

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

July, August, September 2011

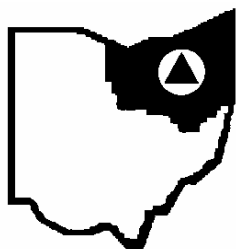
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Volume XXII, Issue 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 17	
Area Assembly	2:00
August 5-7	Cincinnati
55th Ohio State Convention	
August 12-14	Independence
OYPAA Convention	
August 21	
Workshop	2:00
September 18	
Area Committee Meeting	2:00
October 16	
Area Assembly	2:00

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



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A Word from our Delegate



Bob D. presented this report on his return from the 61st General Service Conference in New York:

The following recommendations were approved by the 61st General Service Conference and the General Service Board:

By Floor Action

It was recommended that:

1. The 61st General service Conference express its appreciation and gratitude for the French-language magazine *La Vigne*," and the value it has for French-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous and the respect "*La Vigne*" has shown for the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Agenda

It was recommended that:

2. The theme for the 2012 General Service Conference be: "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age"
3. The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2012 General Service Conference:
(a.) Carrying the A.A. Message: 1.) Still Our Primary Purpose 2.) Social Web Sites 3.) Young People in A.A. 4.) Importance of Sponsorship

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Alternate Delegate's Report

General Service is, in keeping with our 12th Step, carrying our message of recovery in ways that are impossible for the groups and individual AA members to carry. These services include meeting places, hospitals, treatment, and correctional cooperation. They mean pamphlets, books, intergroup offices, good publicity of almost every description, and voluntary money contributions from within the fellowship.



Here in Northeast Ohio, Area 54, one of 93 delegate areas in the US and Canada and one of four in Ohio, is the framework in which these general services are carried out. While Tradition 9 makes clear the principle that AA as such ought never be organized, it also at the same time, recognizes the need for some kind of organization to ensure that these vital services will continue to function under all conditions. This service board or committee is the "Area 54 Northeast Ohio General Service Assembly". It is a body of trusted servants responsible to perform and actively maintain these general services. It is the structure that takes the place of government in AA, ensuring that the full voice of Area 54 will be heard.

All trusted servants are elected, except for committee chairs who are

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Service Doesn't Have to be Kept a Secret

From the Editor...

A number of years ago, someone handed me a button that said, "Service is the Secret". I understood what it meant. The secret to staying sober long-term is always to stay active in the Fellowship. But not so long ago, a past delegate saw one of those buttons on a service worker and commented, "It shouldn't be a secret."

He had a point. Too often we engage in contempt prior to investigation when it comes to service work. We've heard someone else in a meeting give their opinion about this or that aspect of service, and we've taken their word for it. Rather lazy on our part, don't you think?

Sponsorship and service have made all the difference for me. At the risk of offering my opinion, let's glance down "the road not taken" just a bit. I was introduced to my first service position about 2 months sober – making coffee. I had no idea whether or not making coffee for a bunch of drunks would keep me sober. In fact, I was still in the fog and just went along with the person who offered the job to me out of curiosity. But what if I had said "No, I'm not sober long enough." or "I'm too busy", "I don't know how", "I don't want to" or any other of the myriad excuses we hear in meetings? What might have happened to me? Would I have stayed at the fringes of the program? Would I have met as many people as quickly? Would I have finally started feeling useful and enjoy a sense of belonging? Probably not. Eventually, I would have lost interest in those boring meetings and your lousy coffee and quit going altogether. I would have drunk again, and I'd be dead by now.

My sponsor encouraged me gently to take this or that service position. He would put his head together with someone at a meeting. The next thing I knew, he'd wave me over to them. "Charlie needs a ride home – it's on your way – can you do that?" He might also suggest, "Say, why don't you go over to the door and greet people as they come in." You could say I was sponsored into service. In fact, I was sponsored on to the panel of Area 54 officers, but that's a story for another time.

Emptying ashtrays and washing china coffee cups (way back when), making coffee, greeting at the door – all these activities kept me out of myself when I first came in. Funny thing is, they still work that way. I didn't think of these things as 'giving back'. Back then, I was flabbergasted that you even noticed me or wanted my help. "Who me?" took on a whole new meaning suddenly. After a year, you asked me to moderate a table and eventually lead a meeting. Part of me was elated, but much of me was scared to do it. "Good," my sponsor told me, "you must be learning a little humility." I just didn't want the old-timers yelling at me – which they never did. Did they take a firm hand with me? Yes, usually a well-deserved constructive criticism, always and tempered with love and tolerance, often an arm draped over my shoulder, quietly instructing or informing me.

Years ago, a guy named Red N. appointed himself my service sponsor, then explained why I needed one. After pushing all my buttons one day, I shot back at him, "Why are you always so hard on me, Red?" His response changed my view of service.

"Picking on you? No, I'm not picking on you. I see something in you worth working with. If I didn't see something worth saving, I'd ignore you. You get your feelings hurt too much. I'm trying to help you develop a skin. You'll need that in service work – a hide like a rhino."

At some point, my home group sent me to Intergroup as their Representative. We called those once-a-month meetings, "Saturday Night at the Fights." Boy, did I learn about patience, tolerance and the Traditions! I learned how to listen to others' opinions. I was active on a young people's conference committee for several years. I rotated out of those positions and found my way to General Service. I've served in three Areas in Ohio and Michigan over the years. What an adventure it has been!

What has driven my success in service work? Willingness and teach-ability, as well as a little curiosity about what "those people" do over in that other room. Commitment to finish a job I've been given. These are all things that you taught me by your example. Service sponsorship has been an essential ingredient along the way. Late night bull sessions where I'd sit on the outer circle of a conversation, listening to the past delegates talk about New York and the conference. I was honored to be included. They answered my silly questions lovingly and honestly. Now, I'm in the middle of that circle and folks ask me questions. Some change, huh? I'm humbled by your trust.

