

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

October, November, December 2009

<http://www.aaneoh.org>

Volume XXI, Issue 4

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 20
Area Committee Meeting 2:00

October 18
Area Assembly 2:00

November 13-15
East Central Regional Forum
Kalamazoo, MI

November 22
Gratitude Sunday 2:00
Trinity United Church of Christ
150 East North St., Wooster

December 20
Area Committee Meeting 2:00

Unless 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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Delegate's Report

Hello Northeast Ohio Area 54! In Chapter Six of our *AA Service Manual* (Page S48), the very first sentence describes the Delegate's job as a demanding one due to the large amount of time and work involved. How true, how true...my part time job takes me many miles (Springfield, Peoria, Illinois as well as New York) and I have enjoyed every minute of it! On August 7, 2009, I carried the State of Ohio Flag at the Opening Ceremonies of the East Central Regional Conference. What an honor! This summer there were many District picnics I attended and over 300 AA's and their families attended our Open House picnic in Westlake! Last week Jay M. (our Panel 59 mailing Secretary) and I attended the Area 53 Unity Day in Columbus. Jay gave an excellent presentation of how AA General Service was developed as well as the formation of Intergroups and Central Offices that we have today. I shared my experience on recovery as well as my two year stint working at an Intergroup office as well as twelfth step work down in Naples, Florida in the mid nineties.

Due to the reduced publication of *Box 459*, I thought I would give you some highlights of what is happening in AA World Services as well as the *AA Grapevine*.

The vacant AA Staff position has resulted in the submission of over 100 applications and resumes. The final candidates will be interviewed the first week in August with the AA Staff participating in the process.

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Alternate Delegate's Report

As the summer winds down, I have been reviewing the past three months. I did a lot of traveling around to different districts, areas and states.

In June, we were in Wooster for District 10's Picnic. It is very rewarding and encouraging to see so many GSRs active and participating in this district. Thanks to all who worked on this picnic and for their gracious hospitality.

In July, we were in Worthington at the 53rd Ohio State Convention. As several people who attended have reported, the GSR School was the hit. Area 54 is, as I write, working on the Area 54 GSR School.

Area 54 was well represented and many participated in the panels and discussions. On a side note, next year's convention will be in Toledo, August 13, 14 and 15, 2010. In talking with the host committee (Area 55), their goal is to have 1,000 attendees (WOW).

Our August jaunt was to the East Central Regional Convention in Peoria, Illinois. Dan F, Jay M and I attended, arriving at 4:30 Friday morning. It was great that Joel T (Area Corrections Chair) and Bill P (GSR) were also able to attend.

Friday evening began with the flag ceremonial and our own Dan F brought in the best looking flag of all, the Ohio State flag. On Saturday, I spoke at a Traditions Panel on Traditions 7 and 8 -- no dues or fees and no professional 12-steppers. In the afternoon, Dan F discussed Concepts 5 and 6 -- right of appeal and power of the purse. Our own Jay M from the audience shared his own

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The 11th Tradition- True Humility in Practice

I recently came across an article written by a very well known media figure. In the article, the member wrote of his participation in Alcoholics Anonymous for the last thirty years. Up until this point in his sobriety, he had not “outed” himself as a member of AA. At first, it seemed to me merely another breach of the 11th Tradition, which states that “our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.” What I found much more interesting, though, was the stated reason why this person broke their anonymity. The author of the article in question claimed to be aware of the 11th Tradition, but felt that it didn’t apply in this case. He essentially said that new people who go public with their sobriety (in this case he is referring to celebrities who out themselves) are at much greater risk of relapse. In any event, he states that with his thirty years of sobriety, he is not at any risk of relapse, and therefore can break his anonymity with no risk to himself.

This argument, while initially appealing, troubled me some. I felt that there was something demeaning going on under the surface. First off, I don’t believe anyone is immune to drinking again. In AA, we hold that we can recover, but are never cured. This means that we are all a drink away from a drunk. According to our basic text, we have “a daily reprieve [from drinking] contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” (pg. 85) Thirty years of sobriety does not mean that one’s spiritual condition is at such a pinnacle that it no longer requires maintenance and growth. Secondly, as another member of our fellowship put it, by excusing his own anonymity break while demonizing others’, he is setting up two classes of alcoholics: those that are wise and humble enough to break their anonymity at the public level without drinking, and those that are too new, prideful, and ego-driven to survive breaking their own anonymity without the risk of relapse. Part of the egalitarian nature of AA is in the discovery that we must strip away our differences in order to see that we have a common problem (alcoholism) and a common solution (the program). When we walk into the rooms of AA, it doesn’t matter if we are a celebrity or a working-class man or woman; it doesn’t matter if we are rich or poor, what country we’re from, or what faith we may or may not have. All that matters is that we have found ourselves to be powerless over alcohol and that our lives have become unmanageable (or that we merely have a desire to stop drinking!). It is damaging to create these classes of alcoholics because it serves to marginalize newcomers and glorify old-timers. If the author were concerned about the potential for those breaking their ano-

