

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

October, November, December 2011

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXII, Issue 4

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**October 16**  
**Area Assembly 2:00**  
[Literature and AAGV Sales day]

**November 20 1:30**  
**Gratitude Sunday — Akron**  
[Literature and AAGV Sales day]

**December 18**  
**Area Committee Meeting 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

Since the General Service Conference in May, we have been busy giving conference reports in the Area. First was a Cleveland meeting, then down to Salem, District 13, the Akron Multi-District, and the Youngstown Multi-District. None of the groups/districts on the West Side of Cleveland have offered an invitation.

I had a great time at Founders' Day with the Grapevine sales setup in the main food court. There were so many opportunities to be available and pass on information about General Service and what we are about. We got wet on Saturday night and did not dissolve. The motorcycle motorcade on Sunday morning was smaller this year; just a sign of the times.

The Area Open House in Wooster, hosted by Districts 10 and 11, was a better opportunity to be of service with some folks who had no idea what General Service is about. Congratulations to all who attended. We had great examples of service and good leadership. We enjoyed plenty of good food and a good message by our own Alternate Delegate, Ola P.



Our July Assembly was extremely well attended. Thanks for the participation. The Ad Hoc Email Committee made its recommendations. We voted and

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Alternate Delegate's Report

### "Service is key to spiritual progress"

The 2010 Ohio Young People in AA Convention (OYPAA) will forever remain in the recesses of my mind as one of the most awesome experiences of my sober journey. It was held the weekend of August 19<sup>th</sup> in Independence, Ohio.



This was my first OYPAA convention and though I had heard many positive remarks about it, nothing could have prepared me for what I saw, heard, and felt as I sat there surrounded by this energetic, enthusiastic and humble group of people. One of the youngest among them was 15 years old with three years of sobriety. "Wow." It was truly a privilege to hear Jeff S. share his experience, strength, and hope Friday night. Jeff has 17 years of sobriety and now lives in West Virginia. Add to this an atmosphere of love, of being happy, joyous and free—I was taken to a new place in my spirit. I cannot even begin to describe to you that place nor the resulting feeling that I've have since then. **I will, however, encourage all of you who have never attended**

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# Perfect Harmony isn't the same as Unity

## From the Editor...

At the 2011 Ohio State Convention, Don M., trustee-at-large for the U.S., said something like the following during his trustee report... "Perfect Harmony doesn't necessarily mean Unity." He offered this observation in reference to the workings of the AA General Service Board. While the trustee members of the GSB work well together, they don't always agree with each other. That's just human nature. These differing opinions bring a wealth of experience, strength and hope to the Board and ensure that an informed group conscience results. Neither the tyranny of the majority nor the tyranny of the minority hold sway over major decisions. By embracing the diversity of viewpoints offered on any subject, our fellowship is steered toward the middle course, hopefully avoiding those pitfalls mentioned by Bernard Smith in his 1954 talk, "Why Do We Need a Conference?" —

*"...to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; ... to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration...to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few."*

The Unity this trustee was talking about applies equally in our home group. Achieving a well-informed group conscience is the result of hard work, honest appraisal and an open sharing of ideas, concerns and experience by all members of the group. Perfect harmony implies that everyone agrees from the start with no dissension or argument. It can also imply apathy, resignation or defeat. The majority lets the vocal minority steamroll changes through out of a misplaced fear that everyone should always get along in peace and harmonious agreement. If I have a differing opinion, I might hurt someone's feelings by challenging their stated position. We know how sensitive our feelings are and we also know how much we want everyone to like us; how much we crave acceptance from others.

Are we afraid to speak the truth as we see it in our group conscience meetings? In a business meeting, we reach an informed group conscience by talking, listening, debating and thinking, not necessarily in that order. All should have an equal say and all ought respect the experience of each member. Does that mean that old timers should never be trusted to know what's going on in the AA of today? No, lest we forget, they were young once, too. Nor ought the inexperience of new members be dismissed out of hand. Rather these both are learning experiences for all concerned. Must we achieve perfect harmony in our groups? It is an ideal to work for, but we must first understand the nature of harmony. Harmony is not singing with one voice, but many voices blended to create a more perfect whole.