Service work has made all the difference in the world for me. Which would you rather do? Sit on the edge or jump into the middle of the bed? I'll take the comfortable middle every time.

In Love and Service, Jeff, your editor.

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



Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

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(b.) Change - Essential to A.A.'s Growth: 1.) Service: Our Third Legacy, 2.) Spirit of Rotation, 3.) Diversity - Let's Keep Our Doors Open for Any who May Suffer from Alcoholism, 4.) Archives - Where the Past Meets the Present.

4. The following be the workshop topic for the 2012 General Service Conference: "Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare."

Alternate Delegate's Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

appointed by the delegate. The groups elect the GSRs, the GSRs elect the DCMs and they collectively including the committee chairs and intergroup liaisons make up the Area Assembly who in turn elect a Delegate, an alternate, chairperson, treasurer, recording secretary, and mailing secretary. Any interested AA member can attend the Area Assembly, but only those who hold service positions or their alternate may vote.

Preparing the Delegate to attend the annual General Service Conference, held in New York City is the primary responsibility of the assembly, as this is the method by which our collective group conscience can speak forcefully and express its desires for needed services worldwide. Elections are held in October in even years. Ex: next election will be October 2012. The third legacy procedure is used at the assembly, this means to be elected, one must have 2/3rds of the number of votes cast. I am sure that it was the intent, that this particular type of voting procedure would help to eliminate the need for campaigning and the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes.

Today, general service includes all kinds of activities within its structure, carried out by groups, districts, area committees, and delegates. Here in Area 54, the delegate and area committee members make themselves available to visit groups or district meetings and talk about general service. We have three workshops per year in addition to our annual Mini conference, open house picnic in June and Gratitude Sunday in November.

Keeping a balance between our ultimate authority (God) and responsibility (the groups) and the active day-to-day functioning of the Area requires constant communication among all elements of the structure.

"It can take hard work to get the attention of alcoholics, but with a creative approach, they can be encouraged to take time out from the nuts and bolts of recovery to think about another phase of their new lives:" — Bill W.

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

Archives

No recommendations.

Cooperation With the Professional Community

No recommendations.

Corrections

It was recommended that:

5. The following changes be made to the pamphlet "A.A in Correctional Facilities": That the text in the section on "Meetings" which reads,

"Since the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery in AA., many groups hold Step meetings. The leader might share a bit of his or her story and talk briefly about a particular Step and then throw the meeting open for discussion. Each type of meeting serves a different purpose; all are needed." Be replaced with:

"Many groups also hold Step meetings, Tradition meetings or Big Book studies. Each type of meeting serves a different purpose; all are needed."

And that the heading and text of the section Step meetings, which reads,

"Step meetings

In addition to a leader sharing his or her experience with a Step, some groups might read from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, followed by a discussion. Many groups find listening to cassette tapes on the Steps helpful. (Tapes are available from the General Service Office.)"

Be replaced with:

"Step meetings. Tradition meetings and Big Book studies

"Since the Twelve Steps are the basis of our recovery in A.A., many groups hold Step meetings. Some groups read passages from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or the Big Book, followed by a discussion.

"Groups may also read and discuss the Twelve Traditions, the best answers we have found to the questions "How can A.A. best function?" and "How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?" Since the Big Book contains not only directions for how many of our members practice the Twelve Steps, but also a brief history of our Fellowship's beginnings and personal stories to help newcomers identify with other alcoholics, many A.A. groups devote meeting time to

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Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

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the study of this basic text.

"Audio recordings of the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are available from the General Service Office. The pamphlets "The Twelve Steps Illustrated" and "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" may also be helpful."

Finance

It was recommended that:

6. The following changes be made to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix:" "AND" be replaced with "OR" between the pie charts that start on page 12 and an additional "OR" added after the second pie chart. Insert an additional blank pie chart and distribution text.

Grapevine

It was recommended that:

7. In the spirit of being self-supporting while also protecting our Traditions of attraction, anonymity, and non-affiliation, A.A. Grapevine be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies, such as, but not limited to, smart phones, tablets, e-readers, applications and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of magazines, books and products. The committee requests that the Board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time. The Committee requests that a status and financial report be submitted to the 2012 Grapevine Conference Committee.

8. The A.A. Grapevine Board, in consultation with the A.A. World Services Board and under the guidance of the General Service Board chairman, continue to investigate what efficiencies and objectives can be accomplished by combining services and sharing resources, including reviewing

Concept 11. while still maintaining editorial and corporate independence.

9. The editorial revisions made by the A.A. Grapevine staff to The A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print" pamphlet be approved with minor suggestions.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

No recommendations.

Literature

It was recommended that:

10. The revised pamphlet 1The A.A. Member-Medications and Other Drugs" be approved.

11. The trustees Literature Committee continue to develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee expressed support for the trustees' efforts to develop a pamphlet which reflects the wide range of spiritual experiences of A.A. members and asked that a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2012 Conference Committee on Literature for consideration.

12. The following text under "When you're a G.S.R.' in the pamphlet "G.S.R. General Service Representative" which currently reads: "You are linking your home group with the whole of AA. Back in 1953, when the "group contact" was suggested as a new type or trusted servant, the job was seen simply as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information..." Be replaced with: "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 delegates to the newly-formed General Service

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Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

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Conference. By 1953, the job of 'group representative' was also seen as a good means of exchanging up-to-date information..."

Policy & Admissions

It was recommended that:

13. Oscar C. B. and Jesus C. P. S. from the General Service Structure of Peru be admitted to the 61st General Service Conference as observers.

14. Sheila D. and Martin B. from the General Service Structure of Great Britain be admitted to the 61st General Service Conference as observers.

