

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

April, May, June 2011

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXII, Issue 2

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 15 2:00
Unity Day—Delegate’s GSC rpt

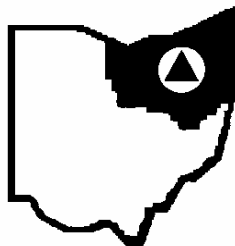
June 10-12
Founders’ Day Weekend

June 19 2:00
Area Committee Meeting

June 26 2:00
Open House Picnic
Christmas Run Park in Wooster

July 17 2:00
Area Assembly

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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A Word from our Delegate



I need to share on a personal note that I am grateful to be alive and grateful for all the many cards and prayers and good wishes. I have no doubt that prayers got me through triple bypass open-heart surgery. You now have a delegate with more heart working. Hopefully it will give me better direction and decision-making. I already have more energy.

I attended the Past Delegates Conference February 11-13, 2011. As a seated delegate, I was able to vote, and participate in the mock conference. I had the opportunity with the help of a past delegate to write a floor action and present it to the conference. Even though it failed it was a worthwhile learning experience. I found it all very stimulating and educational. It was the first time I had to do

my 2-minute Area Highlights Report and it went well even though it was a knee-knocker.

I am grateful we have truly “WE” committees. With the leadership of Dan F, Past Delegate and Ola P, “WE” worked together to fill in the gaps while I was in the hospital and recovering. The “WE” set up the agenda committees and Past Delegate Jeff Y. helped compile the background material and made a list of the literature needed. Others jumped in with additional literature material to be added. Copying and ordering of all the material was completed and the “WE” stuffed your agenda folders 2 weeks before the Mini-Conference. Thanks for the great organization and cooperation!

Unity Day is on the horizon, May 15th, 2011, which is the third Sunday of May at 2 pm and hosted by Cleveland Multi-District. I hope everyone will take the afternoon to join us. Come see how the various service functions: local, district, inter-group, area and national worked together to hold and grow this A.A. body.

I am looking forward to attending the 61st General Service Conference in the first week of May in New York City. I understand that I will not have much sightseeing time but allow me to be part of this wonderful opportunity to be a guardian of our fellowship. Most of all, I have the honor to take your collective conscious and share it with the other voting conference members.

Love, Light and Service, **Bob Denihan, Delegate-Area 54, Panel 61**

Alternate Delegate’s Report



On February 14, 2011, I was privileged to have attended, along with the delegate and two past delegates from our area, the 38th East Central Conference of Delegates Past and Present held in Appleton, Wisconsin. Attendees at the conference consisted of our regional trustee Pam R., GSO Staffer Warren S., seated delegates, their alternates, and past delegates from the East Central Region. The East Central Region is composed of five states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin, consisting of fourteen delegate areas.

The program was similar in composition to our Mini-Conference. There were of course introductions, followed by highlights from each of the fourteen delegate areas on Friday. There was also, a Mock Committee Meeting which was attended by the seated delegates and their alternates. Saturday was much like our Area Assembly, where the business of the region was addressed, after which there was a general sharing session. Saturday night, Warren shared his

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Everyday Sacrifices

“Faith without works was dead, [Ebby] said [to Bill]. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.” — *Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed. pp.14-15. © 2001, A.A.W.S., Inc. Reprinted with permission.*

The longer I stay sober, the more this passage from Bill’s Story resonates with me. With over a quarter-century of experience, strength and hope to reflect on, I can assure you, gentle reader, that there will be trials and low spots on the broad highway. Chances are that there won’t be



one of these big orange highway construction signs to warn us when it’s time to get busy. *“We have to act the Good Samaritan every day if need be.”* Service work in A.A. is one of the best ways I know to avoid a bumpy trip. *“Work with another alcoholic will save the day.”* What am I doing to enlarge and perfect my spiritual life? Sure, we understand that the prayer and meditation suggested in Step Eleven is directed toward our spiritual growth. But is it sufficient? If we are to stay sober in the long run, prayer and meditation must be outward-directed. *“How can I best serve thee—thy will be done.”* Our literature emphasizes the relationship between spirituality and action over and over again. So, we ask ourselves, our sponsors and our home group members: “How can I best serve?” Does the coffee need to be made and the doors kept open? Does this new guy/gal need a sponsor? When did I take my turn chairing last at my home group? Am I

taking anyone through the Steps right now? Is my group participating in the life of A.A. beyond the church basement steps? When did our group answer phones last at Central Office? Is my group accumulating funds for no stated A.A. purpose? A dollar not spent is a drunk not helped. Is my group represented at Intergroup? At the Area? How can we best serve? There is a ‘job’ in A.A. for everyone, I believe. If I’m bored in A.A., I must not be paying attention. *“Near you alcoholics are dying helplessly like people in a sinking ship. If you live in a large place, there are hundreds.”* As Bill W. *“lay in the hospital the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given me. Perhaps I could help some of them. They in turn might work with others.”* My gratitude bubbles over when I realize how many have worked with me and made sacrifices of their time, their experience, their love. How can I best serve? By paying these folks back or by paying it forward? We talk about our gratitude frequently every November, but we have to demonstrate our gratitude *“through work and self sacrifice for others” every day* of the year.



In Love and Service, Jeff, your editor

We welcome your comments and questions. Send topic ideas or complaints to: newsletter@area54.org

Northeast Ohio-Area 54 Hosts 36th Annual Mini-Conference

Over 157 A.A.s gathered at the DoubleTree Hotel in Independence, OH on the first weekend of April to attend the 36th annual Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference. Only 93 delegates from the U.S. and Canada attend the General Service Conference in New York City every year, so in 1976 the Mini-Conference was created to give the rest of us a taste of what the conference is like. Participating members were assigned to a committee where they discussed and voted on the actual agenda items that the delegates, directors, trustees and GSO staff will be deciding at the 61st General Service Conference. After the committee meetings concluded, all participants assembled to vote on many of the agenda items.

The Mini-Conference also provided great fellowship, a great hospitality room, marathon meetings through the night both Friday and Saturday, reports from the Chairman of A.A.W.S. George M., and from the newest staff member to join GSO, Jim M. Jim was the banquet speaker on Saturday evening to a SRO crowd. All A.A. members in attendance can claim participation in a watershed moment in A.A. history. Those GSRs and others who were there for the Saturday afternoon voting session can tell their home groups that **their voice was heard** within the inverted triangle of A.A.. Our delegate will be better informed of our local area conscience about the issues of the day as a result of their participation. Be sure to attend Unity Day in May to hear Bob's report on the Conference.