*"God calls his children to unity, not uniformity."*

*A.A. Grapevine, January, 1984.*

In the January, 1984 A.A. Grapevine, W.C. of Oak Harbor, Washington, wrote,

*"While listening to a fine choral group, I was greatly impressed by the beauty of their singing. My heart was thrilled as the sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses—all in unison—joined in one powerful voice. But then, on the chorus, they sang their individual parts, and the harmony was enrapturing. It made the rendition of the verse seem colorless by comparison.*

*We as AA members "sing" different parts as we work for our sobriety; that is, we come from various backgrounds and have different personalities and abilities. Even so, our labors together for AA can result in a most beautiful harmony of service. Instead of appreciating this blend, however, some AAs demand conformity to their own methods and procedures. They like unison, but only if everyone sings their way.*

*Although that kind of unity can produce limited results, nothing is quite so satisfying as to see different individuals, all with their own styles, talents, and identities, presenting in harmony the same theme--the love and salvation offered by AA. We may not all sing identical notes in our work for the program; each must make his or her particular contribution. A blending of different shades and tones of emphasis can be even more pleasing than unison of forced conformity. Discord arises when someone gets out of tune or doesn't follow the leader.*

*In our service for AA, let's not worry if the person next to us isn't singing our 'note.' If our neighbor is in harmony with the program, we're in the same choir."*

***In Love and Service, Jeff, your editor.***

*We welcome your comments and questions. Send topic ideas or complaints to: [newsletter@area54.org](mailto:newsletter@area54.org)*

Be sure to add "@area54.org"  
to your 'safe senders' or  
'whitelist' in your email utility.



## Delegate's Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

passed a motion to send information out electronically including the *Northeast Ohio Recorder*, flyers, etc. to a specific list. This list includes only those recipients that have made a special request to receive electronic material versus mailed printed material.

Also, it was reported that our traditional Gratitude Sunday will held in Akron this year. A very informative format is planned having all Past Delegates share their journey in service.

The following week Ola P., Bill P. and I took a road trip to Columbus, Indiana. We attended the 2011 Indiana State Convention and East Central Regional (ECR) Conference. I was blessed to represent the Ohio areas by carrying the Ohio State flag at the opening ceremony. We were blessed to hear Phyllis H., Manager of the General Service Office tell her story at the Saturday night meeting.

On Saturday afternoon, the ECR delegates had lunch together with Phyllis H. and Pam R., our ECR Trustee, and had an opportunity to discuss current issues. The fourteen seated delegates of the region were asked to service the ice cream: Friday was Panel 60's turn and Saturday was Panel 61's which included me and my friend Glen P. from Columbus.

## Alternate Delegate's Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

**an OYPAA convention to do so.** Trust me you will never be the same. The next one will be in Toledo, Ohio. It would really be great to see more OYPAA's at the Area Assembly (each third Sunday of the month, except November) *hint !*

I was unable to attend the Friday sessions because I attended the Northcoast Multi-District's Annual Picnic at Forest Hills Park. The speaker, Mike S. shared his experience, strength and hope. As always, there was lots and lots of good food, fun, music and wonderful fellowship.

Service is more than a labor of love and what we do between meetings. Service is actually fun, learning new things, meeting new people, sharing information, getting a new perspective and above all, carrying the message of recovery. "*Service is key to spiritual progress*".

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

August 5-7 I was off to the Ohio State Convention in Cincinnati. As it turned out, I got to share my room with the Archives Chair, Tim H. It was good for both of us. Area 54 was well represented. We had four members from northeast Ohio serve on panels: Quinsetta M., Tim H., Diane K., and James T. It was great to have the complete Panel in attendance. In all, 23 of us attended and hats off to you all and thank you for participating.

I brought back the Ohio State Convention Banner and the flags. Area 54/Northeast Ohio will be the host of the 2012 Ohio State Convention to be held July 20, 21 & 22, 2012 in Beachwood, Ohio at the Hilton Cleveland East.

The weekend of August 12th & 13th, I went to District 14 (Tuscarawas and Carroll Counties), and stayed in Deersville, Ohio. Unfortunately, when there has been no representation of General Service, they really don't understand what we are about. To my surprise a fellow who is a grand sponsee stepped up and offered his time to be of service to re-light District 14. We had a great evening together and I left him with literature and everything he will need to get started. When I asked him how this came about, he reminded me that in his first months of sobriety, I told him to get involved in service after the dust settles and two years of sobriety. His second anniversary has just passed. This is a neat blessing. Thanks and congrats, Mark G.

The same weekend of our Area Workshop was the 2011 OYPAA Convention in Independence, Ohio. Ola P., our Alternate Delegate attended Friday night. Steve B., our Grapevine Chair, and I attended Saturday to Sunday morning. We had a great time with the young people and appreciated their enthusiasm for sobriety.

In our effort to promote better communications with Area 54 and the OYPAA groups, they let me speak for a short time and I invited them to our assemblies and committee meetings and all our events. I took a little razzing about my age and gray hair. I reminded them that growing old is mandatory and maturity is optional. I since have received three emails from three separate attendees requesting electronic newsletters with other event materials as well as an invitation to attend the 2012 OYPAA Convention in Toledo.

