

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

January, February, March 2005

<http://www.aaneoh.org>

Volume XVIII, Issue 1

## UPCOMING EVENTS

January 16 - Area Assembly *Gv Lit*

February 20 - Area Assembly *Gv Lit*

March 20 - Area Assembly

April 1-3 - 30th Mini-Conference  
Holiday Inn Lakeside *Gv Lit*  
1111 Lakeside Ave.  
Cleveland, Ohio

April 17 - Committees Workshop

May 15 - Area Assembly *Lit*

June 10 - 11 *Gv* - 12  
Founders' Day Weekend  
Akron University, Akron, OH

June 26 - Open House Picnic  
Location **TBA**

*Gv* Denotes Grapevine Sales Days

*Lit* Denotes Literature Sales Days

**Unless otherwise noted, Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at:**

**The 12 Step Recovery Club  
1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH  
(on US Route 42 about 1/4 mile south of State Route 303)  
330-273-7216**



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## from the Delegate:

Hello Northeast Ohio Area 54

I am truly grateful to you for allowing me the opportunity to serve Area 54 as your Delegate for the next two years. I will do my best to serve you. Together we and it is we, will remain strong and continue to serve and grow in the spirit of Alcoholics Anonymous General Service.

Most of you know my favorite saying is that Gratitude is an action not just a word. I appreciate all of the love and support that you have given me in the past as your Treasurer and Alternate Delegate.

The Area Committee for Panel 55 Jeff Your, Dan Fitzgerald, Rose Martin, Bill Johnson and Bob Denihan are all committed to serving the Area to the best of their ability. I would also like to say thank you to the 11 (eleven) Committee Chairs who came forward to serve among these are four of our Past Delegates. Please check with them for ways to help carry the message this is our Twelve step work at another level yet as basic as ever and we all need to help each other to serve the whole.

Our 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Mini-Conference will be held April 1 - 3 - 2005 at the Holiday Inn Select City Centre Lakeshore in

Cleveland.

The Theme is "Basics of Our Home Group" Recovery, Unity and Service

The Mini-Conference is a valuable tool for all of us and we need your experience, strength and hope. This also allows me your Trusted Servant to go to the General Service Conference with an informed Group Conscience. Planning meetings are Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> and Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> at the hotel. There are many opportunities to participate and it takes all of us to make this a success.

In addition to our 6 Area Assemblies we have the following scheduled a Committee Workshop, DCM and GSR Workshops there is also Area Open House and Gratitude Sunday. All of this as well as other events, meeting schedules, flyers and the Area Fact File can be found on the area website at [www.aaneoh.org](http://www.aaneoh.org). A big thank you to Dan for keeping this valuable tool updated.

I really want and need to thank the Panel 53 Delegate and Officers, Past Delegates as well as the Committee Chairs Also the DCMs, GSRs, Alternates and everyone for all the service they have been and continue to be Service and Sobriety are alive and well in Area 54.

Yours in Love and Service

Alice Heath

Delegate Panel 55

Area 54 Northeast Ohio

## Area Officer Reports

### REFLECTIONS ON PANEL 53

It's been two years since I was drafted from the floor of the elections assembly. Seems like such a long time ago. Thoughts over that period have ranged from "What have I gotten myself into?" to "Can anyone think of a better job in AA?" The position of mailing secretary has taught me a lot of patience, tolerance and humility – all good lessons according to my service sponsor. With gratitude, I want to acknowledge all the people who quietly guided me throughout. This has been a great committee to serve with – we meshed well as a team. I firmly believe that the next committee will build on these strengths. It's going to be an exciting time for service in Northeast Ohio.

I will be stuffing this column into my twelfth mailing sometime between Christmas and New Year's Day. During the last two years, many friends, panel members and pigeons have helped out on 'Envelop Nights' at my house. We enjoyed dinner and the fellowship in each others company while we handle approximately 8,000 pieces of paper [that's 8,000 opportunities to get a paper cut – YEAH!].

Looking forward to 2005, Committee 55 will be working hard to plan the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Area 54 Mini-Conference, held this year at the Cleveland Lakeshore Holiday Inn Select, April 1-3, 2005. The theme of the Mini-Conference and the 54th General Service Conference is "Basics of Our Homegroup – Recovery, Unity and Service". Look for the early-bird flyer in this mailing. Our state conference will focus on "Inside AA." Mark your calendars for August 12-14, 2005 in Columbus, Ohio. More information is available at [www.aaneoh.org](http://www.aaneoh.org).