15. Mike D., alternate delegate, Area 50, Western New York, be seated as a Conference member at the 61st General Service Conference because John C., the Panel 60 delegate for Area 50 resigned.

16. Mel C., alternate delegate, Area 83, Eastern Ontario International. be seated as a Conference member at the 61st General Service Conference because Robb W., the panel 61 delegate for Area 83 is unable to attend.

17. The General Service Conference conduct a thorough inventory of itself in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan formulated by the Conference Inventory Planning Committee.

18. The 64th General Service Conference be held April 27-May 3, 2014 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays or hotel availability.

19. The Conference Committee on Archives meet separately at the General Service Conference following a joint meeting with the trustees' Committee on Archives.

20. The following procedure for the submission of Concept V minority appeals to the General Service Conference be established:

1) The minority, expressing a feeling or opinion in light of the right of appeal to the General Service Conference, has been very rare. It is hoped that an individual entitled under Concept V to appeal would

exhaust every avenue offered within the General Service Conference structure prior to making an appeal to the General Service Conference.

2) Those entitled to appeal to the General Service Conference are members who, on the inverted triangle of the A.A. service structure, fall *below* the General Service Conference level - members of staffs, committees, corporate boards or trustees, as referenced, in the first paragraph of Concept V of *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

3) The minority should announce, in writing, to the chair of the General Service Board, the General Service Conference delegate chair and to the General Service Office Conference coordinator that it intends to appeal under Concept V to the General Service Conference.

4) All Conference members will be given notice through the General Service Office of the minority's decision to file an appeal.

5) Appeals under Concept v, including any minority report and background, must be received in writing 30 days prior to the General Service Conference in order for these materials to be distributed to Conference members. The G.S.O. Conference coordinator will be responsible for seeing that this material is made available to all Conference members within 10 business days after its receipt.

6) The minority's appeal will be presented before the start of deliberation on Committee Reports:

- The minority will be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their appeal.
- The majority will then be given a maximum of ten minutes to present their position.

7) The discretion to debate a minority's appeal rests with the Conference body.

The chair will ask if there is a motion to decline to consider the minority's appeal. A motion to decline to consider a minority's appeal:

- Must be made without comment.
- Needs a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Requires a *two-thirds majority*.

8) If the Conference decides to debate the appeal, it then takes the form of a motion which does not require a second. If passed by substantial unanimity, it becomes an Advisory Action.

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Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

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9) Whether or not an appeal is debated, a summary of the minority's report and the disposition of the appeal will be published in the *Final Conference Report*.

Public Information

It was recommended that:

21. The 2011 A.A. Membership Survey be conducted by area on a random basis as was done in the 2007 AA. Membership Survey.

22. The Following 'Policy on Actors Portraying A.A. Members or Potential A.A. Members in Videos Produced by the General Service Board or its Affiliates' be approved:

Videos produced and distributed by the General Service Board or its affiliated corporations, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. and Alcoholics Anonymous Grapevine, Inc., *that* include actors portraying A.A. members or potential A.A. members shall not show the actors full face, unless:

a.) The General Service Board, by substantial unanimity, agrees that the proposed video is consistent with the A.A. tradition of attraction rather than promotion, and that such use of an actor or actors does not in fact or in appearance place personalities before principles, and

b.) The General Service Conference authorizes, by substantial unanimity, the production and distribution of such video.

For purposes of this Policy, a video" is any item of visual media in which a live actor appears, regardless of the medium in which the video is presented (DVD, film, electronic File, etc.).

For purposes of this Policy, a potential A.A. member" is a character in a video who is portrayed as seeking help from A.A., or who is portrayed as the recipient of Twelfth Step work in any form. Existing videos using actors to portray A.A. members or potential AA members may continue to be produced and distributed until retired from service.

The videos "Markings on the Journey" and "Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions," each of which is currently distributed only to A.A. groups, as well as 'Bill's Own Story,' which also has

restricted distribution, may continue to be produced and distributed. A copy of this policy shall be given to all entities participating in the production of a video prior to commencement of production. The background documentation for the policy will always be distributed with the policy.

23. A culturally sensitive Spanish—language Public Service Announcement be developed by the trustees' Public Information Committee, independent of any English language P.S.A. (production cost not to exceed \$40,000) to better ensure the hand of A.A. is there whenever anyone anywhere reaches out.

24. The revised "Understanding Anonymity" pamphlet be approved.

25. The revised "The A.A. Fact File" be approved.

26. The section titled 'How You Can Find A.A. in Your Town' in "A.A. At a Glance" be changed to "How To Find AA, and that that section which reads: "*Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in any telephone directory. In most urban areas, a central A.A. office or intergroup, staffed mainly by volunteer A.A.s will be happy to answer your questions and/or put you in touch with those who can.*"

be amended to read:

"Look for Alcoholics Anonymous in any telephone directory, your local newspaper or How to Find A.A. Meetings" on the home page of our website www.aa.org. In most urban areas, a central AA. office or intergroup, staffed mainly by volunteer A.A.s will be happy to answer your questions and/or put you in touch with those who can."

Report and Charter

It was recommended that

27. The following text be added to *The A.A. Service Manual* in Chapter Nine: The General Service Board after the section titled "General Service Trustees" on page S69:

"Trustees Emeriti

The General Service Board has designated rotating board chairpersons as trustees emeriti. Trustees emeriti are invited to attend quarterly board meetings of the General Service Board and the annual General

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Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

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Service Conference. They are a resource of corporate memory and are often asked to share their experience with past board decisions, how previous General Service Boards conducted business, and the processes they used to reach a group conscience. Trustees emeriti do not vote on any matter before the General Service Board or the Conference."