At our Area Workshop in Brunswick, our Area Chair hosted the Area Inventory. The workshop was moderated by five of our past delegates. I found it very encouraging and believe it went well. You may read more about this in the Chairman's Report on page 10 of this issue.

In Loving Service  
**Bob D. — Delegate**  
Area 54, Panel 61

## Responsibility and Service

I bring greetings to all in Area 54 and hope that your summer has been filled with the joy of sobriety. Recently I attended the Ohio State Convention and wanted to comment on the Trustee report that was given by Don M., the Trustee at Large for the US. It was more a call to service than a report, and was one of the finest talks I have ever heard in AA. It made me think.

I have never really understood why so few do service work in Alcoholics Anonymous. I am not talking about work in your Home Group, that is to be expected. I am talking about service work outside of your Home Group, service to your Intergroup or Central office, service to your District and Area. Far too many of our members are working only one side of the triangle. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous consists of all three legs; Recovery, Unity and Service. Anyone who is sober is working the recovery leg, and too many stop there. They go to meetings, help with their Home Group, and that is it. Their lives are busy, after all, they simply don't have the time.

It is easy to forget that our lives are busy because of Alcoholics Anonymous. Without A.A. in my life there is no job, no car, no family, no friends, just the continued descent into the abyss. I was one of those haunted souls who waited with certainty at each dawn for an invisible hand to wrap a cobweb of fear and anxiety around my heart. Then one day a man reached his hand out to me and pulled me from that abyss. Service work is how I pay that man back the debt I owe, a debt that can never be fully paid.

Everyone can do something. I understand that we have responsibilities, that part of being a recovered alcoholic is to meet those responsibilities to your employer, your family, your community. I am lucky in the sense that I have few outside responsibilities and am able to dedicate significant time to service. Everyone, however, can do something. Be the GSR or Intergroup Rep so your Home Group has a voice. Help on one of the committees. How do you think the message is carried to prisons, schools, counselors, doctors, judges, etc? It is carried because members are willing to serve on the Corrections, Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community committees.

I have had the opportunity to carry the message into jails and see the light go on in someone's eyes. It was the type of moment you don't want to give up, because you know intuitively that it is irreplaceable and even sacred in ways you don't try to describe to others. That is the paradox of Service work...the more you give the more you get.

When you try to catch all of something, particularly something very good, it must elude you in part so that it retains its original magic and mystery. It is almost like the elusive snippet from a dream, just on the edge of your consciousness, you don't understand it, but you know it is real. That is the reward of service work; it is an experience you must not miss.

**Jay M.—Area Chairperson**

## Anonymity

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. What does anonymous mean? Webster defines anonymous as 1. Not named or identified. <They wish to remain>, Unknown authorship or origin, and lacking individuality or distinction. A foundation is a basis (principle) upon which something stands. This would mean that the sentence could read " Lacking individuality or personal distinction is the spiritual basis (principle) of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. It's not about me as an individual, it's about Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Bill writes in the 12 and 12, "Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as A.A. members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole society and under which we may grow and work in unity." This requires humility on my part. Once again it's not about me as an individual it's about Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

An old timer once told me "Alcoholics Anonymous doesn't need me, I need Alcoholics Anonymous. Harsh but true, I desperately needed A.A. when I initially stumbled through the doors. A.A. was doing fine before I got here and will continue to be fine when I am gone. I still need A.A. today. The anonymity portion was a big deal to me. I could come and be anonymous. Then I got sober and maybe I need not be so anonymous. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place Principles before Personalities. Anonymity is one of the basic principles of our fellowship. One more excerpt from the 12 and 12 " We are sure that humility , expressed by anonymity , is the greatest safeguard that Alcoholics Anonymous can ever have." Let us keep the doors open for the next alcoholic who stumbles through the door. It's not about me as an individual, it's about Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

One last note on anonymity, I have attended various funerals for A.A members and their families. It's disconcerting to me that some A.A. members ask others to stand and be recognized at funerals. Especially, when there is no mention that the person was a member of A.A. in the Obituary. Actually, it does not matter whether it is in the Obituary or not. I am Anonymous in Public, Press , Radio, Film and the Internet. It's not about me. It's about Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Love and Service,  
**Calvin L.—Area Treasurer**

## News from the Districts and the Committees

### District 10

Our district meetings have been moved back the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at Trinity Church (150 E. North St, Wooster). We had 14 in attendance last Monday in anticipation of our final co-host planning of the Open House picnic. We have a new GSR representing the Millersburg group.

**Steve B., DCM D-10**

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### District 11

There was a productive meeting on June 13 with Steve B., the DCM for District 10 as we made plans for the Area 54 Open House picnic. There were generous contributions from both Districts.