Northeast Ohio-Area 54 Mini-Conference Voting Results

Cooperation With the Professional Community

The committee recommended that the trustees CPC committee create a CD compilation of CPC literature and return a draft or progress report to the 2012 General Service Conference. Passed by **unanimous consent**.

The committee discussed the contents of the CPC Kit and Workbooks and **took no action**

Corrections

The committee recommended that photographs in "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" be updated to reflect recovery-based images and that the pamphlet include the 12 Steps and promises. **Motion passed.** There was then a friendly amendment to limit the above statement to: "**The committee recommended** that photographs in "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" be updated to reflect recovery-based images and that the pamphlet include the 12 Steps" which was defeated.

The committee recommended adding three suggested references to the Big Book in the pamphlet "A.A. in Correctional Facilities,"

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Northeast Ohio-Area 54 Mini-Conference Voting Results

(Continued from page 3)

including a proposed section describing Big Book studies as a possible meeting format. **Motion passed.**

No Report: Insufficient time available to review the Corrections Kit and Workbook.

Finance

The committee recommended that the trustees' Finance Committee convert the Self-support packet F-19 into a comprehensive Finance Kit and return a draft to the 2012 General Service Conference. **Motion passed.**

The committee discussed the list forwarded by the 2010 Conference Finance Committee on additional ways to communicate about self-support and **took no action.**

Grapevine

The committee recommended that A.A. Grapevine, Inc. be permitted to accept contributions using the General Service Board contributions policy, to be used for operating expenses. Any excess contributions will be forwarded to the Reserve Fund. **Motion did not pass.**

The committee discussed how best to support the AA Grapevine and **took no action.**

The committee recommended that the proposed revisions to pamphlet # P-52 "The A.A. Grapevine and La Vina: Our Meetings in Print" be approved except to remove the California address from "How to Order". **Motion passed.**

The committee also recommended that the title of pamphlet # P-52 "The A.A. Grapevine and La Vina: Our Meetings in Print" be revised to "The A.A. Grapevine and La Vina: Our Meetings in Print and Other Media". **Motion passed.**

Literature

Consider a suggestion to replace the text under "When you're a G.S.R." in the pamphlet "G.S.R. General Service Representative."

The present text reads:

"You are linking your home group with the whole of A.A. Back in 1953, when the "group contact" was suggested as a new type of trusted servant, the job was seen simply as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information ..."

The committee recommended replacing the text under "When you're a G.S.R." in the pamphlet "G.S.R. General Service Representative" with the following new text:

"You are linking your home group with the whole of A.A. In 1950, a new type of trusted servant, "group representative," was suggested to help in the selection of area officers, including delegates to the newly-formed General Service Conference. By 1953, the job of "group representative" was also seen as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information ..."

Motion passed unanimously.

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Northeast Ohio-Area 54 Mini-Conference Voting Results

(Continued from page 4)

The committee reviewed the recommendation that the trustees' Literature Committee develop a card similar to the green self-support card to promote literature as a Twelfth Step tool and return a draft to the 2012 General Service Conference and **took no action.**

The committee recommended that the trustees' Literature Committee develop a publication about the General Service Office and return a draft or a progress report to the 2012 General Service Conference. **Motion did not pass.**

Public Information

The committee recommended that the 2011 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis, as was done in the 2007 A.A. Membership Survey. **Motion passed by a vote of 74 - 1.**

Regarding the pamphlet "Understanding Anonymity", **the committee recommended** including revised text addressing the topic of anonymity in the digital age and answers to the question "What should I tell my loved ones about protecting the anonymity of the A.A. members they may meet?" **Motion failed.**

The committee recommended approving the revisions to "The A.A. Fact File." **Motion failed.**

The committee recommended approving the suggested revisions to "A.A. at a Glance." **Motion passed 70-1.**

Treatment Facilities/Special Needs – Accessibilities

The committee recommended that the 'Treatment Facilities Committee' be renamed to 'Treatment Committee' and all A.A literature and committee titles be updated to reflect this change. **Motion failed.**

The committee recommended removing the suggested line of dialog from the video "Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous." Due to lack of time, the assembly took no action.

The committee recommended incorporating the suggested changes to the workbook and kit. Due to lack of time, the assembly took no action.

The committee recommended incorporating the suggested changes to the Special Needs, Kit & Workbook. Due to lack of time, the assembly took no action.

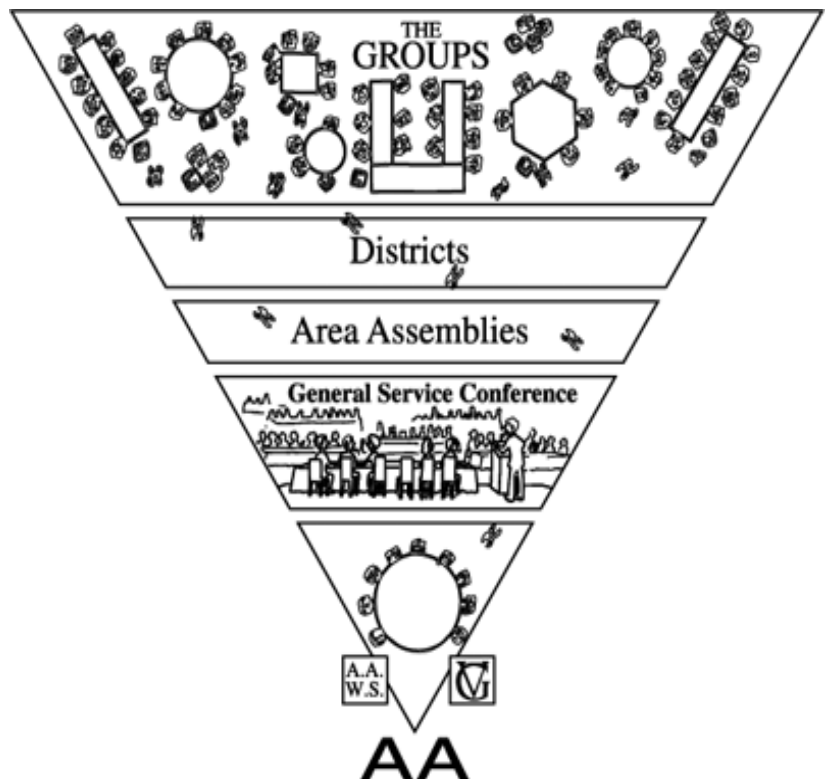
Archives

The committee reviewed the Archives Workbook and **took no action.**

International Convention/ Regional Forums

The committee recommended approving the final report on the 2010 International Convention in San Antonio, Texas. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The committee discussed ways to encourage interest in Regional Forums and how areas communicate about upcoming forums in their region and **took no action.**



Area Officer Reports

(Continued from page 1)

experience, strength and hope. Sunday morning, a Mock Conference Session took place followed by closing remarks from the trustee.