28. The following text on page S67 in *The A.A. Service Manual* under "NOMINATION PROCEDURE" in the section on Regional Trustees: "2. Two Conference Actions should be kept in mind. In 1977, the Conference recommended that a delegate not be eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference. And in 1985, it was recommended that 'no area shall submit an individual as candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large U.S/Canada in the same year.' "

Be replaced with:

"2. Prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large/U.S. or Canada at the same Conference. Also, a General Service Conference delegate is not eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference."

29. The following text on page S68 in *The A.A. Service Manual* under "NOMINATION PROCEDURE" in the section on Trustees-at-large: "In the areas, the same procedure used in selecting a regional trustee candidate is followed. No area should submit the same name for regional and at-large trustee in the same year."

Be replaced with:

"Prior Conferences have recommended that no area submit the same person as a candidate for both regional trustee and trustee-at-large/U.S. or Canada at the same Conference. Also, a General Service Conference delegate is not eligible as a trustee candidate until one year after his or her last Conference."

30. The section titled "Inactive Service Workers" in Chapter Four on page S37 in *The A.A. Service Manual* be revised to read:

"Inactive Service Workers

How does the area deal with area officers and committee

chairs who have been absent from two or more assemblies? While the area assembly needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

31. The following sections be added to *The A.A. Service Manual* as follows:
Add to Chapter Two, page S28, before section titled "Group Information":

"Inactive General Service Representative

A.A. relies on the autonomy of each group regarding the period of time and involvement that constitutes inactivity. While the group needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

Add to Chapter Three, page S33, before section titled "The Alternate D.C.M.":

"Inactive District Committee Member

AA. relies on the autonomy of each district regarding the period of time and involvement that constitutes inactivity. While the district needs to establish its own practices or guidelines, it is generally suggested that a service worker be asked to resign if he or she is unable to carry out the responsibilities of the position."

32. The following text in the section titled "What Goes On at the Conference" on page S55 in *The A.A. Service Manual*:

"What Goes On at the Conference

A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting. and business sessions from Monday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions (see Chapter Eight for more on the committee system), and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations. A closing breakfast on Saturday,

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Delegate's Report on the General Service Conference

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following the last day of Conference business, provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. Every other year, a visit to the home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County is scheduled.”

Be replaced with:

“What Goes On at the Conference

A typical Conference lasts a full week, with sessions running from morning to evening. The opening day features roll call, keynote address, an opening dinner and a five-speaker A.A. meeting. Business sessions from Sunday to Friday include committee meetings, presentations, workshops, and new trustee elections. Each delegate serves on one of the standing Conference committees, which meet early in the week and do the principal work of the Conference. (Some delegates also have a secondary committee assignment.) The committees bring recommendations to the full Conference for consideration as possible Advisory Actions (see Chapter Eight for more on the committee system), and generally the last two days (or more) are devoted to discussion and voting on committee recommendations.

Although outside of the Conference, a delegates-only meeting is often held prior to the opening day of the Conference. On Saturday, following the last day of Conference business, a closing breakfast provides an opportunity for goodbyes, and for rotating trustees to say their farewells. In alternate years, a visit to G.S.O./Grapevine offices or the home of Bill W. and Lois in Westchester County is scheduled.”

33. The General Service Board develop text to add to Article 3 in the current Conference Charter as found in *The A.A. Service Manual* which includes the principles of participation, petition and appeal, for consideration by the 2012 Conference Committee on Report and Charter.

Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities

It was recommended that:

34. The recovery pamphlet “A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs” be approved.

35. The name of the committee be changed to

the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs/Accessibilities and that these changes be reflected in the committee’s Composition, Scope and Procedure.

36. The title of the pamphlet “A.A. in Treatment Facilities” be changed to “A.A. in Treatment Settings” and that the term “treatment facilities” be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as “Treatment Committees” or “treatment settings” wherever it appears in the pamphlet.

Trustees

It was recommended that:

37. The following slates of trustees and officers be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. in May 2011:

Class A Trustees

Terrance M. Bedient, FACHE	John Fromson, M.D.
Frances L. Brisbane, Ph.D.	Corliss Burke
Ward B. Ewing, D.D.	Michele Grinberg, J.D.
The Honorable Rogelio R. Flores	

Class B Trustees

Rod B.	George M.
Kenneth B.	Don Mi.
Donald C.	Don Ma.
Nancy H.	Eleanor N.
Barbara K.	Victor P.
Roberta L.	Pamela R.
J. Gary L.	Clayton V.

38. The January 2011 appointment of the following officers by the Chair of the General Service Board be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in May 2011:

Assistant Treasurer	Donald W. Meurer
Assistant Secretary	Doug R.

39. The slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. World Services Corporate Board in May 2011

40. The slate of directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the A.A. Grapevine Corporate Board in May 2011.

District Reports

NEWS from the DISTRICTS

Sincerest apologies to the Districts that submitted reports in March. These were omitted from the Recorder for lack of space. Better late than never....

District 1

As newly elected DCM for District 1, I have visited various groups in my district explaining group structure. As a result, I am proud to announce the acquisition of 4 new GSRs to the district. I look forward to the upcoming journey as DCM for District 1. Now that the district is no longer a dark district, we plan to keep the light on for you and countless others with the help of a loving God.

Bill H., DCM D-1

District 3

My district has been dark for many years. I am attempting to make myself known to the meetings in my district. I have had a large number of meetings relocate in my district due to the closing of one of the sober clubs. It has been a challenge to track down these meetings because they are not listed in the meeting book, and in some cases, I have had to rely on flyers to find some of these relocated meetings.

I have some positive reaction to the idea of general service work at the meetings I have attended, as well as some negative reaction. At some meetings, it has been difficult to make contact with the group secretary, or to determine the next home group meeting date and time. It has been said we are not always an organized lot, and I tend to agree.

