

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

April, May & June 2007

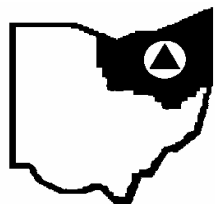
<http://www.aaneoh.org>

Volume XX, Issue 2

## UPCOMING EVENTS

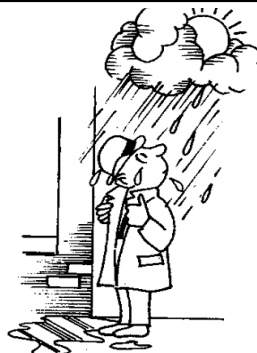
May 20	2:00 PM
Area Assembly	
June 8-10	
Founders Day	
Akron University	Akron, Ohio
June 24	10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Open House Picnic—host District 7	
Waddell Park	Niles, Ohio
July 15	2:00 PM
DCM Workshop	
August 19	2:00 PM
GSR Workshop	
September 16	2:00 PM
Area Assembly	
October 21	2:00 PM
Area Assembly	
November 18	2:00 PM
Gratitude Sunday	

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



### Inside this Issue:

Delegate's Report .....	1
Area Officer's Reports .....	2
Delegate's Conference Report.....	3
Mock Conference Proceedings....	4
Mini-Conference Theme.....	5
Anatomy of a General Service Conference Agenda Item.....	6
Jay's Excellent Adventure.....	7
Area Officers & Committee Chair Contact Information .....	8



## From the Delegate:

By the time you read this, I will be on my way to the General Service Conference in New York for the first time. We have finished the mini-conference where a lot of information was exchanged. I know I learned a lot. I learned a lot of patience, tolerance and humility – of which we can never have enough.

During the month of March, the alternate delegate and I traveled to each corner of the state to attend mini-conferences hosted by Areas 53, 55 and 56. Each area puts a little different spin on the agenda items and consequently, I have a greater understanding and appreciation of the issues we will be discussing at the General Service Conference.

In February, Area 54 hosted the East Central Region's Conference of Delegates, Past and Present. This is about a once every 20 years chance to hold that conference here, as it rotates around the five states in our region.

In March, our area treasurer stepped down from her position. What were we to do? The grace of God was still with the Panel, though, and we put our heads together and made a decision with the help of the past delegates. The March assembly ratified our interim appointment as permanent. Ola P., who served ably as our mailing secretary since December, has been 'demoted' to area treasurer. With her 20 years of experience as a statistical analyst at LTV and Republic Steel, she is certainly

qualified. Thank you, Ola, for being willing to step to the plate at this difficult time. I feel that the area funds are in capable and secure hands.

In May, I will be giving a full Conference Report on the General Service Conference. I'll let the area know how various agenda items were decided and share other spiritual aspects of this momentous occasion in my life. In addition, at this same assembly, we will hold a special Third Legacy election, to fill the position of mailing secretary for the area. Please come out and exercise your group's conscience for the good of AA. Normal attendance requirements will still apply for candidates to stand. The prospective panel member should be willing and able to travel a little on behalf of the area, have dependable transportation, and have the room at home to assemble a 1,500 piece mailing.

Should your group or district wish to host the delegate for a meeting or workshop to talk about the Conference experience, I will be available from May 1<sup>st</sup> onward until the final reports arrive.

I'm looking forward to our area Open House which, this year, will be held at Waddell Park in Niles on June 24<sup>th</sup>. There is a flyer in this mailing, which shows the details and how to get there. Please join us for a fun day for the whole family. The speaker will be our own Alternate Delegate, Danny F.

Check this mailing also for a registration form for the Ohio State Convention -- July 20-22, 2007 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In Love and Service,

Jeff Y., Panel 57 Delegate  
Area 54 – Northeast Ohio

## Area Officers

### From the Recording Secretary

Hello to all in Area 54:

I am truly learning more and more about AA and myself as I begin my journey as Recording Secretary. I have attended the Conference of Delegates & Past Delegates hosted by Area 54 in February and met new friends and old acquaintances. I attended the "A Day with Bill W" in Akron and learned so much about the history of the Big Book. I attended the Area 56 Mini Conference in Sidney, Ohio with my fellow panel members. The love for AA and participating in service was overwhelming. There is no end to the things I can learn in service about AA its history; its members; how others do things in their groups/districts. As long as I keep an open mind and open heart I will continue to learn and grow. For me being involved in service has brought me to another level of recovery which enhances my serenity and peace of mind. I can only thank my higher power and all of AA for this opportunity to help another person and give to others what is so freely being given to me.