Although a ten hour drive each way, the conference proved to be extremely informative, enjoyable and immensely rewarding. The information shared was most valuable as it related primarily to the General Service Conference held in New York. The opportunity to fellowship with others from around the region provided a feeling of inclusiveness and unity. Just knowing that I have done my part, however small, to fulfill our "Declaration of Unity"* was for me, truly spiritually rewarding.

In Loving Service,
Ola P. - Alternate Delegate
Area 54, Panel 61

AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

By the time you read this, the General Service Conference will have ended and the group conscience of all of Alcoholics Anonymous will have been heard and various proposals either moved forward or rejected. Each of you who are active in General Service are Delegates in training and I hope that the Delegate who will be attending the Conference ten years from now is reading this today and entertaining the possibility.

Our current Delegate, Bob D., has charged me to Chair an Ad-Hoc Committee to investigate the feasibility and value of offering the choice of receiving Area 54 mailings via emailed PDF files. In this mailing is a simple survey form. If you are a GSR, please fill out the survey and return it either by mailing it back, bringing it to Unity Day on May 15, or you are welcome to email your answers to me at chair@area54.org. The survey is also available on line at

our web site, www.area54.org.

Remember that it is vital that if you wish to receive the mailings via email, GSRs need also be willing to print them out in order to take them to your home group. If you hold a position other than GSR, we also want to hear your opinion. DCMs, Committee Chairs, or anyone else on our mailing list is welcome and encouraged to return the survey. The Panel is mindful that every dollar we receive in donations started out as a dollar in the basket, and we wish to spend those dollars as wisely as possible.

All of this came about because a single DCM brought up the idea at the Area Assembly in January when we passed the budget. She felt that this would be a good way to save some money. The Panel discussed the idea and decided it had merit.

If you or your home group feels that the Area should be doing something different or should consider doing something we are not currently doing, please always feel free to bring up the idea. We value your opinions and understand, as Bill W. said, that a good idea can come from anywhere. Bring up the idea in the What's on Your Mind portion of our Committee Meetings and Assemblies, or contact any member of the Panel. See you at Unity Day!

Jay M.—Area Chairperson

AREA TREASURER'S REPORT

The Purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous is to provide recovery from alcoholism. Each member's purpose is to stay sober and help another alcoholic to recover from alcoholism. A Single Purpose for A.A. and a Primary Purpose for each member of the fellowship. Alcoholics Anonymous is about but

one thing: **recovery from alcoholism.**

Tradition Three states that "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking." One thing - Stop Drinking. In our early beginnings the A.A. Groups proposed many membership rules. The Groups were fearful and intolerant of those not like themselves.

However they learned that to deprive an alcoholic of the opportunity to recover was to sentence him to the endless misery of jails, institutions and even death. No one wanted to be responsible for condemning another alcoholic. We became inclusive and not exclusive. All membership rules were abandoned.

Tradition Five states "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." The message is the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. The members of Alcoholics Anonymous have shown that they are uniquely qualified to assist in bringing recovery to the new comer. It is a gift from God. We must give it away to keep it.

The Washingtonians, a temperance and abstinence from alcohol group, started out in the 1800's. Their membership grew into the tens of thousands. But they got involved with politics, religion, slavery and prohibition. It fragmented the organization and they dissolved. The Oxford Group provided help to alcoholics. However they were specific about religion and particular about their membership.

Alcoholics Anonymous learned from their mistakes. Two lessons were learned. First, that it is better to do one thing supremely well, than many badly. Secondly, that we should be inclusive and not exclusive. Thus, Singleness of Purpose.

Tradition Six states "an A.A. Group ought never endorse, finance

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Area Officer and Committee Reports, Cont'd

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or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our Primary Purpose.”

The early A.A. members thought that we might be the vanguard for a new period of enlightenment and spirituality. We might transform the world... There would be A.A. hospitals. We would re-write school and medical textbooks. We would even re-write the laws. Pretty hefty stuff and quite presumptuous of us. These early members soon learned that though we could help as concerns Alcoholism, we would not be as effective if we spread out into other areas. Alcoholics Anonymous would stick to one thing - **recovery from alcoholism.**

Tradition Seven states “Every A.A. group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions.” We give to support, sustain and grow this wonderful fellowship. This unites us to a Single Purpose. A.A. accepts contributions from A.A. members only and there is a limit to each member’s yearly contribution (currently \$3,000.00). We do not accept outside contributions. This is real simple. If other people contribute to your organization, they will tend to want to give directions. A.A.s support A.A. and run A.A. for A.A.s for one purpose: **recovery from alcoholism.**

Singleness of Purpose is our life blood. One purpose having the same application for all of us. Recovery from alcoholism. This what we do, One Thing, solitary, not divided, unbroken. Singleness of Purpose. Bill W. said “Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody.”

Love and Service,

Calvin L. — Area Treasurer

AREA RECORDING SECRETARY

I have recently returned from Area 53’s Mini-Conference at Salt Fork State Park Lodge. This was my first conference since the election in October. I was so keyed up, it was almost like my first time attending another area’s Mini-Conference. I had not seen or talked with some of these people since the International Conference in San Antonio, TX. I am looking forward to our very own Mini-Conference. Alcoholics Anonymous continues to confirm that this is where I belong. No matter what happens in life (both positive and negative) I know that I have been given the tools to accept it. Being involved in Service helps to keep me focused on some of the things I can do, to give back to Alcoholics Anonymous. This assists me in keeping my thoughts off of what is, or is not happening to me.