Ron O., DCM D-3

Ashtabula Dual District 23/39

We have been updating group change forms. This is a very important job as the Regional Directory needs to be updated when trying to locate a meeting or temporary contact to Bridge-the-Gap.

DCMs Jon E, D23 & Tim H, D39

Cleveland North Coast Multi-Dist.

There are a lot of things to report both good and not so good. First, at this time CNCMD is homeless, and in the process of finding a new location for the meeting, which meets the first Saturday of each month, unless otherwise stated in the CNCMD Tri-fold. Also, as we prepare for Unity Day on May 15, we also look forward to the History Presentation on Saturday May 21, from 1:00-3:00 PM at the Carl B. Stokes Building. We're sure it will be very informative and interesting. The presenter will be Jay M. There are many events scheduled for this year including an October Workshop, our annual family picnic in August and a Service Panel on 3-30-11 at 4 Absolutes 7:00.

Quincetta M., Chair of CNCMD

District 30

We continue to provide service in a district that's abundant in AA meetings, but very little service representation outside the groups. We continue to have a few people that come to the regular meeting and we discuss many service concepts and how we can get more people involved in our district. Since our last report, the group sent Grapevine editions to the city jail and treatment facilities. They were well received. We will continue to let groups in the Euclid area know that a monthly service meeting is available.

Shyrl B., DCM D-30

District 34

There is progress being made in District 34. I have contacted persons listed on the Group Information Sheets and have gotten many updates. I have also passed on information concerning the importance of having an active GSR, which includes information about our mini-conference. As I have stated before, many of the groups listed have moved to other districts, and some no longer exist. However, I will continue to contact groups and show up at meetings. The pamphlet Circles of Love and Service says that if a group does not have a good GSR, it is isolated from the rest of the Fellowship—it doesn't participate in the conscience of AA as a

whole.

Quincetta M., DCM D-34

District 49

After serving as a GSR for my home group, Nordonia Mens, I was elected DCM for District 49 in October 2010. The district consists of 25 groups in northern Summit County which includes Twinsburg, Maccedonia, Northfield, Richfield, Peninsula and Hudson. Approximately seven of these groups have GSRs. The district is also part of the Akron Multi-district which includes Districts 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 49, 50 and 60. Although I have not achieved my goal of visiting all of the groups in the district, my current focus is ensuring that all active groups are registered with GSO and providing group update information to the Area Registrar by the end of March 2011.

Jerry P., DCM D-49

District 50

As a new DCM for District 50, I explained about group structure at all home group meetings and the importance of having a GSR. All groups are encouraged to attend the Mini-Conference.

Ron P., DCM D-50

INTERGROUP NEWS

ASHTABULA. We have just updated our website, www.aago.net, with new photos of our office space, with local meeting schedule and contact information to various Intergroup officers. We have also changed our monthly meeting to Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. We carry all A.A.W.S. literature and various other recovery publications. Yours in recovery,

Jon E., Ashtabula Intergroup



Talks from the Mini-Conference

Selected excerpts from some of the talks at the 2011 Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference.

Love and Service

By Vanessa S.

It is truly an honor and a privilege to be able to stand here before this Mini-Conference of AA and talk on the subject of Love and Service. When I first got here to AA I was greeted by not just the person at the door but also the members in the group who shook my hand with a smile and said, "Welcome to the Calvary Group," and told me their names, which I knew I would not remember. People were laughing and talking and I felt uncomfortable. But something in the back of my mind told me that this is the place to be.

As time went on I not only heard what Love and Service was about in AA but I experienced it. I can remember being shown the ACTION part of what Love and Service is in this program. They said, "Let us love you until you can love yourself." I would think to myself what a problem that might cause later because of the way I mistreated the very people that tried to love me during my alcoholism, like my family and friends. It did not occur to me that God put this program together and that God was in the meetings. So, that's just what they did. They loved me until I could love myself. They never gave up on me.

They took time to explain things to me, to give me a little pat on the back now and then; they took time to pick me up and take me to meetings every day, my first year, and other numerous little kind and thoughtful acts on my behalf.

Our Twelfth Step....carrying the message...is the basic service that the AA fellowship can ever give. This is the principle aim and main reason for our existence. As they say, if AA fails it will fail from within. Therefore, it is more than a set of principles; it is a society in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

AA service is whatever helps us to reach a fellow sufferer...ranging all the way from a Twelfth Step call, to answering that phone call and sitting down, sharing your experience, strength and hope with the alcoholic. Service to me includes the meeting places where we are able to keep the doors open. Where the alcoholic who still suffers is able to stumble into our meetings and get the help he/she needs. It is the hospitals cooperating with AA in order to help and educate them about the disease of alcoholism and treatment for the alcoholic. It is also our AA's General Service Office where we take action to help those nationally and internationally with persons throughout the country who may reach out for the help of AA. Our Central/Intergroup Offices that provide 24/6 contact numbers, maintain group contact information, publish local meeting directories, maintain a website of information, publish a newsletter for groups, hold regular meetings your Intergroup Representative attends. This is the sum total of all these services which is our "Third Legacy of Service." When we volunteer our time and money to these areas we are doing a service from within the Fellowship.

Someone said, "I can never repay AA for what AA has

done for me." Oh, yes you can...and that is to get active in the fellowship of AA. Love and Service are both ACTION words. If we are truly grateful and have love for the fellowship of AA and what it has done for us then there is a lot you can give back and that is by doing service work.

A longtime once asked me a question, "When do you give up on helping an alcoholic?" His answer was "when he takes his last breath." We must never give up on helping another alcoholic who still suffers and reaches out for help. It is when we have this type of love that we can be of service.

