

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

July, August & September 2007

<http://www.aaneoh.org>

Volume XX, Issue 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 15 2:00 PM
DCM Workshop

July 20 – 22
Ohio State Convention
Cincinnati, OH Hosted by Area 56

August 19 2:00 PM
GSR Workshop

September 16 2:00 PM
Area Assembly

October 12-14 East Central Regional Convention
Manitowoc, WI

October 21 2:00 PM
Area Assembly

November 9-11 East Central Regional Forum — Chicago, IL

November 18 2:00 PM
Gratitude Sunday Location TBA
Hosted by Districts 7, 8, 48

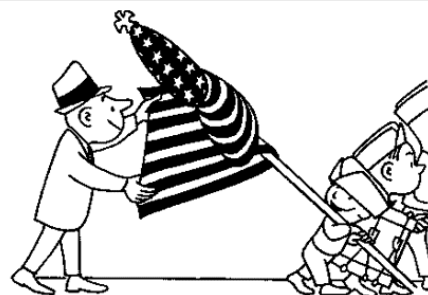
Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at the 12 Step Recovery Club 1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH (on US Route 42 about 1/4 mile south of State Route 303) (330) 273-7216



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Report on the 57th General Service Conference April 22nd – 28th 2007



Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.¹

These words from Bill W. are just as timely today as they were in 1951. Throughout the Conference week, presentations and sharing sessions re-examined the Twelfth Step call with such topics as inclusiveness, our primary purpose, working with wet drunks, and whether we are resting on our laurels.

The General Service Conference (GSC) operates year round with the annual weeklong meeting taking place in April. This meeting is the culmination of a year's worth of work by the GSO and AAGV Staff members who assist the work of the Trustees, AAWS and AAGV Directors and Appointed Committee Members. They meet several times a year in eleven different committees.²

"What I saw and heard and felt"

My Conference experience was extraordinary in many ways – I felt that we made history this year as a Conference. The About Alcoholism section will be placed back in the A.A. *Grapevine* magazine. We approved the revised 3rd edition, We decided that a Class B really ought to be capable of serving as Chairman of the GSB. My committee set precedent and protocol for the future handling of Appeals to the Conference under Concept V. In some ways it was very ordinary. The food was normal hotel food (don't let anyone convince you otherwise; we ate rubber chicken one night). The seemingly endless committee reports and, at times, silly debate reminded me of a **week-long** assembly populated by people who REALLY LOVE attending assemblies. At one point, we were voting on a motion within a motion within a motion.

On Sunday morning, activity began with a two hour Remote Communities Workshop. Although this meeting is not directly associated with the conference, it is important to consider the unique problems of communities outside the normal limits of easy travel and communication.

Monday and Tuesday mornings, all committees swing into action. My assignment on the Trustees Committee had a very full plate before our mini-conference. There would be another item added by the Chairman of the Board in mid-April that **would rock the Conference to its very foundation**. More on that later. ... We could tell early on that we would not have enough time to finish everything on our agenda at this rate, so we met late Monday night and worked

(continued on Page 2)

1. *The A.A. Service Manual, 2006-2007 ed., S1*

2. Archives, Conference, CPC/Treatment, Finance & Budgeting., Policy & Admissions, Public Information/Corrections, International, Literature, Nominating, Literature and the Grapevine.

Report of the 57th General Service Conference April 22-28, 2007 (cont'd)

through lunch on Tuesday.

Monday afternoon we heard reports from both the A.A.W.S. and A.A. Grapevine Board Chairpersons. All regions present their new delegates (the 57's) and we gave our Area highlights interspersed with other business. Vince E. Keefe, Class A Trustee and General Service Board Treasurer gave an interesting Finance Presentation.

Our contributions since 1982 have grown from less than \$2M per year to \$5.4M in 2005. The cost to provide the services to our groups however costs \$7.6M. Today the percentage of groups that contribute is about 43%, down from 60% in 1982. Are the other 57% just uninformed or are they aware but not taking responsibility? A contribution of \$5.75 per member, or \$131.00 per group in 2007, would allow the Fellowship to be fully self-supporting from contributions. This is not a "money issue", it is a responsibility issue. If we become truly self-supporting:

- Literature could be priced at cost.
- Who other than AA, would want to sell literature at cost? As long as we produce our literature, we can maintain the clarity of the message.
- Complete control over all AA literature would rest within our fellowship.
- We would establish a strong financial base to insure that our Service Structure remains in place to serve future generations.
- Most importantly, the entire fellowship would have a strong spiritual connection to our unity.