Since I have made a commitment to staying sober, taking on a district service position has been a great way to help me maintain my sobriety and a little of my sanity. I LOVE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. Yours in Service always,
Jamie B. – Area Recording Secretary

AREA MAILING SECRETARY

The Mailing is going well as expected since I was just elected and still getting what should be done. My first mailing was a little rough since a flyer was not ready at the time we had the folding party. District 13 hosted the event with over 25 members from their district showing up with good fellowship and good food. I would like to thank Jay M. from the panel and also Bill P., Area 54 registrar, for showing us their gratitude for ser-

vice by being there. I wish there were more panel members involved with the folding party. I had another folding party at my apartment to finish up when the flyer was available for us to do so I also would like to thank Cathleen S. and Lori G. for being there Friday 2-18-11 and the members on 2-19-11 Cathleen S., Tim R., Valerie R., Suzanne G., Darlene K., and Mary Ellen from District 7, 8 & 48. They gladly took the time out to be of service to the Area and a great day of fellowship. That tells me, by the members from District 13 and multi-district members, will step up on short notice. I would have named everyone from District 13 but hard to remember that many names. Next time I will have a sign up sheet.

The next mailing party is in April after the Mini-Conference. If anyone is interested let me know. I also believe you should be recognized when you’re doing service and also lets those members know we appreciate their work. Jay has been a great help in getting me settled into the job and showing me what to do. I also want to thank everyone one for giving me the honor of doing the mailings and being on the panel. I could not be grateful enough for this service, again thanks.

Joel T.—Area Mailing Secretary

REGISTRAR

I would like to thank all the participation of the DCM’s. So far to date we have successfully added 4 new groups ‘pending active’ to the area, and we have a long way to go. We have added 28 1st time GSR’s from January 1st to March 15th, and I look forward to seeing all of you active in service. New primary contacts are numbering in the hundreds.

Also I would like to send a warm congratulation to the 4 new DCMs,

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along with thanks' to some of you getting active again.

The addition of the Fax # and the online registration has been used by many, and it makes the process go much smoother. I thank those that chose this form of communication.

Record keeping and updates are a year long process, and I encourage you to keep us informed of any changes. The more accurate AREA 54 records are with The General Service Office in NY, the better they can assist us with our needs and questions, enabling us to have a more informed group conscience.

Love & Service, William P.— Registrar

CORRECTIONS

We have had our first area corrections meeting which was held on March 13th at the Dick Riley Fellowship hall in Youngstown, OH. We had a good turnout. We got a few members of A.A. to get involved and have the willingness to grow along with our multi district corrections committee that we are spearheading here in our area. Our next meeting will be held at the same location on Sunday, the 10th of April at 12pm until 2pm. We will nominate officers for our infrastructure of the committee. We would greatly appreciate any help from our fellow experienced members of our fellowship to join us as we trudge the road to happy destiny.

Thomas M.—Area 54 Corrections Chair

I am responsible ...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help. I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

The CPC Committee is pleased to report that all is well as we prepare to go into our mini-conference. We have been diligent in reviewing our background materials in anticipation of committee deliberations. During this reporting period we have also received a follow-up contact from an inquiry received by GSO. The inquiring individual is employed in a professional capacity at an area correctional institution, so we will pass this information on to our Area Corrections Committee.

We have also had communication from the CPC Committee chairs from Areas 53 and 55 regarding a convention of the Ohio Catholic Education Association to take place in October in Columbus. Due to the cost of having a booth at the event the only way participation seems feasible at this time would be for the CPC Committees from all four Ohio Areas to combine efforts. The current plan is to setup a conference call meeting between the four areas to discuss this matter in earnest. Humbly submitted,

James T. — C.P.C. Chair

Attraction or Promotion?

Our Eleventh Tradition in the short form states “*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.*”

That is a statement made up of two thoughts, each of which contains key words: “attraction rather than promotion”, and “personal anonymity”. This article examines the first thought from the perspective of carrying out standing committee work, particularly from the

view of the CPC Committee, but applicable to other committees whose function is to provide information to people outside our fellowship.

From the very early days of our fellowship we anticipated that we would cooperate with the professional community. In the Forward to the First Edition of the “Big Book” we find the following statement: “*Inquiry by scientific, medical and religious societies will be welcome.*” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Ed., pg. xiv) And inquiries we got. As noted in the Forward to the Second Edition, “*Another reason for the wide acceptance of A.A. was the ministrations of friends – friends in medicine, religion, and the press, together with innumerable others who became our able and persistent advocates.*” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Ed., pg. xx) The question therefore is how would these professionals who support us, and direct many who need us to our doors, have found us in the first place had we not embarked upon some course of promotion? How could we have garnered such “attraction” without some form of publicity (i.e. promotion)?

One clue to answering these perplexing questions lies in looking at the original long form of the Eleventh Tradition: *Our A.A. experience has taught us that: Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never a need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.*

(Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Ed., pg. 565)

Thus, the key is in the tone of our publicity – not in the fact of its existence. Though we might look at the Eleventh Tradition from the stand-

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Committee Reports, Cont'd

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point of two stand-alone concepts, we soon discover that in order to define "attraction vs. promotion" in this context we must understand personal anonymity, especially from a spiritual perspective. Bill W. was keenly aware of the business of promotion. It is essentially what he did for a living as a stock speculator, using his personal charisma to stir up interest in selling fledgling companies to investors. He also understood the dangers of taking it too personal when such deals fell through the cracks, like the Mayflower Hotel experience. On one hand if we were to "sell" A.A. to professionals by relying on our own personal charisma and sales pitch success might lead to a dangerous ego trip. On the other hand if we rely on our own personalities in this work failure may lead to depression. So we detach, and present A.A. in a manner that it sells itself. That is the essence of attraction in publicity – no gimmicks, just the facts.

A typical "ad" man would suggest that this is no way to run a publicity campaign. And he would be exactly right. We do not run publicity campaigns. We simply make the basic facts available, and those who find it "attractive" take the ball and run with it. As Bill W. put it,

"Obviously, A.A. had to be publicized somehow, so we resorted to the idea that it would be far better to let our friends do this for us. Precisely that has happened, to an unbelievable extent."