These services whether performed by individuals, groups, areas or AA as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Several of the most vital areas of service is that of the General Service Office, AA World Service, Inc., AA Grapevine and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

All doors were closed to us but one. For, some, we decided to go back out and experience a bit more. Eventually, by God's grace and mercy, we crawled back, expecting the same looks of contempt and disgust we got everywhere else. Instead, we were welcomed back to the only home where that man or woman is standing at the door saying, "Welcome back, I'm glad to see you here!" And then they asked, "Are you ready to take certain steps?"

Love and Service is how the parts of what I've just pointed out to you all fit and work together. This is where the AA system for getting things done—to help the alcoholics, without bosses or rules.

It is putting the alcoholic ahead of your own best interest. It is having no thought of reward for doing service in AA. It is making that donation to AA and that donation being anonymous. It all boils down to gratitude for our recovery which leads to love and in turn that love leading to service.

Spiritual Value of Our A.A. Dollars

By Calvin L.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I Am Responsible. That is an amazing statement for an alcoholic like me to make. That in itself is the Spiritual Value of Our AA Dollars.

Before I came to AA, I was not a very responsible person. I always had good intentions but I could not muster the power to carry through. Yet I was under the delusion in the reality of my own mind that I was self sufficient, in control and had total responsibility for people, places and things that were none of my business. I continued in this flawed thinking until I hit bottom and came to AA. Even today, I must be reminded that my perception may not be the reality of the situation.

In AA, I learned that I was responsible for my actions, that I was Powerless, not only over alcohol but also people, places and things. I needed a power greater than myself. I needed a God of my own understanding. I was told that I must find him now. I

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Talks from the Mini-Conference, cont'd

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proceeded to develop a relationship with God through the Twelve Steps of AA. I have incorporated these spiritual principles into my daily life. Today I know that God brought me to Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous brought me to God.

I remember being at a Big Book meeting one year into my sobriety and reading in the Big Book that “each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God.” I realized then and there that this had also happened for me. What an incredible moment. The book described what would happen and it actually happened to me. I had developed a relationship with God.

Today I have relationship and fellowship with MY GOD. He is the Creator and I am the Creation, He is the Potter and I am the Clay. He is not just the God of my sobriety. He is God of my life. I experienced a Spiritual Awakening through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Today I am responsible. I tap into a Power Greater than myself each day. I do this through the power of prayer. The Eleventh step talks about praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry it out. I need that Power to do the next right thing. I don't always want to do the next right thing. So I need a Power greater than myself to tap into.

What is the Spiritual Value of our AA Dollars? Saving lives and changing lives! Establishing, maintaining and repairing relationships. Becoming productive citizens, that's what AA has done for you and me.

No wonder the early AAs thought that this was the vanguard of a new awakening to save mankind. Thank God that through trial and error they came to the knowledge that we would do but one thing. We would be about Recovery from Alcoholism.

Thank God the wealthy benefactors turned us down when we asked for money. John D. Rockefeller said “I am afraid that money will spoil this thing.” Also there was the cliché “Who pays the piper calls the tune.” Outside contributions would bring about outside direction. AA would accept no outside contributions. This spiritual program would be self-supporting through our own contributions, this is the spiritual value of our AA dollars.

Thus AA is run by alcoholics for alcoholics and supported through the contributions of alcoholics only. Whenever an alcoholic puts money into the basket, he is guaranteeing our spiritual way of life. Not only for himself but for future alcoholics who stumble through the door. We keep the doors of AA open by making sure the bills are paid at the Intergroup office, the District, the Area and at the General Service Office. We keep the doors of AA open by giving our time, talent and treasures for the benefit of others...thinking of others, doing for others, getting out of self.

What is the spiritual value our AA dollars? Our green Self-Support card states “The amount of our contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around the world.” What is the spiritual value of our AA dollars? You and me, we are the spiritual value of our AA dollars.

Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age: Carrying AA's Message Online

by Dan M.

Since 1997, the Internet has proven to be a valuable tool for Area 54 in carrying the message – the message of service as well as sobriety. For Area 54, the Web site is a repository of information. One frequently experienced difficulty of service rotation is the loss of information that the service worker fails to pass on, such as computer files or paper records. Over the years, this has led to inefficiency and inconsistency of Area practices and policies. For example, a corrections chair that spent two years establishing local contacts at institutions and home groups who fails to pass this information on to the next chair, which forces the incoming chair to redo the same footwork, rather than just updating the information. Similar situations have occurred for Area records such as district boundaries and maps, Area minutes, NE Ohio Recorders, to name a few.

The Area 54 Web site has become an important data warehouse of our shared experience providing 24 x 7 access to information, reducing the burden on service workers of locating and providing that information, and improving satisfaction of those seeking information, so long as the website is updated regularly. Today, the Area 54 Web site houses the Area 54 Guidelines, the Mini-Conference guidelines, GSR School Workbook, the NE Ohio Recorder, district boundaries and maps, district meeting schedules and minutes, standing committee information and contacts, group update forms, and the Area 54 and East Central Region (ECR) schedules. The Web site also provides links to other Ohio service Areas, local Intergroups and Central Offices, the General Service Office and a variety of historical resources.

When the Area Web site was first conceived, it was the intent of the Area committee to allow non-service entities to tap the resource for their use, such as announcing events. This was especially important in 1997, when registering a domain name was about \$65 a year and hosting was expensive. At that time, the total annual expense was about \$500. Today, the cost is about \$150, which allows other entities to create their own websites cost efficiently.

Today, Area 54 is exploring use of the Web site and e-mail to reduce the escalating cost of printing and mailing, the largest single expense incurred by the Area budget. The General Service Office undertook a similar optional distribution policy several years ago with its Archives newsletter *Markings*, which was followed with *BOX 4-5-9* e-mail distribution. While we realize that a portion of our distribution will be printed and mailed, even a small move to online resources can save the Area thousands of dollars that can be used to carry the message in other ways.