Yours in Service Always,  
Jamie B.

### From the Treasurer

May the grace, mercy and peace of God continue to be upon each of you.

I would like to share with you briefly, a few of the wonderful spiritual experiences that have occurred in my life recently.

On March 17, along with other Area 54 officers, I attended the Akron Multi-District's presentation "A Day with Bill W. A most awesome presentation

that included home movies of our co-founders, Bob and Bill together, laughing and talking; Bill and his wife Lois at their home "Stepping Stones", with Bill telling his story. "WOW". Seeing these film filled my eyes with tears while at the same time filling my heart with an amazing new sense of gratitude for what has been passed on to me. The history of our fellowship shared there was indeed priceless. My many, many thanks to the Akron Multi-District, for this most unforgettable spiritual experience.

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, at our Area Assembly, I actually felt the face of God smile upon me, as the assembly unanimously approved me as the new Treasurer. What I felt that day in that most brief moment of time, can only be described as a truly spiritually humbling experience. Something I have not had the privilege to feel before. Thank you for showing your faith and trust in a process which I believe to be under the direction and guidance of Him who presides over us all.

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Area 56 Mini-Conference along with other Area 54 officers. Once again something amazing happened to me. People, most of whom I had never met, began to congratulate me, to thank me, and to give me warm words of encouragement on becoming the new treasurer of Area 54. Although not so profound as at the Assembly, I did once again feel the face of God smiling down on me. I have in the past attended two of our Area 54 Mini-Conferences, and clearly remember that feeling of inclusiveness in the whole of our fellowship becoming ever so prevalent. I have to tell you that,

that feeling took another giant growth spurt at the Area 56 Mini-Conference. Being there meeting people from other areas, watching and learning more about the things that help to keep our society in unity was a most rewarding and truly spiritual experience.

While pondering these recent and somewhat strange occurrences, I realize that God began to smile down on me when He introduced into my life a very strange woman. Her name is Elvira A., and she began to say and to do some very strange things. I remember the first very strange thing she said was that "I never had to drink again," and "to hold my head up." The first strange thing that she did was to show me love and tolerance and to give me her undivided attention. Now if that wasn't strange enough for me, she began to refer to me as her "baby", took me by my hand and proceeded to teach me how to stay sober, how to love myself and how to live one day at a time. I am happy to say that although Elvira A. continues in this strange behavior, she is no longer a stranger. She is, has been, and always will be my sponsor and friend, and one of those most responsible for my amazing and joyful journey in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am eternally grateful.

In Love & Service  
Ola P., Treasurer



## Area Officers

### From the Alternate Delegate

Hi everyone,

I attended the Area 53 Mini-Conference with our Delegate Jeff Y. at the Salt Fork State Park Lodge and Conference center on March 9-11, 2007. We arrived and it was 64 degrees!! The Conference opened up on Friday evening with East Central Region Trustee Bob M. and General Service Office Staff member Warren S. reporting on the state of Alcoholics Anonymous. Saturday was our big day with each attendee given a committee assignments for discussion on agenda from the General Service Conference. Jeff attended the Trustees committee because this is his Conference assignment. I participated on the Literature Committee. I was very impressed that my Literature Committee was composed of twelve female GSRs and DCMs, with only three males participating in the discussion. My experience is normally the opposite ratio. Saturday evening Warren S., of the GSO, shared his experience and journey to AA, and what he is doing today. Sunday was a mock conference to vote on recommendations that arose from the Saturday committee discussion. I participated by tallying the vote. I learn a great deal about AA at these Conferences and must conclude that God really presides over us all at these affairs!

On the weekend of March 23-25, 2007, Jeff and I attended the Area 56 SW Ohio Mini-Conference in Sidney, Ohio. Our ECR Trustee Bob M. was again present and shared his story on Friday night. General Service Office Staff member Rick W., who sits on the Group Services desk, attended and shared his story Saturday evening following the banquet.