(*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pg. 181)

The C.P.C. Workbook provides a general statement of the Committee's purpose: *Members of C.P.C. committees inform professionals and future professional about A.A.- what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals, and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating.*

(C.P.C. Workbook, pg. 5)

Such professionals include alcohol-

ism or other counselors, armed forces officers, athletic coaches, corrections officers, court officials, educators, employers, human resources directors, health care professionals (doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, etc), clergypersons, judges, law enforcement officers, probation officers, attorneys, social workers, and union officials, just to name a few. As a group we might label these professionals as "front-liners" – that is, people who are likely to run into individuals whose drinking causes problems. With a little information about what our fellowship is and does, these professionals may be in a position to direct the problem drinker our way, much like Dr. Silkworth directed patients to Bill W. or Sister Ignatia worked with Dr. Bob. At the area level these contacts are typically made in one of two ways: 1) in response to inquiries, often referred to us by the C.P.C. Desk at G.S.O.; and, 2) through a committee member's personal outreach.

In the spirit of C.P.C. work I have approached "front-liners" with whom I have a personal rapport. These are individuals with whom I can sit down for lunch or coffee, and break my anonymity. The reality is that because of the personal rapport, these are individuals who probably knew of my alcoholism before I knew. But when they see that something is different, they have sometimes inquired, resulting in a door-opening experience to do C.P.C. work. This is a form of attraction. Then there are those instances in which I have created the opening. But creating the opening with a stranger can be dangerously close to the "promotion" line for me. Perhaps those opportunities are better handled by our conference-approved literature.

During the ordinary course of our lives, all of us are likely to

come in contact with "front-liners." It may come as the result of a parent-teacher conference, or a doctor's appointment. Therefore, with a little courage, we can all be C.P.C. committee workers. You will have to break your own anonymity in making the pitch. But remember, our traditions advise anonymity only at the media level, neither above that level nor below it. One must remember, however, that it is essential to provide our new "front-liner" with basic anonymity information. It not only protects the C.P.C. worker, but also helps the "front-liner" understand our program.

If at some point as you "trudge the Road to Happy Destiny" you should feel the urge to chat with a "front-liner" let it be known to your Area C.P.C. chairperson. We have guidelines to help us along the way. And, equally important, we need your input.

James T. — C.P.C. Chair

SPECIAL NEEDS

My first three months as chairman have started out busy. I received from this assembly and delivered a Get Well card to our delegate Bob D., on his recent hospitalization at University Hospitals of Cleveland.

I am in need of people to join my committee, especially from this assembly, so please get in touch with me ASAP!

I visited Carrington Manor in Ashtabula, OH where I met In-House Social Worker Ms. Christine Barnes. To my surprise, the staff has solved the problem of in-house AA meetings by driving patients to local meetings twice a week.

I left a message with Ms. Minisha Griffith at Broadway Care Center in Maple Hts. explaining the

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District & Committee Reports, Cont'd

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availability of our services to patients. I also visited Ms. Fran Giddings concerning Jan P., an AA member staying at Country Club Retirement Center in Austinburg, OH. Local AA members are taking meetings in-house there on Thursdays with the permission of the staff.

Herman A.—Special Needs Chair

TREATMENT / BTG

This month, Thomas M, our new Area Correction Chair, got a request to start an A.A. meeting in treatment facility. I was excited to share that the District leadership helps with this and shared from the Treatment Workbook and other material the procedures and guidelines for institutional meetings and other types of meetings.

After personally being part of a A.A. meeting in a treatment facility for eleven years, I shared that we get a lot of questions about the money/rent and following the rules of the facility as to time of the meeting, etc. from A.A. members. Everyone seems to think that **autonomy** applies to a facilities meeting but it does not in the normal way. In other words, we play by the facilities' rules.

In reference to Bridging the Gap from Treatment to A.A. in February, I received 21 Temporary Contact Requests: one each for: Charlestown, WV, Ashtabula County, N. Royalton, OH, Canton, OH, Massillon, OH, Knoxville, TN, Kokomo, IN, Toledo and Cincinnati; six from Area 60, PA; two for Akron and four for Youngstown.

In March, I received 20 requests, one each for: Garfield Hts, Medina, Fairview Park, Olmsted Falls, Woodmere, Richmond Hts and Toledo;

four for Area 60 in western PA, four for Akron, three for Lorain and two for Youngstown.

I have asked Gary C. to be Alternate Treatment Chair. The Committee responsibilities are diverse. This committee should also be working with the districts to meet the needs of half-way houses and treatment centers including the outpatient programs to coordinate the patient with A.A. involvement.

Yours in service,

Susan R. — Area Treatment Chair

GRAPEVINE

This being my first report as Grapevine Committee Chair, I'd like to express our gratitude to Jeff N. for his past service as Grapevine Committee Chair.

We have new committee members that have signed on. Welcome to: Vanessa S.— district 34, Tanya S.— district 35, and Sarah P.— districts 22,43,44.

Some correspondence from Dateline Grapevine dated Nov 2010 states to watch for an electronic version of La Vina and that 30-packs of Grapevine for \$54 are now being offered as of the first of the year replacing the 50-packs for institutions. Our latest mailing (March 2011) has a News Flash: AAGV is not a sinking ship. In fact, if 4,500 print subscriptions were added in addition to current print subscription projections AAGV would close the budget gap and become fully self supporting this year. That's only 48 extra print subscriptions per Area. March marks the official launch of Grapevine's digital magazine in addition to existing print and audio formats to Grapevine and La Vina. At \$19.97 per

year about 65 new digital subscriptions per area would close the budget gap. Discounts are available: \$10 off the total of any two versions, \$15 off the total of any three versions and \$20 off the total of any four versions.

Grapevine sales at Area 54 events included \$33 in October, 2010, \$87 in November at Gratitude Sunday and \$23 in January. We are well stocked for Grapevine sales for the Mini- Conference. Sales will be on Saturday only 9 am to 4:30 pm. An order will be made to restock for Founders' Day sales. If you are interested in volunteering to fill an hour slot on Founders' Day weekend, please do so. Respectfully submitted,

Steve B.—Area Grapevine Chair

LITERATURE

Literature was purchased to fulfill the needs of the Mini-Conference folders. Please feel free to contact me regarding your literature needs. Upcoming sales days: April 2 at the MC, May 15 at Unity Day, July 17 & October 16 at Assembly, and November 20 at Gratitude Sunday.