A short subway ride north on Tuesday afternoon brought us to the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine Office. I could have spent a LOT more time there talking to the staff, but too soon it was time to let them go home for the day. Besides, we weren't done working for the day. A working dinner of just the delegates lasted from 6 until 9 pm.

I was ready to let off a little steam when a fellow delegate from Ohio suggested that we hit the little neighborhood meeting right across the street from the hotel. I was honored to be asked to speak at the meeting as they were celebrating April anniversaries that week with all celebrants giving a short talk. The group presented me with a XXII year token and a big slice of cake. What a bonus! All the locals were scratching their heads trying to figure out who were all these well-dressed out-of-towners invading their meeting. Afterward, we all lingered in the warm evening air on the sidewalk for a while.

Savoring the short break from our business, I was approached by a couple of young people who had been at the meeting. They were curious about why we were all in town. As briefly as possible, I said that we were here from all over North America to conduct the yearly business of A.A. After a little more conversation, the young girl, Meg, said thoughtfully, "I think I'd like to do that someday."

Here was the spiritual experience I was waiting for... here was the future leadership of A.A. standing in front of me. I kid you not - Nineteen years old, two years sober, leaning on her skateboard and playing with the piercing in her lip. She recognized the value of what we do, though. I asked her and her boyfriend Jack if they were in a hurry to get home - "No, not really." I said, "Come on; let me show you something really cool." We walked over to the hotel and I took them up to the 4th Floor pre-function space outside our two ballrooms. The staff from AAWS and AAGV had lovingly filled this area with all of our literature in all of our formats. There was a very attractive Grapevine display with all the new products that had been rolled out that week. Literally hundreds of items overflowed the tabletop displays. These kids were truly being turned loose in a 'candy store' containing our message. It was gratifying and invigorating to see them run from table to table, shouting to each other, "Hey, look at this!" I felt like a kid again myself. After all, I was only 22 when I came in. Back then, I think I would have been so impressed to meet a bunch of delegates at their age (today we know better...).

Finally, we approached the 'piece de resistance' - the table with all the Big Books in over 50 languages displayed row after row, column by column. The murmurs of awe and surprise continued. Book after book, they marveled at the foreign languages into which our message had been translated. They thought it was odd to see that some of the books opened from right to left. The boy mentioned that his step-father could benefit from a big book in Polish. I reminded them where our GSO was located and encouraged him to go soon. Too soon, the evening turned to late night. We said good night, but not before letting these young, future leaders of AA know how to contact their delegate and encouraging them to stay curious and keep coming back!

Wednesday morning was a workshop on the "Spiritual Value of Our AA Dollars." All of us were jumbled into different groups than our usual committee assignments and included the Class A's, B's and staffers. More area highlight reports filled up the rest of the morning and brought us to another Regional lunch. The afternoon session was highlighted by regional elections of three Class B trustees. As a member of the trustees committee, I was included in the pool of voters. There are as many votes from the Trustees Nominating Committee and the Conference Committee on Trustees as are needed to match the number of delegates in that region. Each delegate area in a region may put up a candidate and all delegates have (continued on Page 3)

Report of the 57th General Service Conference April 22-28, 2007 (cont'd)

two minutes to tell the assembled body about the candidate from their area. This helped flesh out the dry material on every candidate's resume. Since I didn't know anyone who was standing, the delegate presentations helped me make up my mind. It was an amazing process to see the Third Legacy procedure used at that level. It works as well as it does here. No one went to the hat this year, though. All new trustees were elected with a clear mandate of more than 2/3 majority. Starting on Wednesday evening, committees began giving their reports and recommendations came to the floor.

My Trustees Committee was chosen to present our recommendations early Wednesday evening. Our report took about three hours to present, finishing up on Thursday afternoon.