nymity to relapse, he would share experience with them on the value of maintaining his anonymity at the public level for thirty years and about the ego-deflation required to do so. Personal sharing would be much more valuable in preventing their possible relapse than vilifying them while hypocritically pardoning himself from the same crime.

Despite this, his article was, objectively, a very nice piece, intertwining his personal story with AA history, while at the same time dispelling common myths and criticisms about AA that appear rampant on the internet. Why, then, is it a big deal to break one’s anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film? Its not like one person can single-handedly bring the demise of AA by publishing an article about his involvement in it. The key to this tradition is the “attraction rather than promotion” part. Individual members promoting AA publicly has proven to be more harmful to our fellowship than helpful. Historically, it has led in part to the downfall of other organizations that have sought to help alcoholics. The author of the article is generally respected, but there are those who probably don’t like him too much either. His involvement in and promotion of AA may keep some away from the program. One could imagine the potential damage to our fellowship if politicians started breaking their anonymity in an effort to promote AA.

In AA, we let the press do the promotion for us. As a whole, we don’t have any opinion on what the press thinks of us, but we have found over the years, despite some negative reporting, that they have been our greatest allies. They do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

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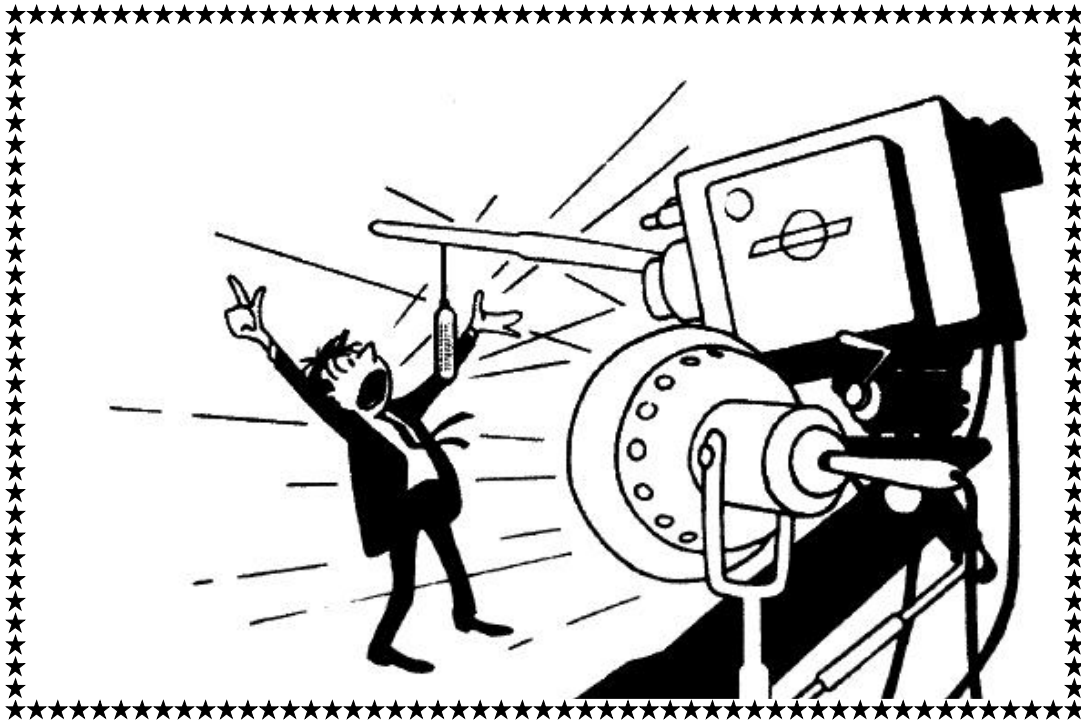


The 11th Tradition- True Humility in Practice, Cont'd

In the end, perhaps the 12th Tradition holds the key to the 11th Tradition. Tradition 12 states, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." Through the traditions, we "give up personal desires for the common good," as we learn how these desires often prove more injurious than beneficial to our fellowship. Anonymity is the ultimate display of the traditions at work: we rely solely on the principles of AA to carry the message rather than on the personalities of its individual members. To quote from the *12 and 12*, "...anonymity is real humility at work...Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as AA members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public." (pg. 187) Indeed, humility through anonymity protects us from ourselves, when our ego screams at us to be recognized for our sobriety.