Terry H.—Area Literature Chair

NEWS from the DISTRICTS

District 6—Trumbull County

Elections for our district took place in December. As newly elected Alternate DCM, I have been working with our DCM, Donnie B. to inform all of our district groups of the im-

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District Reports, Cont'd

(Continued from page 10)

portance of GSRs to service work, because the number of active GSRs is very low. All the active members of our district are looking forward to learning our service roles to better serve our district, area and AA as a whole.

Andrew R.—Alternate DCM

District 10—Wayne & Holmes Co.

Our General Service Registration packets have been received and will be completed by the mini-conference. Our groups have done a good job of staying current.

Our district meetings have continued to meet regularly on the 2nd Sunday at 5pm at St. James 122 West North St. in Wooster.

I have attended District 11 meetings and the open house picnic planning is going well. We updated the flyer and it is posted on our Area 54 website and will be distributed with our next mailing. Thanks to Dan M. for maps on the back of flyer and posting it on the website.

Our district treasury is enabling us to help with costs for the mini conference expenses for our poorer groups with GSR's wishing to attend. We will have several new MC attendees.

Respectfully, Steve B., DCM

District 11—Medina South

We had our first district meeting of 2011 at Freshwater Church in Wadsworth on Feb 13th. We have district meetings bi-monthly on the 2nd Sunday at 2 pm. Next meeting is set for the same location on April 10th. We had six people in attendance. Districts 10 & 11 proposed to host the Area 54 Open House picnic and our bid was accepted by the assembly in January. The DCM of District 10,

Steve B., joined our meeting. He went over the Area 54 Open House picnic that District 11 is going to help host with District 10. **Christmas Run Park in Wooster** has been selected as the site for the picnic on June 26th. Flyers are being distributed already. Our district voted on what supplies we are going to buy for the picnic and in what other areas we can help along with getting the word out to our individual groups in District 11 to get volunteers for set-up and clean-up at the picnic. We went over the District 11 finances. Therese W. volunteered and was elected treasurer for District 11. She will get change to Akron Intergroup News and the Akron meeting directories to show name and address as the District 11 treasurer.

In the spirit of rotation, I told the District I am stepping down as DCM after more than two years at our next meeting on April 10th. Daniel G. was elected alternate DCM. GSRs were advised to get the news out to local meetings. If anyone wants to step up to fill the DCM position, have them appear at the next meeting to vote in a new DCM. We have one person interested so far, so District 11 will not become a dark district.

The District also voted to make a District 11 meeting schedule sheet of the A.A. meetings in our district. One use of this sheet would be to provide information on A.A. at the Lodi Truck Stop. Group treasurers are reminded to use your group service number when making 7th Tradition contributions to District 11. The District will pay rent on a month-to-month basis to allow the new DCM flexibility in scheduling future meeting location. We are looking for ideas and suggestions on ways to be of service to A.A. in our area and intergroup. Our next meeting will be on April 10th at the

Freshwater Community Church, 185 Humbult Avenue, Wadsworth OH 44281.

Respectfully, Tom B., DCM

District 19B—Lorain & Vermilion

My name is Linda S. I have recently accepted the position of DCM in this district. Opal is serving as my alternate. I have received a DCM packet for the first time from GSO-NY. We have contacted 23 of the 41 meetings in the district so far. We plan to have 13 more contacts made by the Mini-Conference.

**Respectfully submitted,
Linda S. —DCM, District 19B**

District 35—Hough, Glenville & Bratenahl

Upon Edith F.'s rotation, I am taking over the responsibilities of DCM for this district.

Respectfully, Edward V., DCM

District 55—Club 24, Clev Hts.

I'm serving as the acting DCM for this Cleveland Heights clubhouse which is host to over 30 meetings. I hope to get all group records up-to-date and acquire group histories for our area archives. About a dozen of these groups have responded so far. I hope to get service meetings started back up for this multi-district (32,40,41,42 & 55) in the Fall of 2011.

Respectfully, Robert McK.[47/54]



ACCEPTING THE INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE

The essential ingredients to an *informed* group conscience are that all the relevant facts are present for discussion that everyone has been given a full and fair hearing on the matter, and that we only act on serious matters when we reach substantial unanimity. Please notice, however, that the emphasis here is on the word “informed.” We can satisfy all these requirements, yet we still do not get a guarantee that we have reached a right decision. Majorities, as well as minorities, can be wrong. It is possible to be “fully informed” and “wrong.” Bill W. recognized this. Warranty Four states, “That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.” In discussing this Warranty further, Bill said, “And when a decision taken in substantial unanimity does happen to go wrong, there can be no heated recriminations. Everybody will be able to say, ‘Well. We had a careful debate, we took the decision, and it turned out to be a bad one. Better luck next time!’”

When was the last time you heard those sentiments expressed by someone in your home group, in your district, in your Area Committee, or in your Area Assembly? Try it sometime. You might be lucky enough not to be hit by a flying chair or coffee mug. Unfortunately, we all too often fall short of this ideal of civility that Bill W held out to us. I think what Bill was pointing out here is that the extraordinary rights we grant the minority and the deliberately slow process we

use to reach a decision are designed not to guarantee that we will always be right, but that we will always seek to preserve A.A. unity. I believe that the minority’s right to be heard is vital in preserving our unity as a fellowship, but like any right that we enjoy in a democratic society, it must be exercised responsibly.

How then can the minority misuse this cherished set of rights that we all enjoy? I think that all of us recognize that the informed group conscience should be trusted rather than any one individual’s opinion, no matter how knowledgeable the person may be about a subject or how passionately they feel about it. However, I recognize in myself that it is precisely when I consider myself knowledgeable about a topic or when I am most passionate about an issue, that I am least likely to be willing to accept a group conscience that is contrary to my position.

It is at these times that I am most in danger of falling into the trap of believing that because the majority disagreed with me, they must be uninformed or misinformed. IF they had just listened a little more closely to my arguments, if they had only progressed to the point where they understood my interpretation of A.A. principles to be the right one, then they would have come to their senses and agreed with me, as any right thinking person must. Thinking this way, I can continue to lobby for “my way,”

while giving lip service to the principle of working for A.A. unity through the informed group conscience process. In reality, I now find myself in the position of believing the group conscience is informed only if it agrees with me. Although I may have no conscious awareness of it, just think of the spiritual arrogance I have attained. Essentially, I am saying, because you disagreed with me, you are uninformed; and it is my duty to point out and correct the error of your ways.