Words cannot express the gratitude I have for our Area service workers and to AA itself. My whole outlook on life has changed since I have entered into service work. Shortly after I arrived at A.A. meetings in Florida in 1990, my sponsor told me that AA could be "beyond my wildest dreams." I wish he were here today for me to acknowledge his words. Because of all of you and a loving God I can live inside of my skin today and can only give give back.

In Love and Service,  
Dan F., Alternate Delegate

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**All first year delegates to the General Service Conference are given the opportunity to share a two-minute presentation on the highlights of their Area General Service. The following will be presented by Area 54 NE Ohio Panel 57 Delegate Jeff Your.**

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My name is Jeff Y. and I serve as the Panel 57 Delegate from Area 54 Northeast Ohio, the "cradle of AA." From the banks of the Ohio River to the shores of Lake Erie, Area 54 embraces 20,000 members in 1,500 groups comprising 64 districts. Eight intergroup offices serve the Area.

Northeast Ohio General Service has a website, with a GSR fact file, schedule of events, district maps and contact information for officers and committee chairs. Each of our six Area officers serves as a liaison to two or more of our eleven standing committees. Six Area Assemblies and three workshops per year keep our GSRs and DCMs informed and involved. Two other events – a summer Open House

Picnic and an autumn Gratitude dinner – are hosted by our districts and help attract members to service.

Inactive districts remain a challenge to full participation. However, groups still receive the same level of service from the area and from our GSO whether or not they shoulder the shared responsibility of our Seventh Tradition.

We held our 32nd Annual Mini-Conference in March modeled after the General Service Conference. AA members see the committee process at work using some of this year's Agenda items. An informed Area conscience prepares the delegate for the Conference. An invited staffer from GSO and our Regional Trustee provide insightful reports to those gathered. Each delegate from Ohio attends all four area mini-conferences statewide. We feel this enhances cooperation and Unity. It affords all of us a broader perspective on the issues.

Our area hosted the East-Central Regional Conference of Delegates, Past and Present in February. We will also host the 2008 East-Central Regional Convention in our area in conjunction with the 52nd Ohio State Convention. I am honored to serve, and humbled by the trust of my area. Together, we're learning to be good stewards of our Three Legacies.

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**Make your reservations with Jeff to have him visit your group, district, or Intergroup to present up-to-date information about the proceedings of the 57th General Service Conference. Contact Jeff by mail, e-mail or phone to reserve your time and date.**

## 32nd NE Ohio Mini-Conference Committee Recommendations & Voting Results

### Archives Committee

A. Reviewed the Workbook and suggested it should be edited for grammar.

B. Reviewed the Final Report of Subcommittee on Archives Recordings and the "Sound and Video access Policies."

### CPC Committee

A. Reviewed the "Progress Report on Video Segments Directed to Professionals" and **recommended** that the word clergy be included preceding "employment/human relations." The recommendation was unanimously adopted by the body.

C. Discussed ways of stimulating interest in C.P.C. service.

### Corrections Committee

A. Recommended the draft "Informational Media Presentation Introducing A.A. to Training Academies and In-service Training for Corrections Personnel" be approved. The recommendation was approved unanimously by the body.

B. Reviewed contents of Kit and Workbook.

C. After discussing ways to stimulate interest in corrections the committee suggested that GSRs ask their home groups to "adopt" a correctional facility for a period of time.

### Finance Committee

A. Recommended an increase the maximum annual contribution to the General Service Board from an A.A. member from \$2,000 to \$3,000. The recommendation was approved unanimously by the body.

B. Recommended adding text regarding reimbursement for GSR travel expenses from group funds to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix." The recommendation was adopted with 3 opposed.

C. Discussed a request to "Develop a communication plan for the purpose of increasing the level of group participation and self-support within the Conference structure" and made no recommendation.

### Grapevine Committee

A. Recommended a new old-timers item for 2008 or later.

B. Considered requests to reinstate a section on the subject of alcoholism in the A.A. Grapevine and took no action.

C. Reviewed the contents of Workbook.

### Literature Committee

B. Recommended to add text from The A.A. Service Manual, "Financial Support: Current experience indicates that many groups provide financial support for their general service representatives to attend service functions" to "The A.A. Group" and "GSR" pamphlets. The recommendation was approved unanimously by the body.