First order of business was to approve the slates of candidates for Trustees, Directors, and Officers of the Board – this is relatively routine. The next item is one which many of us discussed at length at our Mini-Conference this spring. Should any alcoholic trustees be considered in the selection of the next Chairperson of the GSB? Our answer was a resounding YES! All of the usual arguments were made pro and con from the floor microphones – anonymity, balance of the Board, and so on. Our by-laws do not preclude, but actually mention the possibility of a Class B trustee as Chairperson. But the feeling was that we are honoring the legacy of Bill W. by taking another small step toward autonomy in all of our affairs. We are coming of age just a little more by this decision. One delegate pointed out that most of the arguments against this change are fear-driven.

Will the next Chair be an alcoholic? Not necessarily, increasing the pool of eligible candidates will ensure that the very best person, alcoholic or not, is chosen. The issues of handling anonymity are seen as opportunities, not as a stumbling block. This is the chance for our Fellowship to squarely face the press and say, "Here are the reasons why we don't appear full face in published or broadcast media." It is an opportunity to educate the world about some of our spiritual principles – humility, honesty, willingness to overcome our fears.

Now, for the part of our deliberations that so many members of my committee were concerned about. The last item of business was an Appeal to the Conference for a Minority Report to be heard. Rumors of the exercise of this rarely used procedure by a small group of Trustees reached many of the delegates just days before the Conference began. It had been assigned to our committee since that's where it seemed to fit, but there had only been one other instance of this happening, in 1962, by Bill W. himself. There was no record in the archives how that was handled, so we were making a little history and setting a precedent for future Conferences. Delegates rushed to the

microphones all over the room when it was brought up. Everyone was upset (although wildly uninformed) about the Appeal.

A question was raised at the Board level whether a search should begin for the next General Manager of GSO. As this is a very important executive position, it will take upwards of 18 months to complete the process (or so I've been told). A majority of the 19 Trustees voted to not start a search at this time, but the vote was not unanimous. The minority did not feel that their Right was given a sufficient hearing. Considering that this decision could be a grave error on the part of the Board, this group of Minority voters filed what is called a Minority Report with the Conference. This Appeal to the Conference is one of our checks-and-balances described in the Concepts (specifically Concept Five). It is a seldom used, but cherished part of our Third Legacy.³ Our committee requested that the Board give the Minority Report a full hearing at the next Board meeting and that the Procedure for Hiring a General Manager be updated and clarified.

As a result, I'm happy to report that the State of the Conference Process is **safe and sound** following the disposition of this Appeal. The State of AA is sound for another year, safe even from us.

On Thursday, interspersed amid more committee presentations, there were theme presentations and reports by Dorothy W., Trustee US-at-large, Murray M., Trustee Canada-at-large, and Doug R., GSO International Staff assignment, concerning their travels this past year. We worked from 9 am until 10 pm most days, or later.

Friday, the body sensed that the end was near. We forged ahead through many more committee reports and finished the business of the 57th GSC around 7 pm. This also included consideration of floor actions followed by a sharing session at which each of the outgoing Panel 56 delegates made brief remarks regarding their conference experiences and said goodbye. The conference was closed with remarks by Greg M, General Service Manager, followed by the Serenity Prayer in Spanish, French and English.

We are shaping and making the history of A.A. by our actions each day we serve this fellowship. I was reminded by one presenter; "We may be the only Service Manual someone ever reads."

In love and service,

Jeff Y., Panel 57 Delegate Area 54 NE Ohio

3. In the light of the principle of the "Right of Appeal," all minorities — whether in our staffs, committees, corporate boards or among the Trustees — should be *encouraged* to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. And when a minority considers an issue to be such a grave one that a mistaken decision could seriously affect A.A. as a whole, it should then charge itself with the actual *duty* of presenting a minority report to the Conference.

General Service—What it is and My Experience

In Tradition #5, Bill W. wrote: "The ability of each AA to identify himself with and bring recovery to the newcomer is a gift from God...passing on this gift to others is our one aim. Sobriety can't be kept unless it is given away."

Carrying the AA message through General Service is the most rewarding gift I have found. It is said that "Service is the Secret", for me this is a fact.

After spending 25 years in and out of the rooms, knowing I was an alcoholic & believing I was 'constitutionally incapable', God stuck his foot in the revolving door & Alice stuck hers somewhere else.

Following my last relapse, she told me if I was willing to go to any length, it was time to try a different level of service that just might keep me here.