By now, I feel perfectly justified in stepping outside of the group conscience process and engaging in any number of tactics to win on the issue, all for the good of A.A., you understand. At the level of the Conference, since the process is flawed and I certainly don’t trust the committee system, I could directly lobby all of the Delegates through a letter writing campaign for my position. If that doesn’t work, I imagine that I could even circumvent the Conference completely. I’m not quite sure how I would do this, but maybe a direct mail campaign aimed at intergroups would accomplish my objectives. However, I don’t know if I wish to be seen as that extreme, so perhaps I should incite others and have them do that for me.

I do not believe we can ever achieve a truly informed group conscience when the majority does not allow a full and fair hearing of the minority opinion, nor when the minority having been

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fully and fairly heard on an issue and failing to convince the majority, refuses to accept that the group conscience has spoken and tries to win the argument by sowing discontent and exhausting the other side with constant demands to revisit matters already decided until, by a process of attrition, others give in. To me, we as a fellowship have to seek to avoid both this tyranny of the majority, as well as this tyranny of the minority. I do not expect that there will ever be uniformity of opinion within the fellowship regarding many of the great issues to come before us at the any of our many service levels.

These are certainly matters capable of debate. People with equal love and concern for the fellowship can find themselves on different sides of these issues. I am more than happy to engage in a dialog with anyone on the facts of this or that issue and the application of A.A. principles to those sets of facts or situations. However, when there is a long history of time and effort devoted to seeking an informed group conscience on an issue, both at the level of the General Service Conference and throughout the fellowship, I usually find that by this time I have long since ceased to try to win converts to my way of thinking. At this stage, my primary purpose in engaging in such a dialog is to allow myself and others to answer these questions:

- *Has the minority opinion been given a full and fair hearing?*
- *Has the minority been allowed to exercise all of its traditional*

rights of appeal?

- *Having heard the minority opinion one more time, has my thinking been changed?*

Everyone must answer those questions for oneself. I trust that each of us in answering these questions, will then be able to act in a way that permits us to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic and to preserve A.A. unity.

These days, I really feel as if I am beginning to cease fighting anything or anybody. I do not know whether this is as a result of wisdom gained from experience, or of exhaustion brought on by advancing years, or of the inevitable physical decrepitude that has reduced my once extremely complex philosophy of life to this one simple proposition --- that one should never pass up an opportunity to go to the bathroom. But whatever the cause, I find myself increasingly tolerant of ambiguity in my life and in those around me. I actually feel more comfortable around people who appear capable of at least occasionally changing their minds. I find that more and more I can bring a historical perspective to the dialog. What can seem like such a life-and-death issue in the heat of the debate cools considerably in the light of this historical perspective. For example, I like to remember that just a few years ago I was listening to countless members of the fellowship announce in doomsday tones that we could not survive without the circle and triangle as a way of identifying Conference approved

literature. Well, there appears to be quite a bit of life left in this old fellowship yet. Remember the predicted demise of A.A. that was going to result from the vans of treatment center patients and court slip bearers who were being dumped at the front doors of our home groups? How many other alcoholic Armageddons are but faded memories for us now? One by one, an informed group conscience has allowed us to weather these storms or a loving God has removed them from our path.

I believe that when an informed group conscience has been reached on an issue, one can agree or disagree with the outcome. But if we are wrong, I believe a loving God will reveal that misstep to us in time. In the interim, our job whether we are in the majority or in the minority is to work for A.A. unity. I pray always that I never become so passionate about, or ego-invested in an issue that I am willing to tear this fellowship apart in proving that I am right. And finally, in those really tough times when you or I am absolutely convinced that we are right and everyone else is wrong, I pray that we be granted, with at least a modicum of grace, the ability to accept the informed group conscience, wrong though we may think it to be, and the wisdom to wait patiently for the opportunity to say, without rancor, "Better luck next time!"

Arnold R., Area 29

Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.

THE A.A. BICYCLE — TRAVELING THE BROAD HIGHWAY

Adapted from an original submission by Andy T.[53/53] to the Area 29 Margenser Newsletter, 2002.

THE WHEELS: One drunk talking to another forms a little group—others join them and as they grow and expand more little groups are formed. These little groups are the rubber tires of each wheel. (Where the rubber hits the road!)

One wheel has many spokes known as the **INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVES (IGRs)**, who attend intergroup meetings keeping a two-way flow of information going between the **Central Office** and the little groups.

These spokes connect at one **HUB**; which is the **INTERGROUP** or **CENTRAL OFFICE**; who elect officers and appoint committees to carry on the work of the little groups locally.

One wheel has many spokes known as **GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES (GSRs)**, who attend district meetings linking his/her little group to A.A. as a whole.

They connect to another **HUB**; the **AREA ASSEMBLY**.

The reflectors on each wheel are the **GROUP CONSCIENCE**: a reflection of the thinking of the groups, district or area. This informs the delegate as s/he prepares to attend the **GSC**.

THE FRAME: The **GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE (GSO)**, is the **HUB** of A.A. activity, something like an oversized intergroup or central office. But, it is much bigger... The national A.A. Business office, only more.

THE CRANK: The **GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**, the actual voice and effective conscience for our whole society, operates the movements of the A.A. structure. Together with the **TRUSTEES**, A.A.s and non A.A.s working as **SPECIAL WORKERS**, needed for the good of A.A. as a whole.

THE PEDALS: The **7th TRADITION** of A.A. is the lever turning the crank which operates the frame.

THE CHAIN: The **DELEGATES**, as one of the many trusted servants carrying the group conscience from the Areas the Delegates connect the messages from the little groups to the crank, powered by the contributions, and operating the frame turning the wheels.

THE SEAT: Guiding A.A. as a whole from the voice of the little groups is a **HIGHER POWER, A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, THE 'GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION' OF G-O-D**.

THE HANDLEBARS: **OUR THREE LEGACIES** of Recovery, Unity and Service help us get a handle on all these new ideas. The Steps, Traditions and Concepts help steer us and A.A.-as-a-whole so we all stay on the Road of Happy Destiny!



From the Archives...