C. Discussed requests to develop an intergroup/central office pamphlet and took no action.

E. Recommended to revise the pamphlet, "The A.A. Member - Medications and Other Drugs." The recommendation was adopted with 3 opposed. After the minority expressed the need to see the revisions before approving, a motion to reconsider was made and passed. After further discussion the recommendation was adopted with 3 opposed.

G. Considered production a pamphlet to replace the "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic" and took no action.

### Public Information Committee

C. Considered the proposed television PSA "A Force of Nature" and took no action. Because the PSA was not approved, there was no action necessary on financing production or distribution.

D. Recommended the development of a video targeting young people. An amendment to describe the targeted age bracket was made and withdrawn. The recommendation was approved unanimously by the body.

H. Reviewed contents of Kit and Workbook

### Report and Charter Committee

A. Reviewed a suggested list of duties of a DCMC in the *AA Service Manual* and made no recommendation.

B. 1) Considered a request to have AAWS discontinue publishing the regional Canada, Western & Eastern US directories and took no action. Strong opposition to discontinue publishing the directories was expressed by the committee.

B. 2) Recommended a subsection "International Correspondence Meetings" for listing Online Intergroups that desire to be listed, and that interested Online Intergroups provide e-mail contact and/or Web site address to be included in the Canada, Western & Eastern US regional directories. The recommendation was approved unanimously by the body.

### Treatment Facilities Committee

A. After reviewing local sharing of the video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous*, suggested finding ways to get more exposure of the video at home groups.

B. Reviewed contents of the Kit and Workbook.

C. Discussed stimulating interest in treatment facility 12<sup>th</sup> Step work and suggested groups use this as discussion topics and use sponsors to encourage participation.

### Trustees Committee

E. Reviewed report regarding a Class B (alcoholic) trustee serving as chairperson of the GSB and took no action.

G. Recommended that the existing sentence pertaining to regional trustees in the Bylaws of the General Service Board, Inc. in the *A.A. Service Manual* S110 be amended to read: "Class B regional trustees are expected to contribute their time basically during the four periods of the year, viz., each three-day period ending on the day of each quarterly meeting of the trustees of the General Service Board, and, in addition, to provide the Board their views and opinions regarding policy matters based on Fellowship-wide experience." The recommendation was unanimously adopted by the body.

### Floor Actions

1. A motion to develop an intergroup/central office pamphlet died for lack of a second.

2. A motion to reconsider the option of a Class B Trustee serving as Chair of the GSB was not discussed because a motion to "not consider the motion" passed.

## **32nd NE Ohio Mini-Conference Theme**

### ***The Spiritual Value of Our A.A. Dollars***

#### **1. What practical and spiritual benefits come from contributing in the hat?**

Many involved in the discussion recognize the practical benefits of contributing to the group in keeping the doors open for the newcomer and passing on what has been given to us. At the group level, this includes ensuring that a meeting takes place, providing literature, and modest refreshments. When it comes to contributing, many members shared the fact that some have more to give than others do, and some members lack the means to contribute financially altogether. The amount of a contribution is not as important as the act of giving, and there are non-financial ways to give through service to the group. Most members agree that it is our duty as individuals, and as a group, to fulfill the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition of self-support.

The spiritual benefits include a sense of belonging, and a renewal that individually we are giving back freely as the message has been shared with us. As one group summarized, it is more rewarding to give than receive. *Pass it on.*

#### **2. Am I hesitant to ask other A.A. members to contribute, or to dig a little deeper, if they can?**

There were mixed responses on this question. Some felt that asking members to dig deeper might result in embarrassment for those that could not afford to do so. Others stated that they just ask without regard to a person's ability to contribute financially. However, they also stated that they understand there are some who simply cannot afford to contribute money.

A more significant theme emerged that it is important for group Treasurers, DCMs and GSRs to enlighten members on how contributions are used to carry the message of recovery. Some felt that not reporting group finances created hesitance in contributing because of misunderstandings of how the A.A. dollar is used to carry the message. Most felt there were many opportunities to report on finances, including group conscience meetings, district meetings and Area Assemblies. There were suggestions that sponsorship plays a key role in teaching new members the importance of the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition.

