healing wishes. Like you I will be using phone meetings, and virtual meetings, and my Grapevine and calling a friend to help me stay sober. My phone is working, feel free to keep me entertained and call me.

**Susan R., Alternate Delegate
Area 54 - Panel 67**

AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Greetings

We would usually be updating everyone on the agenda items and the great time we had at the Mini-Conference, but for the safety of our members in Area 54 and orders from the governor our event was cancelled. I did have the opportunity to attend the Area 55 Northwest Ohio & Southeast Michigan Mini-Conference in Bowling Green. It used to be held in Perrysburg but the hotel it was held at has been sold so this year it was held at First United Methodist Church. It was held on Friday evening and all-day Saturday. The Friday session started with opening remarks By Jim S. Area 55 Delegate. There were Area highlights five minutes each for 2nd year delegates Stephen S. from Area 53 and our delegate Shyrl B. Area 54. Two-minute reports were given by Jim S. Area 55 and Nancy F. Area 56, followed by a GSO report given by Jeff W. who serves on the group services position. The Friday evening speaker was Mark E. our East Central Regional Trustee, followed by an ice cream social hosted by NOCYPAA. On Saturday Area 55 provided breakfast burritos, juice and coffee.

Jim S. opened the conference and we went into sessions at 9:30. I was on the Corrections/ International/Regional Forum Committee. We reviewed the Corrections Workbook and discussed ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and attract first time attendees. We also discussed the upcoming International Convention. We then had hotdogs and chili, salad and beverages for lunch. The afternoon voting session had quite a few issues involving literature such as changing the Preamble to Alcoholics Anonymous to "is a fellowship of People." The item failed to garner enough votes for passage. Also, a vote to publish a 5th edition of the Big Book passed with a huge

(Continued on page 4)

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT (Continued from page 3)

majority, but there will be no changes to the first 164 pages of the book. A majority of people are very adamant about that.

After a great afternoon we had a barbecue chicken dinner with baked beans, and macaroni and cheese. We had bread pudding for dessert. All the food was prepared by AA members from Area 55. After dinner Mark E. our East Central Regional Trustee provided us with his report and GSO staffer Jeff W. shared his message of recovery followed by closing remarks from Jim S. All in all, I thought it was a great success - shorter than what we are used to but well run and very informative. As the cost of hotels continues to rise this may also be an option for us in the future.

This virus has disrupted our way of life as we knew it, closing meetings and our fellowship at our homegroups. Some have made a new adjustment finding online meetings and using apps to keep their homegroup going. There are also members who may not be so tech savvy who we need to call and offer support during this time. And with groups not meeting financial contributions may not be making their way to Districts, Intergroups, Area and GSO. Maybe we should contact our treasurers and see if they can make a donation.

I pray everyone stays healthy and safe during this trying time.

Yours in service,

Tim H. - Area Chairperson
Area 54 - Panel 69

AREA RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT

Greetings to all.

I am in with all of you. We are in this journey together. Service is the key, and for that I am responsible.

Love and Service.

Very sincerely,

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

FROM THE CLEVELAND DISTRICT OFFICE...

The Cleveland District Office has received a number of calls asking us what our stance/suggestions are regarding meetings and the COVID-19 virus. In accordance with our 10th tradition "*Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy*".

Each group is autonomous and can decide what protocols they want at their meeting through a group conscience. The Group should announce what the group protocols are before the meeting starts so there is no confusion about hand holding at the end of the meeting.

Since there is no vaccine to prevent the COVID-19 virus, each member may want to think about the following suggestions:

Here are everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses in general, such as colds and the flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Don't share food, beverages or smoking devices with others
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick
 - Avoid shaking hands—try a fist bump instead
 - Stay home when sick
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve or cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue directly into the trash

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

The General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous for the U.S./Canada functions as a repository for A.A. members and groups who are looking for shared experience from the A.A. Fellowship. As the global situation related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to develop, G.S.O. is fully committed to its role as an important resource center to help navigate this unprecedented public health emergency.

It is important to note, G.S.O. is not an authoritative body over A.A. groups, nor does it initiate rules or directives, as each A.A. group and entity is autonomous and decisions are made through an individual group conscience. Providing guidance on health issues is outside the scope of the A.A. sharing that G.S.O. offers. For anyone experiencing health and safety questions, it is suggested they contact national, state/provincial and local health authorities for appropriate information.