Ten years ago in Box 4-5-9, the new translation of the Big Book in Mongolian was announced. The fourth edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* was approved at the 51st General Service Conference and began shipping later that year. Every A.A. group registered with GSO received one complementary copy. Page 449 still in the book...;-)

Fifteen years ago—the first issue of *La Vina* is published by the A.A.GV on a bi-monthly basis beginning June, 1996.

Twenty years ago—The General Service Conference is held in Rye Town, NY; only the second time the Conference is held outside Manhattan. The 1955 GSC was held in conjunction with the International Convention in St. Louis.

Twenty-Five years ago—Ruth Hock, A.A.'s first non-alcoholic secretary/staff member, passes away on May 4, 1986.

Thirty years ago—the first issue of *Markings*, the A.A. Archives newsletter is published.

Forty years ago—the GSC authorizes the A.A.GV to raise subscription rates to \$5.00 per year, single issue price 50¢

Fifty years ago—Bill W. is developing the Third Legacy Manual during 1961. Frank Buchman and Carl Jung die.

Seventy years ago—Dr. Bob asks Evan W., fired from the Akron Beacon-Journal and sobering up in May 1941, to write some 'blue-collar A.A.' pamphlets. Dr. Bob considers the Big Book too complicated for many A.A.'s.

Seventy-Five years ago—Bill writes that a small but solid group was developing at Clinton St. in New York, mid-'36

Eighty years ago—Akron's Russell 'Bud' Firestone achieves 'miraculous' sobriety through the Oxford Group in 1931. Dr. Carl Jung is treating Rowland H; tells him that there is no medical hope for alcoholics of his type.

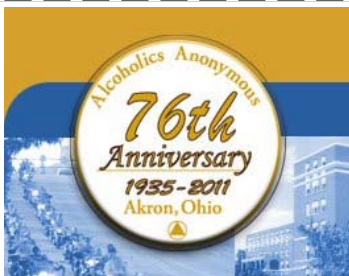
Ninety years ago—Bill W. invited by Thomas Edison to take an employment test at his laboratory—May 1921

One Hundred years ago—Bill W. and Ebby T. are classmates for one year in 1911 at Burr and Burton Seminary.

One Hundred Ten years ago—Charlie Towns opens his *Hospital for Drug and Alcohol Addictions* in NYC, 1901.

The Northeast Ohio Recorder is published four times yearly. We welcome the participation of all in Area 54. Submissions may be sent to newsletter@area54.org

Please send your letters and articles in plain text or MSWord-compatible formats. Deadline for inclusion in next issue is June 19.



Area 54 Open House Picnic

Hosted by the Groups of Districts 10 and 11

Christmas Run Park
700 N Grant St
Wooster Ohio 44691
Pavillion 1

June 26, 2011

Open @ 12:00 pm

Eat @ 1:30 pm

Lead @ 3 pm

Upcoming Events

[Ohio, Regional...and Beyond](#)

Elsewhere in Ohio

May 14—Columbus, OH

Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting
@ 10 am

August 5-7—Cincinnati, OH.

55th Ohio State Convention

August 12-13—Independence, OH

OYPA.A. Convention

U.S. and Canada

24th Int'l Men's Conference

April 15-17, 2011 in St. Louis, MO

15th National Archives Workshop

Sept 22-25, 2011 in Helena, MT

East-Central Region

July 22-24—Columbus, IN

Indiana State Convention & ECR Conference

November 10-13—Miamisburg, OH

East Central Regional Forum and Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our A.A. experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, 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

Your Trusted Servants Committee 61

Bob D., Panel 61 Delegate
PO Box 8, 50 N. Maple St.
Orwell, OH 44076
(216) 408-9020
delegate@area54.org

Ola P., Alternate Delegate
4480 Granada Blvd. #22
Warrensville Hts., OH 44128
(216) 662-8906
e-mail: altdelegate@area54.org

Jay M., Area Chairperson
378 Sullivan Ave
Akron, OH 44305
(330) 631-2604
e-mail: chair@area54.org

Calvin L., Treasurer
3571 Riedham Rd
Shaker Hts, OH 44120
(216) 334-4594
e-mail: treasurer@area54.org

Jamie B., Recording Secretary
3254 Redwood Rd.
Cleveland Hts., OH 44118
(216) 932-8016
e-mail: recordingsecretary@area54.org

Joel T., Mailing Secretary
4633 Apt. #5 Deer Creek Ct
Austintown, OH 44515
(330) 646-3490
e-mail: mailingsecretary@area54.org

Committee Chairpersons 2011-2012

Archives	Tim H. 1944 Jefferson-Eagleville Rd. Jefferson, Ohio 44047	(440) 415-2960 archives@area54.org
Archivist	Kevin S. 289 Colgate Ave. Elyria, OH 44035	(440) 323-9217 archivist@area54.org
Correctional Facilities	Thomas M. 220 Marmion Street Youngstown, OH 44507	(330) 559-9902 cf@area54.org
Cooperation with the Professional Community	James T. 19104 Maple Heights Blvd. Maple Hts., OH 44137	(216) 322-7005 cpc@area54.org
Finance	Diane K. 5 Chippenham Court Rocky River, OH 44116	(440) 333-5432 finance@area54.org
Floor Management	Robert M. 1367 Grantleigh Rd. South Euclid, OH 44121	(216) 691-1605 floormgmt@area54.org
Grapevine	Steve B. 347 Lucca St. Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 347-1120 gvchair@area54.org
Group Services	Jerry P. 4733 E. 85th St. Garfield Hts, OH. 44125	(216) 883-6095 groupservices@area54.org
Literature	Terry H. 2961 Essex Rd. Cleveland Hts., OH 44118	(216) 406-4089 literature@area54.org
"Recorder" Newsletter	Jeffrey Y. 1076 Woodview Rd Cleveland Hts., OH 44121	(216) 496-7594 newsletter@area54.org
Public Information	Tonia B. 1763 Clarkstone Rd Cleveland, OH. 44112	(216) 481-8322 pi@area54.org
Registrar	Bill P. P.O. Box 172 West Farmington, OH 44491	(216) 390-1468 registrar@area54.org
Special Needs	Herman A. 4480 New Hudson Rd Orwell, OH 44076	(440) 812-9222 specialneeds@area54.org
Treatment Facilities	Susan R. PO Box 8, 50 N. Maple St Orwell, Ohio 44076	(216) 407-6090 tf@area54.org

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