Despite many benefits of online resources, there are potential problems that we must consider and take steps to reduce. The General Service Office publishes a guideline called *The AA Guidelines on Internet* (MG-18). This publication provides the shared experience of AA members utilizing online resources to

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Talks from the Mini-Conference, cont'd

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carry the message, such as websites, social networking, e-mail, online meetings and Web conferencing. Last updated in June 2008, the General Service Office constantly requests that members and service entities share their website and online experiences, which is especially important in a rapidly changing and evolving environment.

Many of the concerns addressed in the *AA Guidelines on Internet* address our Eleventh Tradition. Specifically, as stated in the Long Form of the AA Tradition, that, "... our [last] names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed."

Everything we post online is no longer confined to a sole audience, such as a home group. For example, when we print and distribute an announcement at an AA meeting, it is directed at those AA members. However, posting the same flyer online now reaches anyone who has access to Internet resources and manages to browse to its location. In fact, there are thousands of data mining Web crawlers that purposely seek out all information posted on the Internet and index it into search records for its users. Because of these powerful tools, we must be rigorous in our efforts to insure that personal identify information is protected.

Area 54 is not immune from such harm. In the past we have inadvertently made mistakes. For many years, the Area 54 newsletter, the *NE Ohio Recorder*, was not an anonymous document. The *NE Ohio Recorder* included the first and last names, addresses, and phone numbers of the Area Committee, including Area officers, standing committee chairs and district committee members. Despite this lack of anonymity, it was mailed to 1,500 groups in NE Ohio with no assurance of how the document would be treated. Simply leaving the newsletter within the grasp of family members at home potentially compromised anonymity. It was not uncommon to find the newsletter circulated at "open" AA meetings. This was drawn to our attention by a past delegate from New Hampshire who has relocated to Area 54. While examining this situation we were also considering posting the *NE Ohio Recorder* on the Area Web site. Since 2006, the *NE Ohio Recorder* has

been published without last names and made it available on the Area Web site.

A similar growing experience occurred with personal e-mail addresses of Area service workers. Many, including myself, prefer e-mail addresses that include first and last names. This presents a two-fold problem. When the e-mail address is printed on the Area Web site or on printed material it directly compromises anonymity. Also, when an e-mail is sent to other members, e-mail forwarding and the dreaded "reply all" expose the identity to anyone the e-mail is forwarded too. Unfortunately, our propensity to create chain e-mails exacerbates this problem. There are several e-mail practices to reduce these problems, such as using blind carbon copy (BCC) and removing previous recipient's lists before forwarding e-mail. We urge everyone in service to learn and practice good e-mail etiquette, or shall we say netiquette, when using e-mail as a service tool.

To reduce potential exposure of identity for our service workers, Area 54 has used generic e-mail addresses for its officers and committees, such as delegate@area54.org. These generic e-mail addresses help preserve continuity of communication due to rotation and reduce identifying names on the Area Web site and in printed material, such as the Area schedule mailed to 1,500 groups in NE Ohio.

For the same reason, we need to be cautious about including names and phone numbers on flyers and other announcements posted on the Internet, or distributed at groups. Reverse phone book searches may lead to identifying the owner of a telephone number. This attempt to garner more information from small bits, like a phone number, is called social engineering. While not new, social engineering has proliferated in the Internet Age and is the root of identity theft.

While the Area Web site does not utilize "guest books" that allow visitors to post comments, some service entities do permit these postings. Similar identity and anonymity concerns must be considered, including last names and email addresses of visitors,

and the content that is posted, such as identifying information of other members and offensive comments. Web masters must be aware of these situations and create policies that allow the removal of offensive postings and hide personally identifying information, such as e-mail addresses. Chat rooms must be dealt with by establishing similar policies.

An emerging concern for Web masters is "geotagging," or geospatial metadata contained within photographs, video, SMS messages, or RSS feeds. This data includes geocoding, or the geographical location of where the photo or video was created or the SMS or RSS feed originated. This information can be plugged into a variety of mapping or GPS coordinate converter websites, easily identifying the home of a member. Be aware, cell phones or smart phones attach GIS information. Posting tagged photos reveals the location and possibly the identity of the member that shot the picture or video. These dangers can be avoided by removing geotags with a metadata removal tool for photos before publishing them on the Internet.

This brings us to social networking. Some of the largest abuses of our Eleventh Tradition can be observed on social networking Web sites, such as Facebook and MySpace. These concerns are not only for anonymity, but our safety as well. While initially attractive to our youngest generations, social networks have grown in population with young baby boomers. In May 2010, the Pew Internet & American Life Project reported that 47% of people 50 to 64 use a social network, and 26% of 65-years and older.* Of those using social networks, 20% of online adults ages 50-64 say they use social networking sites every day. At the same time, the use of status update services like Twitter has also grown for people aged 50-64. One in ten internet users ages 50 and older now say they use Twitter or another service to share updates about themselves or see updates about others. The Pew study indicates that 8% of all Internet users are now using Twitter.

While there are many unique advantages of social networking, there are just as many concerns. Social net-

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Talks from the Mini-Conference, cont'd

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working safety and identity concerns, including cyber bullying and identity theft. Research indicates that people are more likely to say things in an e-mail or website than they are in person. These sites open the door for other identity problems through the posting of names, addresses and photos, some of which could be other AA members that did not give permission. Tweeting and texting can also lead to inadvertently sharing telephone numbers and last names.

The "smart phone" has made the Internet mobile, which means exacerbated e-mail and texting identity problems. Nearly 85% of adults under 65-years have a cell phone.