Starting out as a GSR & quickly becoming Secretary of Dual District 23/39 I was told a lot & I listened. Moving into Alternate DCM position, I was shown much & I learned. When I became DCM for District 23 I got involved and began to understand.

Given the honor to serve as Area 54 CPC chair the learning continues. However, I know that General Service is the key to my sobriety and I am responsible to suit up, show up, and carry the message. **-Christine McG., Area CPC Chairperson**

My first awareness of service in Alcoholics Anonymous was when a friend, Jim W., mentioned the Third Legacy. I have never heard this term and asked Jim what the Third Legacy was. Jim offered to take me to an Area 54 Assembly. At that Assembly, I heard the Twelve Concepts for the first time. I knew of our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I had never heard of the Twelve Concepts. I realized there was much more to AA than attending meetings. Deciding I wanted to learn more I began my service path as GSR for my home group. I was soon informed I needed a service sponsor to guide me in service, just as my sponsor guided me in AA. I attended my first Area 54 Mini-Conference in Ashtabula. It was very informative and helped me understand the structure implied in the circle and triangle. I began to understand how decisions are made in AA and that there are many service levels.

Serving as the Area 54 Finance Chair for the next two year was a real eye opener. I was elected Area 54 Recording Secretary in October 2006. My experience in AA is one of growth. I actually feel a part of something that keeps me sober, along with my higher power and the members of AA. I can recall wanting to feel a part of or just to fit in all the years of my drinking. Today I do not need to drink to feel a part of, I just need to get involved and participate. It's not enough to occupy a seat anymore. Service does that for me. I love this program!

-Jamie B., Area 54 Recording Secretary

Serving as a staff member at GSO entails sharing collected A.A. experience with members, serving as resources to the Conference and Trustees committees, as well as a voting member of the General Service Conference. Additional information about the duties and responsibilities of the GSO staff member may be found in *The A.A. Service Manual*, and in Concept 5 and Tradition Eight (the right of participation) in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and the pamphlet, *Your A.A. General Service Office*. Being a staff member is truly a unique and wonderful experience. **-Adrienne B., GSO staff**

I love AA and what the program of Alcoholics Anonymous has done for my life and how it has given me a path of spirituality I thought completely unobtainable for a drunken sot like myself. So in the course of my journey I was introduced to service, firstly setting up a meetings, making coffee shaking hands and clean up. Then as treasurer and literature person which introduced me to the central office and it became my desire to read all the literature in order to be able to answer any questions. And later to what could be the most important job in AA the GSR. No one wanted it so I volunteered about five or six years ago at my home group. I had no idea what I had gotten myself into at the time, but my service sponsor said not to worry none of us knew at first. So I began by reading snippets of Box 459 at my home group during announcements, much to the chagrin of some members, but to the delight of others. I was in turn incredibly grateful for the amount of literature, meetings and freedom at my leisure in and around the Cleveland area, as a result of the foresight and growing pains of our founders in the early days. And even more so because I had AA, given to me in abundance, whereas others had nothing, not a big book in their native tongue, not a legal meeting place or even another alcoholic. Somewhere during this time I began to explore our traditions in earnest to try understand the importance of the traditions and why we need to adhere to them. But understand that groups and people can be wrong and this doesn't exclude these persons from AA. Nor does this mean or give me the right to tell them so, unless of course I start to try and educate rather than dictate. I have taken along time to get here some of my experiences lead to my frustration and anger over lack of regard for the traditions in meetings and lack of participation in service at many levels. But these and a good service sponsor have taught me humble pie is delicious and goes well with a glass full of service.

One night at an old home group a man lead and mentioned something other than alcohol of course I was riled up. And mentioned it to the old timer sitting next to me. He gave me some great advice, that I heeded on this particular evening but wasn't able to fully comprehend the wisdom in his words until many months later during another lead of the same type. I began to read the traditions hanging on the wall. The power and depth of the word unity made sense after all this time. The old timer told me not to make a comment about this break in a certain tradition for the sake of unity of the group and for the sake of the new comer. **-Marc W., GSR Lee Rd Wednesday**

Cleveland North Coast Multi-district
& Heights Hub Multi-district, present

Annual Picnic

Saturday, August 18, 2007

8:30 A.M. Until ?