There was also a significant belief from members that an increase in the "normal" amount contributed when the group passes the hat (or basket) is necessary. The "normal" amount of one dollar began in the 1960s and remains the "normal" amount today, despite significant increases in the costs of rent, refreshments, and to a lesser degree, an increase in literature prices. Members felt that we must lead by example in encouraging giving more than one dollar by doing it ourselves. Overall, this will encourage responsibility of sharing the burden at the group, district, Area and worldwide levels.

#### **3. How does my group ensure that A.A. dollars are spent wisely in the spirit of carrying the message at:**

##### **The Group:**

From the discussion, it appears that the group is the primary level for insuring that contributions are spent wisely. Many expressed the opinion that contributions should not be used to fund anniversary dinners or parties, that these should be financed separately.

A primary way to insure that the money is being spent wisely is to include Treasurer's reports at group conscience meetings. While the Treasurer makes normal payments of rent, literature and refreshments, any other decision should be done as a group

conscience. This includes making the decision to support all A.A. entities, including the district, Area, central office or intergroup, and the General Service Office.

Education of members at the group level is usually where finances fail. It is suggested that members read the available literature on group finances, discuss finances at a group conscience, and have the group set a prudent reserve. All amounts beyond the prudent reserve should be passed along to the other entities to help carry the message on a wider basis. Having a GSR is important in the education process. Additional ways to encourage contributing beyond the group include the GSO birthday plan.

##### **The District:**

While some felt there was not much to manage at the district level, most members feel it is important to send GSR to the district meeting. By encouraging attendance, we gain accountability. As with the AA group, financial reports at the district level are important, as is a means to decide how district money is used to carry the message.

##### **The Central Office / Intergroup:**

Most members recognize the need for central office and intergroup offices as clearing houses for twelve step calls and housing literature inventories locally. This means it is important to support the office to have telephones answered when the still suffering alcoholic asks for help. But not all excess group money should be sent to the central office.

The best way to ensure that the central office or intergroup is spending contributions wisely is by sending representatives to intergroup meetings and getting involved in committees. Additionally, requesting that the intergroup produce financial reports and publish them on occasion.

##### **The Area:**

The best way to ensure that the Area is spending contributions wisely is by sending representatives to Area Assemblies meetings and getting involved in committees that use the money to carry the message to the still suffering. All local members should review the Area's published financial reports and asking questions when unsure. Some members recognize that the contribution reports by district are a valuable tool in identifying unrepresented districts.

##### **The General Service Office:**

Most members recognize the huge job conducted by GSO on a national and international basis. The annual financial reports included in the Final Report of the General Service Conference are important tools in recognizing and educating members on needs far beyond the group level. By reading the report and asking questions of our Delegate, we are holding GSO accountable. Another important tool is the regional forums that are held biannually. At the regional forum, we have the opportunity to meet staff members and Trustees so that we can see first hand whom our front-line workers are.

##### **The A.A. Grapevine:**

Many members expressed the fact that the Grapevine is an underutilized tool. Ways of increasing awareness include having a group subscription, possibly a sharing library, and stress the value of a Grapevine subscription during the announcement phase of a meeting.

## Anatomy of a General Service Conference Agenda Item

Often AA members ask where General Service Conference agenda items come from. Some agenda items arise from normal day-to-day business operations of AA when a need is recognized by the trustees or staff members. Other agenda items arise from the fact that our literature becomes out-of-date and periodically needs to be reviewed to determine if it is still meeting the goal of carrying the message to the alcoholic, or in some cases, non-alcoholic. This is why we produced the fourth edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in 2001. Since that time, many of AAs pamphlets that include stories from members, such as *Young People and AA* and *AA and the Armed Services*, have been updated.

On occasion, conference agenda items come directly from the fellowship. They start as a thought or idea that a member has, or recognition of a need. When this occurs, it is wise for the member to share their ideas with their service sponsor, or fellow service worker. By getting input from others, we can weigh the merit of our ideas. While it is possible to submit these ideas directly to the Conference, it is usually advised to use the Conference structure to submit ideas. This is because the respective Trustees committee will generally look for a more widely expressed need over an individual need, in line with our first Tradition. It is suggested that the AA member gain wider support, such as at the district or Area level.