Area 54 has taken advantage of new technologies enabling it to carry the message of recovery and service more efficiently. As well as remaining on the cutting edge, we must maintain current policies and serve as a teacher for the groups and members in NE Ohio to deal with and prevent potential tradition problems. We need to listen closely to the needs of our members and provide the guidance to address rapidly changing and evolving technologies. We must painstakingly protect the anonymity and identity of our service workers and other AA members in NE Ohio. We also need to help AA World Service transform to emerging forms of media as the printed word gives way to electronic technologies. This can be done by participating in future surveys and letting our delegate carry our opinions to the General Service Conference, where these issues will be discussed.

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References

*Pew Internet & American Life Project. (2011). Pew Internet. Retrieved on March 28, 2011 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/>

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 Sept. 11.

HOW IMPORTANT IS A HOMEGROUP

By Vanessa S.

My sponsor once told me and many of you may have already heard this saying that "If you don't have a home group then you are considered homeless, as an alcoholic."

I can see where coming into a room full of alcoholics from off the streets and being told something like that. Not having a home because we drank up the home life that we once new, one would consider the hopeless alcoholic being homeless. Maybe we never experienced having a home or family. Being homeless is just what the alcoholic encounters when we hit our bottoms. No home to call our own. Alcohol has eaten up our family and friends. There is no where to turn for understanding or love and or compassion we so desperately need and can find in a place called "home."

So, how important is the home group? It is a place to come each week and people get to know who we are and are willing to help us along our journey to recovery and where we develop true and lasting friendships. There we find people who will love us until we can learn to love ourselves. We are able to have substitute members until we are reunited with our own.

It is somewhere we can be ourselves and not be judged or criticized. A home group is a group of alcoholics learning acceptance, tolerance and patience. A home away from where we feel safe. A place where we are told to keep coming back to.

It is where everyone is welcome to come whether you are from Park Avenue or from the park bench. It is a home where a group of people experience a God of their own understanding, either in a new light or for the very first time.

It is a place to come in and when someone sees you often enough and you are looking sad or unhappy, we recognize it and even though you may say your feeling okay....we know to tell you that whatever the problem is...there are those among us who have had them too.....if you share that problem or situation you can find that it either is cut in half or you are told that "it too shall pass," once someone has shared their experience, strength and hope with you.....you find you are not alone. It's where I am taught how to pray. It is a home where a group of people learn discipline and respect not only for themselves but their fellow members of the group.

Unity lies in a home group and we are one with that common bond, ALCOHOLISM. There is a special closing that I would like to end with that basically concludes what my awareness of a home group should depict. A home group is where we learn that, "even though you might not like all of us you'll love us in a very special way, and the same way we already love you. So reason things out, we don't let gossip or criticism of one another be our primary focus, instead let the love of the program grow in us ONE DAY AT A TIME."

From the Archives...

Forty-five years ago, in 1966, two federal Appeals Court decisions support the disease concept of alcoholism. President Lyndon B. Johnson appoints first National Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and becomes the first President to address the country about alcoholism. He proclaims: "The alcoholic suffers from a disease which will yield eventually to scientific research and adequate treatment."

Thirty years ago, in the summer of 1981, The U.S. Postal Service issued a first-class stamp imprinted with
**"Alcoholism.
 You can beat it!"**



Upcoming Events

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

Forum FAQs

- **FREE REGISTRATION**
- first time forum attendees welcome!
- put on by the A.A. General Service Board
- "open" to A.A. members or to anyone interested in A.A.
- to enhance communication and participation among A.A. members, the General Service Board, and staff and directors from the General Service Office Staff and the A.A. Grapevine.
- a meeting place to ask questions and spark new ideas to help carry the A.A. message of hope to the still-suffering alcoholic.
- to provide unique opportunities for A.A. members throughout the East Central Region to share their experience, strength and hope.
- hosted by the 14 Areas in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin & Michigan
- it's an Open Sharing Session about A.A.!

Elsewhere in Ohio

August 5-7—Cincinnati, OH.
55th Ohio State Convention

August 12-14—Independence, OH
OYPAA Convention

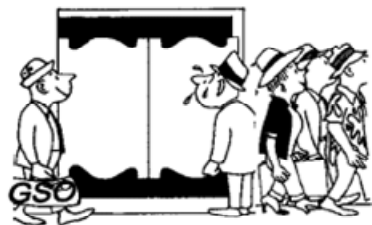
East-Central Region

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

U.S. and Canada

15th National Archives Workshop
Sept 22-25, 2011 in Helena, MT



Our Meetings in Print

Twelve Ways I Use the AA Grapevine (and LaVina) in my Daily Life

1. To carry a meeting in my pocket—every issue has a dozen or more stories and numerous other features.
2. To bring a topic to a meeting.
3. For use in helping shut-ins, who can't get to many meetings.
4. By reading the letters to the editor, I learn to maintain an open mind and allow for differing perspectives.
5. To learn some of the history of AA
6. To learn about parts of A.A. in which I have no experience—there is a prison issue every summer, entire issues devoted to young people in sobriety, old-timers, loners, and so on.
7. To inject a little humor into my program through jokes and cartoons in each issue
8. To contribute my thoughts and ideas to this continuous discussion by submitting stories, pictures, letters or jokes to the AAGV.
9. To learn what the rest of the world is thinking about our disease— in the 'grey pages', now titled "Alcoholism at Large".
10. To find out what's happening in our region and internationally.
11. To learn how other groups have solved problems similar to those in my home group – pick up a copy of *The AA Home Group – The Heartbeat of A.A.*
12. To read the words of our Founders first hand, re-printed from prior Grapevines—almost every year, November/Gratitude month has meant Classic Grapevine issues.



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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.

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