However, in response to the global outbreak, the office does have some general experience regarding how some A.A. groups and members have begun addressing this issue. Many are following “social distancing” guidelines established by local, state/provincial and federal officials, while at the same time maintaining their focus on recovery and facilitating digital A.A. meetings.

By attending digital meetings, group members can focus on A.A.’s primary purpose: to carry its message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers. Many groups have alerted local A.A. offices or hotlines if they are temporarily not meeting in their regular physical space. Some groups have shared that they are utilizing digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, or conducting conference calls.

A.A. groups and members are also creating contact lists, keeping in touch by phone, email or social media. Many local A.A. central/intergroup offices and area service structures have added information to their websites about how to change a meeting format from “in-person” to a digital platform.

A.A. in the digital age has certainly taken on a new meaning in these challenging times, reminding its members and those searching for help that A.A. is not just a “place,” but exists in the hearts, minds and help offered.

A WORD FROM AKRON



Founders' Day 2020 Has Been Cancelled

Akron, Ohio – Birthplace of A.A.

Due to health concerns for our attendees and volunteers, the Founders' Day Committee has made the difficult decision to cancel this year's Founders' Day Celebration. Everyone who has pre-registered will be receiving a full refund. We will post more details as they become available.

...and now for a legal opinion:

We alcoholics are pretty crafty people. We will do whatever we can to GET OUR WAY. We will find or make-up excuses to not follow rules and regulations recommended by medical professionals. We've been doing it for years. We've heard, "Well, the Governor said 10 people is OK, and my group only has 8." Or, "Aren't we an essential service?"

Technically, a legal argument could be made that some facilities that hold AA meetings fit the definition of "Human Services Operations," which are exempt from Ohio's Stay-at-Home Order. Specifically, the Order provides "individuals may leave their residences to work for or obtain service from any Human Services Operation. Those Operations include both private, federal, state and VA funded "Operations," both profit and non-profit based. The Order also defines Human Services Operations as including "residential settings for ... substance abuse disorders..." So, for example, some have argued that going to a meeting at the VA Hospital or at a treatment center or even at a church (they are exempt too) is legally permitted.



Stop!!!! Wrong!!!! AA is independent and does not own or operate any such facility. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. We are NOT affiliated with such entities. Therefore, we are not an "operation" of such a facility or entity. The entities, who may themselves be renting and may be made up entirely of AA members, such as a club (you know who you are), simply provide space in their respective facilities to accommodate AA, and we ought to be paying rent or providing some other form of gratitude.

And, it isn't about ten people either. As a prominent church leader in our state has said, "even where two people gather and do not practice 'social distancing' they are potentially exposing each other, and therefore exposing a multitude of others." Remember, the virus can be spread by people who have no symptoms and don't even know they have it. The Coronavirus does not have a twelve-step program in its life cycle.

So, let's just "keep it simple": **STAY AT HOME!!!!**

James T., Attorney-at-law

UPCOMING DATES FOR AREA 54 AND BEYOND

NOTE THE DATE

April 19 - Area Assembly **CANCELLED**

May 17 - Unity Day Workshop **Lit**

June 12-14 - Founders' Day **CANCELLED**

June 28 - Area Open House Picnic
Horseshoe Lake Park, Shaker Hts.
Hosted by Cleveland North Coast Multi-District
(Subject to COVID-19 update)

July 19 - Area Assembly **Gv Lit**

July 19 - Area Assembly **Gv Lit**

August 22 - DCM College at State Convention

August 21-23 - 64th Ohio State Conv.
DoubleTree by Hilton-Independence

Gv = Grapevine sale days Lit = Literature sale days

OUTSIDE OUR AREA

April 19-25 - New York, NY **CANCELLED**
70th General Service Conference

May 2nd - Columbus, OH
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

July 2-5-Detroit, MI **CANCELLED**
International Convention A.A

November 7th - Columbus, OH
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

EXCEPT AS NOTED, Area 54 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



The 2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 2-5, 2020 in Detroit, Michigan with the theme "Love and Tolerance is our Code."

A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 85th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Ford Field Stadium. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the COBO Center in downtown Detroit.

Online registration is available on aa.org. Advanced registration for the convention until April 14, 2020 is \$115.00 (USD) per attendee. Registration after April 15, 2020 will be \$140.00 (USD) per attendee.

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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