Speaker at 3:00 PM - Russ W., Mailing Secretary
At Forest Hills Park (Cleveland Heights side)

Food, fun and fellowship

Bring the kids for fun and games

Officer & Committee Chair Reports

Alternate Delegate Report

Area 54's 32nd annual Mini Conference was held at the Holiday Inn Westlake on March 30 thru April 1, 2007. Our Delegate Jeff opened the Conference at 7:00 PM Friday evening with introductions of the Area Committee and out-of-town guests. Friday evening was full of reports from trusted servants from all service positions, from GSR all the way down to trustee. The East Central Region Trustee Bob M. attended the Conference that weekend. There was a first-time multi-media presentation call *Conceptualizations* conducted by Bob Mck., Area 54 Archivist, and Gail L., Akron Intergroup Archivist, that presented an alternate look at our Twelve Concepts.

Saturday was a very busy day that began with conference committees discussion on the agenda items assigned to 10 different committees. We reconvened as a large group to conduct a mock conference to discuss the findings of each conference committee. This gave all attendees a similar experience to that of attending the General Service Conference. After an excellent dinner on Saturday evening, Angela M. and a cast of characters presented a historical skit on AA's founding. I don't think there was a dry eye in the house when they played a recording of Dr. Bob's last talk at the first International Convention of AA, held in Cleveland in 1950. Adrienne B, a staff member at our General Service Office, gave a wonderful message of hope and sobriety to top off a full day of growth.

On Sunday morning, we

concluded our committee discussions on the theme of the conference, "The Spiritual value of Our AA Dollars." The conference closed with an Ask-It Basket. By noon, our delegate was prepared to head to New York for the April General Service Conference with our collective group conscience.

On Sunday, April 15, 2007, I chaired our 7th Annual Committee Workshop. Area 54 committee chairs present included Archives, CPC, Finance, Grapevine, Literature, Public Information, Treatment, and the alternate Corrections Chair. We began by enjoying our covered dishes and there was plenty of food for all. After our meal, each committee chair shared their duties and current activities of their committee work. Most of the chairs expressed a need in volunteers to join their committees to carry on the service work. The "new" chairs expressed their willingness to learn their new assignments.

The turnout of new members attending the workshop was encouraging. Because of the large turnout of newer service members, we held a "What's on your Mind??" and an "Ask it Basket" session before closing the workshop. This allowed more experienced service members to answer questions. It was obvious that everyone left more knowledgeable about our Twelve Traditions, and with tools to handle issues that arise in the home group.

In Love and Service,
Dan F.
Alternate Delegate

Treasurer's Report

Warm Greetings & God's Blessings to you. When Bill W. spoke of Gods' will for AA being expressed in the group conscience, I seriously doubt that he considered how we would know what Gods' will really is if we have only limited group participation.

I feel that it is important to understand that "Self Support" requires commitment, and behaving responsibly. It is about more than money, although it started with the ten cents that Ebby spent to visit Bill W. on Clinton Street. We have only to look at Ebbys' example to see that "Self Support" in addition to money involves time, effort and self-sacrifice.

Alcoholics Anonymous, among other things is about "Inclusiveness". More inclusiveness beyond the group level is necessary if we are to understand how we fit as individuals in AA and what our role is as a small part of a big whole. It also explains how the "Seventh Tradition" is used at all levels of service.

Group acceptance of our "Seventh Tradition" reinforces the commitment to our "Primary Purpose" of reaching out to the still suffering alcoholic.

We have to give it away to keep it, and giving it away through service is fun.

In Love & Service
Ola P.
Area 54 Treasurer



District Reports

District 41

We, the members of District 41 of the Heights Hub Multi-District, would like to respectfully and confidentially report that as of February 14, 2007 our newly elected DCM for the next two years is Rena Strickland, a member of the Cleveland eastside group Language Of The Heart. Rena has been registered as the GSR for her home group. In order to fulfill the duties of DCM required Rena to rotate out of the GSR position. In January 21, Rena received the DCM packet from the General Service Office. This 5-pound box contains valuable information to assist Rena in her new endeavor as a trusted servant.