When articles like this are published, we see how a true humility and a sense of unity can help us all become "active guardians" of our traditions: we put our personal ambitions aside as we strip away the fetters of our wealth, status, and creed. Through this process we come to realize that we are all just "garden-variety drunks." This is precisely how AA unity maximizes our ability to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Dave S.
Editor, Northeast Ohio Recorder



Delegate's Report Cont'd

Archives: The summer issue of *Markings* was the first electronic-only version of the newsletter. The savings in cost to produce and mail hard copies annually is \$20,000.

Corrections: Gayle S.R. who recently rotated off the Corrections desk at GSO reported that the GSO office is handling up to 500 letters a month from inmates in correctional facilities. In the first 6 months of 2009, 414 male inmates and 200 female inmates were linked to outside volunteers. The Corrections Correspondence Service continues to be one of our most valuable efforts.

A.A.W.S. Publishing: Future AA membership surveys were approved to be produced in Spanish and French. The Board also approved a request that the abridged format of the Big Book be produced in audio CD format with an estimated price of \$18.00. The Board also approved a request that the *ASL Big Book* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* videos be converted to DVD format. The Final Reports on the 59th General Service Conference will not arrive until September. The Big Book that was on the Kindle reader for a very short period of time has now been terminated. The Publishing Committee agreed in part to terminate the "Kindle Project" with Amazon Digital Services Inc. due to pricing irregularities. A letter from the chair of the history and resolution of the Kindle project is to be circulated to all Conference members.

Publications: Total distribution of all books was up 37% from the same period of 2008. Many customers purchased large quantities just prior to the July 1 price increase.

International Convention: Registration for the 2010 International Convention in San Antonio, Texas begins September 1. The Registration brochure has been posted on GSO's AA Web site. On September 1, GSO will post a link from their site to the online registration site. There is also updated information about hotel reservations, transportation, etc, online at <http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=211>. The San Antonio Convention and Visitor's Bureau has also created a site (English only) about San Antonio for Convention attendees, and GSO has provided a link to this information. The Convention will be held July 1-4, 2010. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

AA Grapevine: The Grapevine saw a slight increase in monthly circulation. Average monthly circulation was 104,571 at the end of June 2009 (103,211 print, 1,360, audio). Response to the redesign of the Grapevine has been largely positive. The chief concern, the placement of the Preamble, Steps, and Traditions has been addressed by moving them to the inside covers, beginning with the August issue. The size of the Alcoholism at Large disclaimer will be increased as of the September issue.

I hope this update on what has been happening recently in our society will give the General Service Representatives (or anyone else in Area 54) an opportunity to make up a two minute report to give to their Home Group. I will look forward to seeing you all at our next Area Committee Meeting on September 20 or at our next Area Assembly on October 18 in Brunswick.

Love and Service, Danny F. Delegate (59)(54)

Alternate Delegate's Report Cont'd

experiences with the Concepts during the question and answer period. He was very enlightening. The real highlight of this convention was talking to folks from other areas. I learned how their committees operated and how their areas were structured.

In traveling and talking to people at our assemblies and committees, I have discovered some disturbing information. Many of our area groups are violating traditions. I am responsible to not only know the traditions but to be a guardian of them as well. Therefore we are looking for ways to educate these groups but not police. The good news is that there are no AA police and the bad news is that there are no AA police.

I am looking forward to September 20th Area Committee meeting. This is an opportunity for GSRs to hear what is going on in the Area Committees and connect with a committee of interest.

My first service sponsor told me to be useful instead of ornamental.

Bob D., Alternate Delegate



Area Officer and Committee Reports

Warmest Greetings to All...

I recently traveled to Area 53, as an observer, with our past Delegate Jeff Y., who was invited to moderate their annual Area Inventory, sponsored by Districts 26/27.