Ideas that members discuss and ratify at the district are passed along to the Area Assembly for consideration. At the Area Assembly, there is discussion, possibly investigation, and finally a vote. If the Area Assembly ratifies the idea, it is forwarded to the Conference coordinator by the delegate. This must be done by fall to allow the respective Trustees Committee adequate time to review and research these recommendations.

After the delegate submits the idea, now called an Area recommendation, GSO usually responds with "shared experience" that may include service literature or exiting literature that may have been overlooked.

The respective Trustees committee may determine that there is a need for more input from the fellowship, or send the recommendation to the General Service Conference. By this time, a period of time has transpired, sometimes several years. Because the Conference is only one week long, it is not possible to discuss every members ideas.

At this years Conference there is an agenda item that grew out of a suggestion by a member residing in District 52. After discussing the idea at the district level, District 52 forwarded the idea as a motion that was placed on the new business agenda of the Area Assembly. The motion called for increasing the annual limit that any AA member is permitted to donate to the General Service Office. This is the same limit placed on one-time death bequeaths.

After discussion and a vote at the Area Assembly, the recommendation was forwarded to the Conference

coordinator by the Area 54 Delegate. The recommendation was discussed by the Trustee Finance Committee and was put on the agenda for the 2007 General Service Conference.

In recent history there have been other items placed on the Conference agenda generated by members in Area 54. At the 2004 General Service Conference, an Area 54 recommendation to create a pamphlet on service sponsorship resulted in modification of the pamphlet *Questions and Answers on Sponsorship*. The section on Service Sponsorship was lengthened to include some service material and additional material provided by Area 54. In the late 1990s, the Conference Archive Committee adopted an *Archive Workbook* submitted by an Area 54 Past Delegate.

The input of members ideas are important to insure that we remain in touch with the needs of our community and continue to carry the message.

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### WHY DO WE NEED A CONFERENCE?

The late Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic, then chairman of the North American board of Trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting in New York:

*We may not need a General Service Conference to insure our own recovery. We do need it to insure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to insure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in AA that rebirth which brought us back to life.*

*We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must insure can never invade AA. We need it to insure AA against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect AA against disintegration while preventing over integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.*

*We need it to insure that changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and the wants of AA, and not of any few. We need it to insure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.*

**Pass It On**

## Jay's Excellent Adventure—by Jay M., Archivist

It is amazing how significant events in our lives can turn on a seemingly innocuous event. In 2001, because I was a member of the Society of American Archivists, I received a newsletter from the Rockefeller Archive Center. Reading it, and knowing that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. had helped us in our early days, a question wandered into the wasteland of my mind, "I wonder if they have anything on AA?"

Well...a couple of emails later a box arrived with copies of four folders on AA and the Rockefellers...hundreds of documents. Reading through them I became increasingly amazed because there was history here that no one had ever seen!

Then the second of the chain of innocuous events happened. Gail L., the Akron Intergroup Archivist said, "Why don't you write a book about it?" So I did. Six years, four drafts, and 350,000 words later it was almost done but some final research was needed. I applied to the Trustees Archives Committee for permission to do research at the General Service Office archives, and with help from some past Delegates did receive that permission.

So the week of March 12 I set out for the State of New York with great anticipation. Monday morning started in an inauspicious manner when the alarm didn't go off, but I was like a kid on Christmas morning and had been awake for awhile. I set off for the Rockefeller Archive Center and the Rockefeller archivist (one of 17), Amy Fitch, greeted me at the door.

There were folders on the original contribution, the Rockefeller dinner, full folders on some of the associates of Rockefeller's who were so instrumental in our survival in the early days, and many of whom served us as Trustees. Willard Richardson and Albert Scott, in particular had full folders of information, and I was delighted to see all the information on Albert Scott for we know very little about him. He was the one at the initial meeting at the Rockefeller offices who, after hearing our stories, exclaimed: "Why, this is First Century Christianity! What can we do to help?"

Frank Amos went to Akron to "investigate" us and wrote a glowing report (you can find it in *Dr. Bob and The Good Oldtimers*) and I held the original document in my hands. I cannot tell you of the emotional response I had...maybe few would understand but I was holding the same piece of paper that played a large part in convincing Mr. Rockefeller to help and, not in a small way, helped us to survive.