Since becoming DCM, I have visited all 18 groups in District 41 to update the group information. The oldest group is the Fairmount Tuesday, founded in 1946. The youngest group is the First 164 Pages Big Book B. Discussion, which started in 1998. The average size of a group in District 41 is 16 members. The majority meetings are held on Tuesday or Thursday. All of our group meetings are held in churches and are all non-smoking meetings. Our 18 groups are located in portions of three cities, four groups in the City of Cleveland, five groups in Shaker Heights, and nine groups in Cleveland Heights. All of the groups in Cleveland have GSRs, half of the groups in Cleveland Heights have GSRs, and none of the groups in Shaker Heights currently have GSRs.

We need a G.S.R. and an Alternate G.S.R. from each home group who has the time and energy to commit to our district. Our GSRs, DCMs, and all members are welcome to attend the monthly meeting of the Heights Hub Multi-district held at Club 24, 1635 Lee Road, on the 2nd Sunday of every month at 12:30 PM. We hope to SEE YOU THERE!

In Love & Service,

Rena Strickland, DCM District 41

District 19-B

My name is Craig, my sobriety date is 12/7/1998. I served as my home group's GSR for two years prior to becoming a DCM. Doing service work is my way of giving back to the program since I have yet to be asked to sponsor anyone in the program. When I first became a GSR, it helped me open up to people, although I still am a quite person. I live in the city of Lorain. At a recent multi-district meeting, I was asked if I was interested in the DCM position. At that time, I was in the process of rotating out of my GSR position. The

long travel time had forced me to change my home group. I was reluctant to accept the DCM position at first because I did not know what the position entailed. But, after talking with Donna L., the previous DCM, and Russ W., the current Area 54 Mailing Secretary, I was encouraged with the prospect of being the DCM and accepted the position. While attending many meetings to updating the group information, my employer changed my work shift to the afternoon shift. This hindered my attendance at the majority of the meetings in the district. I have since found an alternate and have hopes that together we can get all the group information updated. The changes to my work schedule interrupted my plans and has limited my meeting attendance.

In Love and Service,

Craig W., DCM District 19-B

Districts 52 & 53

District 52 and 53 encompass Bay Village, Westlake and Rocky River. I began doing general service work as a GSR for my home group in the fall of 2005. Beginning as a GSR is the most logical place to start doing general service work, however, nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to encounter! Area Assemblies were new to me. They were overwhelming and somewhat confusing because of the terminology, organizational aspects of AA. Since I always love a challenge, I decided that I would get comfortable in this new world. By early 2006, I had discovered that there were no DCMs in the northwest suburbs. This really bothered me and I mentioned it to Jeff Your and Danny Fitzgerald. Without thinking about it, I expressed that I may be interested in the position. I had 1-1/2 years of sobriety. The DCM pamphlet suggests that DCMs have 4-5 years of sobriety. I never thought I would be given the responsibility. In March, Panel 55 delegate Alice H. welcomed me into the DCM role. I thank God that she was willing to take a chance on me.

My role as DCM involves educating the district on how members can participate in the General Service structure of AA. Many groups I encounter do not think that AA exists beyond the Cleveland District Office. They never thought about where the printing of our literature took place. Many groups were not informed that they could benefit from having a representative who would carry their voice to General Service. They did not know what a GSR was! "Splits" were not understood. The district was naive

and biased. My work was cut out for me and I had no idea where to begin. Well, someone once told me to "do the next right thing". Therefore, I went to my home group and told them that I could no longer be their GSR because I had other responsibilities now that I was a DCM. I asked that we get a replacement and this woman became GSR #1 for the district. From this simple beginning, the district has become a viable presence on the west side.

I feel that my job is to educate the groups in the district regarding GSO. Since I could not do this alone it was necessary to get GSRs at every group to help, which has been challenging. We have, however, grown to a total of eleven GSRs in the district. The word is out and now groups want to be a part of this "new" world of General Service.

I hold regular District Meetings at my house. There is always plenty to eat and things to learn. We go over specific group issues and share our experience strength and hope. Usually I have someone give a talk to educate the group. This has included Bill Wilson speaking on the traditions! We have gotten to know each other over the months and there is a genuine caring among us all.