Jeff Your  
Outgoing Mailing Secretary  
Incoming Alternate Delegate

### HI EVERYONE

My name is Dan Fitzgerald, And I an an alcoholic. My new *Hat* to wear in January 2005 is your Area 54 Chairperson (Now Panel 55). Words cannot express the Gratitude I have for the program and Fellowship of AA. I walked into my first General Service (District 7) Meeting at the 24 Hour Club, in Naples Florida in January 1992. I was accompanied by the two (2) gentlemen who 12 Stepped me in April of 1990. They told me to sit and listen and try to absorb what happens at a District meeting and all I can remember was those long timers hurling their egos back and forth across the room! I believe I was 'Bitten by The Bug' that day and I have been active in General Service since. I am now in my third Delegate Area (A four(4) year stint over in PA Area 60) with another Service Position that will help me grow in my knowledge of the Traditions as well as the Concepts. The end result of my participation with all of you over the next two (2) tears will be some more ego deflation as well as the witnessing of a loving God as He presides over all of us and our collective Group Conscience. Yours in Love and Service, **Dan Fitzgerald**, Area Chair

**For sale, best offer:**  
Brother Model BWP 7000J  
Word Processor System  
**also bid separately for:**

Office desk, laminate top, 4.5 ft. x 2 ft., 3 drawer with office chair, and carpet protector.

Both are at our archival repository in the Akron Intergroup Office, 775 N. Main Street. We just don't have room for the desk and have no current use for a word processor. Contact Bob McKimm at 216-691-1605 or [bobnotgod2@att.net](mailto:bobnotgod2@att.net).

I would like to thank Area 54 for allowing me to serve as the Grapevine Chairperson for the last two years. It has been a great experience for me. I have learned more about the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, our service structure, and myself. I would like to thank all of the people who helped me to be of service by helping with the setup and teardown of the Grapevine tables at the Assemblies, Founder's Day, and the State Convention. I would also like to thank the people who allowed me to provide presentations at District and Intergroup meetings.

As I pass the position on to the next chairperson, I will pass along my experience as well, and continue to be of service and continue to learn in the upcoming years as the Treasurer for Area 54.

In loving service,  
Bill Johnson, Treasurer  
Area 54 Panel 55

### Gratitude Sunday

The Cleveland Multi District would like to thank the many Groups for their involvement with **Gratitude Sunday 2004.**

**F.O.G., King Kennedy, Cleveland Teamsters, Free At Last, New Way Of Life, Springbrook, VA Saturday, Free From Pain, Calvary group, Buckeye Monday, Cory Hope Faith & Love, East Side Old Timers, Kinsman Saturday Morning, Windermere Sunday, East Cleveland Community, New Hope, Mustard Seed Monday, O.D.A.A.T., Solidarity, Solidarity #2, Stella Maris Sunday Morning and St Catherine**

Love and Service  
**Clarence Garner**, Chair

## Unconventional Convention

[Adapted from a presentation given at the 2004 General Service Conference]

Just think, in a little more than six months, we will meet once again to celebrate AA's 70th Birthday at our International Convention in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. June 30 - July 3, 2005 are the dates -- so mark your calendar! Plans are well under way to make this a joyous and memorable event.

Toronto, in the Huron language, means "meeting place," and what could be a more appropriate name for a location where AA members will gather to celebrate sobriety? And a "meeting place" it will be, with lots of meetings and more meetings, along with panels and workshops, plus marathons and, of course, those extraordinary Big Meetings in the SkyDome Stadium -- all packed into four joyous days. We will start the festivities on Thursday night with a "Party in the Park," right behind the South Building of the Metro Toronto Convention Center. The fun will overflow onto the plaza of the CN Tower, a Toronto landmark, and music will fill the summer night from the three or four dances we have planned. At midnight on Thursday, our marathon meetings get under way and run continuously until Sunday morning.

Friday night in the SkyDome will mark the Opening Ceremonies, which include the exciting Parade of Flags of those countries represented at the Convention, followed by the three-speaker Big AA Meeting. The wonderful Old-timers Stadium Meeting will take place on Saturday night, and the good news in 2005 is that this year we are giving the old-timers, whose names are selected from the hat, a little bit more time to share their experience, strength, and hope. And for the finale, on Sunday morning, we will have our customary three-speaker Big Meeting with the Closing Ceremonies.

Our International AA Conventions have often been focal points for important moments in AA history. At the first Convention, in Cleveland in 1950, our Twelve Traditions were confirmed, helping to ensure the future of our Fellowship. At the same time, the members assembled there had the sad privilege of hearing Dr. Bob speak before an AA audience for the last time. At the 1955 Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Bill W. declared that AA had "come of age," and the leadership of AA was turned over to the General Service Conference. And, as you may have already realized, Sunday, July 3, 2005, will mark the 50th anniversary of that milestone movement. In 1970, at the Miami Beach International, our ailing co-founder, Bill W., delivered his last, powerful message; six months later Bill died. Some statistical Convention highlights include seeing attendance catapult from 22,500 at the 1980 Convention in Denver, to 45,600 at our 50th Birthday celebration in 1985 in Montreal. The 1955 Convention in San Diego was spectacular, with our largest attendance ever of 54,000 paid attendees. At our last gathering, in

Minneapolis in 2000, the convention center sold 75,000 cups of coffee, half a ton of soft ice cream, and one ton of French fries. Caffeine, sugar, and grease -- someone, someday may research the diet of a sober alcoholic.