My interest was peaked, and as I had never heard of an Area Inventory, I could not pass up the opportunity to explore the benefits this process might have to Area 54.

The questions (16 in all) were adapted from the "Group Inventory" questionnaire by the late Andy T, Past Delegate of Area 53. Attendees were divided into groups and each group was responsible to discuss and answer 5 questions with all groups answering question 16. After lunch, an open discussion was held by all attendees with Jeff as the moderator. The questions ranged from purpose of the Area, its collective conscience, diversity, minority opinions, leadership, the role of Treatment Centers, remote communities, etc.

I am really honored to say that, even though I sat with a group as an observer, they wanted to know how some of the issues stemming from the questions were handled in Area 54. It came as no surprise that many of the issues facing Area 53 are also apparent in Area 54. Though all questions were important, the one that prompted the most discussion was that of **Diversity** and **Remote Communities**.

At the end of the discussion, a list was made of the issues that resulted from the Inventory. These will be brought to the Assembly via Agenda Items where they will be addressed for possible action and dissolution.

The benefits of such an Inventory in Area 54, I feel, would be immense. As I stated earlier, we encounter and face many of the same issues as Area 53. For the GSR and those new to General Service, it

would be an excellent avenue for in-depth expression.

In Love & Service
Ola P. - Area 54 Chairperson

Treatment Facilities/Bridging the Gap Committee

Part of guidelines for Treatment Facilities are to reach the alcoholic who is in a treatment facility or rehab. This includes presentations, meetings, and approaching treatment center personnel about AA and temporary contact programs. Part of Bridging the Gap between treatment programs and AA is the Temporary Contact Program, which is designed to help the alcoholic in treatment program make the transition to AA. (Excerpts from *Guidelines to Treatment Facilities* Committee and *Bridging the Gap* pamphlet)

Thanks to all the folks that have let us know that they will help on this committee. District 10 is doing a great job with working with the treatment facility in their area. More folks have stepped up to be part of Bridging the Gap for their districts. Since June we have more help in Elyria and the counties nearby as well as in the western suburbs and the west side of Cleveland.

These point people will take the request and find a person in their community to make the temporary contact with the person making the transition from the treatment facility to AA meetings. If they want to they can call the people themselves. This is great 12-step work.

We still need help in the Cleveland Metro Area especially in the "Heights" and Southeast Suburbs. If you are curious about this program, checkout the *Bridging the Gap* pamphlet. You may also find this pamphlet online at www.aa.org. The *Treatment Facilities Guidelines* are

also located at the same site.

One of the other guidelines includes taking AA meetings to treatment facilities and the committee to make a list of meetings at treatment facilities. I know that we have several meetings at treatment facilities. It would be great if we could actually compile a list of the meetings for Area 54, Northeast Ohio. If you know of meetings around the area or are interested in being part of this project, please notify me.

If you have an AA meeting at a treatment facility in your district/community, the meeting could probably use some support from outside AA's. On a personal note, working with an AA meeting at a local treatment facility the past few years has enhanced my sobriety.

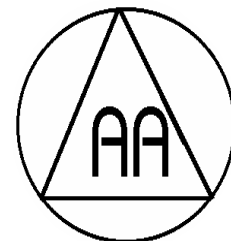
News from Box 4-5-9

2009 Conference Advisory Actions and Additional Considerations

Treatment Facilities—that the revised video *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* be approved; that the committee's scope be expanded to include service to Special Needs/Accessibilities committee and that the name of the committee be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

[Note my interpretation of the second portion of this action is to change and expand the oversight of Conference Committee to include all three areas officially. It should give attention to Special Needs and Accessibilities as well as Treatment.]

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Area Officer and Committee Reports, Cont'd

CPC/Treatment Facilities Trustees' Committee Report

Treatment Facilities – the committee's interest in treatment facilities, rehabilitation centers and similar centers is reflected through local AA committees on Treatment Facilities, Hospitals & Institutions (H&I) and Bridging the Gap (BTG). Shared experience about this facet of Twelfth Step work is conveyed in literature, by written communications, and by articles in Box 4-5-9 and the AA Grapevine. The committee also considers the need for changes in related AA literature.

Susan R., Treatment Facilities

Since updates sent in over the summer have been slow, I have been continually caught up on them. If you have any group changes or additions please get them to soon. Note that we have forms for each of these on our web site (area54.org) that better fit the needs of NE Ohio and of the current entry program (FNV) than do the old forms available on the GSO site.