I also make a point of going to as many business meetings as possible. If a group does not have a GSR, I take the responsibility of educating the group until they can elect their own GSR. I encourage all GSRs to educate themselves so they can educate their group. I consider it my duty to be a strong support to them and accompany them to business meetings if they would like. All are strongly encouraged to attend Area Assemblies and workshops. All of this is brand new to the Westside, so we have our work cut out for us.

As a DCM, I stay close to members of the Area Panel and report back to them as to the health of the district. Their experience is indispensable to me. They know most of the GSRs by name. This vital link is what AA service is all about.

From the beginning, building a cohesive district, with people willing to do the work of a GSR, has been a challenge. My enthusiasm for doing the work is a gift from God. I know being involved and doing service keeps me sober. I love the camaraderie of it all and "hanging" with those who have been there. For me, it is a win-win situation!

In Love and Service,

Diane K., DCM Districts 52/53

History is Made in Vermont—by Jay M., *Archivist*

Mother's Day weekend proved to be historic for Alcoholics Anonymous. A weekend conference held at the Wilson House in East Dorset, Vermont had the theme: Slender Threads of Early AA History. The Akron archivist, Gail L. organized the weekend and we presented a number of talks.

Vermont is not a short drive. Myself, Gail, Bruce H., Bob M (Panel 47 delegate) and Harmon V. set off on Friday morning at 6:00 a.m. One finds out quickly who is and is not a morning person! Nine hours later we arrived at the birthplace of our co-founder.

If you have never been there, please go. The Inn where Bill was born has been completely restored and is simply a wonderful building. The late Ozzie L. and his wife Bonnie made it their mission in life to restore this wonderful treasure that was built in 1852 and are owed a debt of gratitude from AA members everywhere.

Next door to the inn is the house where Bill grew up and is now a library and archives. We saw Bill's tiny bedroom and looked out the window he talks about in the Big Book looking at the mountain.

Gail led things off Friday night with the Akron Story and Writing of the Big Book. On Saturday Gail gave the History of the Women behind the Men, and after lunch I gave a talk on the history of the Rockefeller's involvement with AA. Gail and Harmon followed me with their Traditions talk that we in Akron are so familiar with. After another unbelievable meal (they prepare everything from scratch) Gail gave a new talk: All about Bob and Anne.

The history that was made came on Sunday morning. In the Meeting Room (that used to be a bar) a panel discussion was held entitled "Spirit of Cooperation."

At the table was Gail L., the Akron Intergroup Archivist; Amy Filiatreau, the non-alcoholic GSO Archivist; Annah P., Director and archivist of Stepping Stones (Bill and Lois' home in Bedford NY); Bruce H., Trustee of the Foundation that operates Dr. Bob's home and Bonnie L., Director of the Wilson House.

What an inspiring event to participate in, including archivists involved in the service structure representing the two founding cities in AA, Akron and NY, including representatives from both our co-founders homes. It is something that had never happened in the past and was truly an historic event.

The main discussion was on how these entities could cooperate with each other for the good of AA.

Many members get a bit confused concerning Tradition Six: (Long Form) "Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to AA should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing

the material from the spiritual. An AA group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to AA such as clubs or hospitals, which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the AA name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, AA managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside AA - and medically supervised. While an AA group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An AA group can bind itself to no one."

Some take that to mean that we should never have anything to do with any outside enterprise, no matter how closely related to Alcoholics Anonymous. The key here is cooperation, not affiliation. That is why Stepping Stones, Dr. Bob's Home and the Wilson House are separately incorporated foundations. AA cannot own property of a substantial nature.

What emerged from the discussion was the possibility of producing a brochure that will cover all five entities to give AA members a source to know and understand the rich history available to us all. It will not be produced by AA or any of the outside entities, but rather will be a joint venture of interested AA members as well as non-alcoholics. This brochure would then be available at any of the three homes, Akron or New York. It would be offered in the spirit of cooperation, not affiliation.

The idea is still in the formative stages, but was an excellent start. More will be revealed.

We ended our trip with a visit to Bill's simple grave. What a wonderful example of humility for us all. Both he and Dr. Bob were buried like "regular folk," no monument to indicate anything to do with AA. What I found striking was the small, worn to the dirt spot in front of Bill's grave where countless grateful members had stood to pay their respects.

It was truly a spiritual weekend. Vermont is a beautiful state, and, at least for this alcoholic, a home away from home.



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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