Beside the significant historical facts and numbers, we know that every member who attends an International Convention takes away their own cherished and memorable experiences. All of us who are able to go to Toronto will, I'm pretty sure, have these experiences. Many of us will travel to Toronto with old friends, sponsors, or home group members, having those on-the-road meetings that form such an important part of our Fellowship sharing. At the Convention, new, lifelong friendships will be made. Twelfth Step work will take place -- perhaps just seeing our joy and our numbers will plant a seed for someone's future sobriety. Those AA "coincidences" will occur -- a friend you loved and lost track of will show up sober. Someone on your Eighth Step list will appear and provide you with the opportunity to make amends; perhaps you'll be on their Eighth Step list, as well. We'll hear a speaker talk at a topic meeting or an oldtimer share at the Saturday night Big Meeting and something they say will open up a new and positive perspective we hadn't considered. In the wee hours of the morning, our life may be led down an entirely new or different path. International Conventions offer the occasion for rich and varied experiences, some dramatic and historical, others quiet and serene.

When planning these International Conventions, we try very hard to emphasize to hotels and convention centers in the cities chosen as Convention sites, the magnitude of our event, yet the message doesn't always get across. At one Convention, disaster struck when all the major facilities in the city ran out of coffee -- we drank them dry. But worse was yet to happen -- during another Convention in another city, they ran out of toilet paper.

From the beginning of these events, the AA spirit experienced at our International Conventions has been cause for comment from local non AAs. In 1950, a cab driver in Cleveland stated that we were the nicest convention they had ever had. Another cabbie commented, "If one of you fellows asked to be taken to a gin mill, we wouldn't do it . . . that's all!" In the interests of protecting one member's sobriety, a restaurant in Seattle refused to serve a glass of wine the AA member had ordered for his Al-Anon wife. A lady taxi driver in Seattle commented, "You people have something special. You make me feel good. I'm usually dragged out by these summer conventions, but this time I'm looking forward to each run. Even when one of you gets cranky, the others talk him out of it. I've never seen anything like it. I wish I could send my kids."

In Miami in 1970 -- where the registration fee, by the way, was \$6.00 -- a woman noted, "People, people everywhere, but not a drop to drink!" 1980 in Denver saw the fire department called out three times because the smoke level in

the convention hall was dangerously high (ah, for the days of ashtrays at meetings). Also, at that same Convention, rumors had spread that there was an AA nudists' workshop taking place and some serious inquiries were made as to where it was being held. The individual writing about this rumor suggested that, if true, a group should be formed and called "The Naked Truth Group." A woman who attended the International Convention in Montreal in 1985 innocently checked into a local motel; when she checked out in the morning, she discovered she had been charged for her room by the hour -- it was "one of those" places.

I recently heard from a couple of old-timers who called the G.S.O. asking for information about the 2005 Convention, and they each shared how they had met Bill W. in Toronto at the 1965 International Convention. One man, in fact, was a volunteer who was assigned as Bill's "hand guard." What's a "hand guard?", you ask? So many people wanted to shake Bill's hand that it got painfully sore, so this fellow's job was to keep folks from shaking our co founder's hand. He didn't explain how he accomplished that. Perhaps it should have been a job for an Al-Anon member.

And now we are coming up on to the 2005 International Convention. The theme for this, our 12th International AA Convention, is "I Am Responsible." It was at the 1965 celebration of AA's 30th Anniversary, whose theme was "Responsibility," that over 10,000 attendees for the first time declared in unison, "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible." This theme gives all members of our "we" Fellowship the opportunity to reflect on our individual responsibilities to the still-suffering alcoholic, to the newcomer, to each other, and to AA as a whole.

One day at a time, we are working toward an international celebration of AA's 70th Birthday, which we know will be a powerful example of sharing, gratitude, and joy and will encompass the language of the heart. In going over those wonderful articles in the AA Grapevine about past International Conventions, I came across a letter to the editor from a member who had attended the 1955 Convention in St. Louis and evidently had been asked to report on his experiences there. In his letter, he described hearing all those wonderful people who were part of our early history: Bill, of course, the Rev. Sam Shoemaker, Father Ed Dowling, Dr. Harry Tiebout, and Dr. Jack Norris, among them. He was very moved by the Convention experience; in fact, he signed his letter "Altered Ego." He added a P.S. to the letter and then added a P.P.S. This is "Altered Ego's" P.P.S.: "And please insert under 'highlights' your reporter's own big moment when he heard Dr. Bob's son repeat in a quiet remembrance, his father's unforgettable admonition to AAs wherever they may be . . . and whenever: 'Keep it simple, remember it started around a kitchen table.'"

For all the special surroundings of our 2005 International get-together -- a world-class city, a splendid convention center, and the spectacular SkyDome Stadium, let's keep Dr. Bob's image in our minds -- that it started at a kitchen table with one alcoholic sharing with another.

## RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our AA experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, as He may speak in our group conscience, is our sole Authority. World Service is the heart of our Third Legacy. Our meetings are informative and educational. They are held so that the Committee Members, GSR's and all interested members may be better equipped to carry the message of World Service back to their home groups and individual members, thus giving a better understanding to our purpose, our hopes and our work.

### Your Trusted Servants Committee 55

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