Online data entry by groups to GSO, announced in a recent *Grapevine*, have been postponed indefinitely. Several of us area registrars made GSO aware of area implications; e.g., we in area 54 enter addresses with 9-digit zip codes after post office web site verification since this confirms the correctness of the address and saves on postage.

Past delegate Bob McK. was elected state archivist/historian last May. He received the state archives in July and they are being housed in our room in the Akron Intergroup Office suite. Much of this collection will be scanned so that it can be more widely available.

Bob McK., Area Registrar
State Archivist

Multi-District 7, 8, & 48 along with District 6 have started a corrections committee. This is a great step forward. They also have started to pass the Pink Can at one of the meetings. They will try to get more meetings to do the same to help get donations for books and literature for behind the walls. Akron Corrections keeps in touch with one another on a regular basis. I have also been talking to Steve S. from Columbus Ohio and have been in touch with other states about what they are doing to help behind the walls. There have been some problems in some county jails with regards to meetings behind bars, but if we talk to county sheriffs, we might remedy this problem. We also have a request in the Y.A.I.G.A newsletter for members to go into jails and prisons to carry the message behind the walls.

Joel T. CFC Area 54

DCM Reports

The summer is upon us and there have been many picnics and events here in our districts and all over northeast Ohio. District 6 held a picnic with a lot of help from Mary, the DCM and others; its great to see the support from her district. District 7 has been rolling along with a lot of picnics and other recovery events headed by many different meetings and groups but summer is coming to a end and it's time for all our GSR's and DCM's to start returning to our area assemblies and be accountable for their meeting and groups. I hope to have more contributions from the meetings and groups. Times are hard, financially, but the donations are needed to support A.A. as a whole. Without contributions, we cannot carry the message around the world. Costs are going up all over and cuts are being made, but we need A.A members to help more if able.

Joel T. D.C.M District 7

District 13 is moving right along. Attendance at the monthly GSR meetings (Held the second Sunday of each month at the Oxford House in Salem) is holding its own. We now have all of our committee chairs in place and are moving to work in those areas. Our big thing right now is an upcoming fund Pasta Dinner fund raiser on September 12th in Salem at the CIO Hall.

Thank you,

Eric B. DCM - District 13 of Area 54

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DCM Reports, Cont'd...

Hello, my name is Pete P and I am an alcoholic. It is my privilege to be taking over the position of DCM for district 48, area 54. My predecessor, for personal reasons, needed to step down-I was the alternate and was voted into the position. I have just begun to re-familiarize myself with my groups and who my GSRs are. My job will not be so different from when I was alternate DCM. I will orchestrate the job to the fullest of my capabilities and delegate jobs to others in AA that may not be active simply because they're not familiar with service work. Finding meetings that are not active in district 48 and need active GSRs will be my first priority. With my presence at their meetings and my input and encouragement maybe I can spark some interest. Gary D is my alternate DCM and will be active as well. Together, along with our sponsees, we will all meetings in our district and attempt to get them active and keep them informed as to coming events in the district, area, and beyond. Our groups that do not have active GSRs will be encouraged to elect them and we will be acting GSRs until they do. We will visit homegroup meetings and provide information. Our plan is to conduct mini-GSR workshops to stress the importance of the position and what exactly a GSR does and how it is much more than the political side of AA. Our singleness of purpose is to serve the newcomer and will remain so and to activate inactive groups into some capacity of service work. Without the service end of AA, our legacy is not complete. Thank you— Yours in Service—Pete P, DCM District 48



The 2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme "A Vision for You." A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels.

Convention registration and housing reservations opened on September 1, 2009. Also, all GSRs should have received registration packets in the mail. You can also go to www.aa.org for online registration and more info.

The registration process is slightly different than the previous convention. Rather than having a hotel lottery, all registrants will be able to reserve hotel rooms on a first come, first serve basis. After you have registered, you will be emailed a registration code, which you can then use to book a hotel room. While you still don't have a choice of which hotel you will stay in, about 8,000 of the 10,000 rooms blocked off for the convention are located within walking distance of the convention center, which means you have an 80% chance of getting a nearby room (chances are even greater if you register early!).

See you all in San Antonio!!!!

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.

Confidential Contact List

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 Visit us at <http://www.aaneoh.org>