Tuesday morning I got up early and headed to the train station in Tarrytown for the ride into Manhattan. \$7 parking meter...\$19.50 round trip train ticket...\$22 cab...2 eggs, bacon and coffee at a small café on Madison Ave \$14.50...GSO Office? Priceless. I arrived at 475 Riverside Drive and made my way up to the 11th floor. As you get off the elevator you are staring at a gold circle and triangle on the wall. The Serenity Prayer in multiple languages is also on one wall and I went to the desk and asked for Amy, our archivist at GSO. She came back and took me into the archives and gave me a tour of many of the historic items on display.

Then I went to the reading room and started a two day, 16 hour marathon of writing as fast as I could. The archives has a policy of not copying documents for a number of reasons, and any information or quotes I wanted I had to write down. I was overwhelmed with the information, it was sensory overload. The problem was that a particular folder might have a few documents salient to my research, but every piece of paper was fascinating, and I had to struggle to not read everything. I could have spent two months there!

There was simply wonderful stuff. I was researching mainly the period from 1937 - 1948 and everything was amazing, detailing the formation of our Fellowship and principles. I held the original

Alcoholic Foundation trust agreement (the precursor to the General Service Board) in my hands with Dr. Bob's signature. Those hands of mine were shaking. I saw many original letters written by Bill and Bob (Dr. Bob's handwriting is almost indecipherable.)

A small example of some of the precious documents I saw...Many documents detailing the struggles these men had for their very survival, not just the survival of AA. It is interesting to note that most feel or think that Bill met Bob...they got Bill D. sober...wrote the book and everything was peachy as the AA movement expanded across the country and the world. The true facts are much different. These men went through incredibly hard times yet kept the faith. Yet they never gave up, they never put personal financial survival ahead of helping drunks, and the wives are owed a debt of gratitude from us all.

I saw many documents of the struggles and fights as our structure formed. I saw evidence of fund raising efforts that almost invariably proved unsuccessful. I saw much evidence of the role our non-alcoholic friends had in our survival. I saw a letter Bill wrote in 1940 expressing amazement that they had learned that groups were sprouting up started by people who had gotten sober only using the Big Book. I saw the idea of a General Service Conference form, the idea of the Twelve Concepts form. I could go on and on, but you get the idea.

On Wednesday I took a tour of the office and had a wonderful time. I was treated by all of the staff as if the only reason they were there was to serve me. And that is the general attitude at GSO. Everyone I saw stopped whatever they were doing to explain their role at the office and answer whatever questions I had. I came away with the conviction that every single person in that office, from the custodian who I met in the hall to Greg M., the General Manager, cares deeply about Alcoholics Anonymous and truly considers their job as service, not employment. Rick W. showed me the new group database and it is a great improvement over the old one. Bob M. will be very happy.

At 4:30 on Wednesday I finished the last folder and sat back with a great sigh of relief. I made it!

Thursday morning I made the short drive north to the home of Bill and Lois, Stepping Stones. A member from Colorado was there and Sarah, the foundation assistant, gave us a wonderful tour of the home. I had the opportunity to sit in Bill's chair at 'Wits End,' the studio where Bill did his writing. Again, I had an emotional response as I was sitting at the desk where words were written that helped to save my life.

What a trip, what an excellent adventure! Long after my book is done and fades into memory and gathers dust on some obscure bookshelf, long after the details of the research fade from my mind, the memory of seeing AA in one of its two founding home cities, of being where those who founded our great Fellowship stood will remain bright.

We all start with the divorced, empty look of a person who might have lived one way all their lives only to awake one morning and discover that none of our experience counted, that we were cut loose and voiceless in a place where no other people lived. But when we came to AA we found that indeed, others do live in this place. And do have a voice, and do live a happy sober life.

The trip needed no songwriter or poet to make it real. It was a sonnet by itself, a softly muted, jaded, heartbreakingly beautiful piece of our history that was now forever in my soul and that I knew I would never be without.

## 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.

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**ATTEND THE SPECIAL ELECTION TO FILL  
THIS POSITION AT THE MAY ASSEMBLY!**

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