**Arthur E., DCM D-11**

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### District 13

We in District 13 have been very busy updating information on meetings. We put together a mailing for Area 54 and are working down by the Ohio River, in East Liverpool enrolling new GSRs.

**Gary C., DCM D-13**

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### District 30

Slow and steady is our pace in the Euclid district. The goal is still the same; to get to meetings and encourage participation in our service process. We have a new women's big book meeting at the Just For Today Club on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm.

**Shyrl B., DCM D-30**

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### District 34

I have spoken to the listed contact person for the Downtown New Frontier Group, which meets at Reserve Square 1701 E. 12th St., the home of the Cleveland

Central Office. He mentioned that the lunchtime meetings (5 days a week) are all pretty much one and the same. It was mentioned that all of their contributions are given to Central Office. We talked about the group sending a GSR to Cleveland North Coast Multi-District and to the Third Legacy Meeting in Brunswick that they might have an informed group. He said that he would discuss the matter with the other members. I discovered that The Hamilton Sunday Group which once met at 2221 Hamilton at 7:30 PM has not existed for at least 10 years. Also, the Saturday Noon Group once located at 2219 Payne Ave. is no longer around.

**Quincetta M., DCM D-34**

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### District 39

We have only had one issue that I am aware of in the dual district and it happened at my home group. A member called the treatment center that brings clients to our meeting and informed them that they weren't welcome anymore. We talked and since it's an open meeting and we have never really had any problems that they should come back and we will have a group conscience meeting from now on.

**Tim H., DCM-39**

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### District 49

With my recent move from Garfield Hts to Macedonia, I now live in the district that I represent. Prior to moving, I was able to get GSRs or contact persons for all groups in D-49. I

look forward to being more of presence in the district.

**Jerry P., DCM D-49**

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### District 61

I'm a new DCM. I visit the meetings in this new district to try to get GSRs for the meetings. So far, they just want to be a GSR in name only.

**Nelson, DCM D-61**

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## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Archives Committee

We continue to take records to our repository at the Akron Intergroup Office, usually the Monday following Assemblies.

**Tim H., Archivist**

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### Cooperation with the Professional Community

Your CPC Chair enjoyed a pleasant opportunity to set up a display of AA literature at a food truck site in District 34 during this reporting period. We thank the DCM, who was at the event, for bringing this opportunity to our attention. There were several hundred people fed from the truck which was located at the Euclid Congregational Church. We watched a couple people come by our rack a few times, and look around to see if anyone was watching them look at the rack. I do believe that a couple seeds were planted that day.

**James T., CPC Chair**

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## Talks from the Ohio State Convention

*Selected excerpts from some of the talks at the 2011 Ohio State Convention, held in Cincinnati in August. Northeast Ohio hosts the Ohio State Convention next year at the Beachwood Hilton. Watch for details coming soon, and consider helping out on one of the committees.*

### A Peaceful Home and Neighborhood: Unity in the Home Group

*By James T.*

In contemplating this topic assignment, I cannot help but to remember that during my life as an active alcoholic, my home and neighborhood were anything but peaceful. And though there may have been some unity in my home by virtue of familial relationship – either by blood or by marriage – my alcoholism did not allow me to have an awareness of the true significance of that concept. Instead, and unknown to me at the time, my selfishness, exacerbated by my alcoholism, used my family's unity as a source of abuse. So even though unity might be inherent to our circumstances, whether by virtue of our family, our jobs, our communities, or even our A.A. Home Group, District or Area, without a personal commitment, we can and will find chaos amidst the most unified entity.

So, today, as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous generally, and as a member of a Home Group specifically, I am blessed to be a part of something that is united together for a common purpose. And it is my sincere hope that our second legacy – Unity – will continue to be a thriving concept within our fellowship. After all, as our very first Tradition points out, "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." And, as a "trusted servant" in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have made a commitment to be a guardian\* of our Traditions. Indeed, I have made a personal declaration that "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.

In talking about our Homes and our Neighborhoods from an A.A. focus, and for our discussion today, consider your Home Group as you would your personal dwelling place. And consider your District or Area as your own neighborhood, which is to say the location of your dwelling place.

Bill W. makes reference to an historic event of his day that gives us a very graphic illustration of the significance of the idea of being united for a common welfare. His words from page 131 of what we call the "12 and 12" are worth repeating today:

Countless times, in as many cities and hamlets, we reenacted the story of Eddie Rickenbacker and his courageous company when their plane crashed in the Pacific. Like us, they and suddenly found themselves saved from death, but still floating upon a perilous sea. How well they say that their common welfare came first. None might become selfish of water or bread.

Each needed to consider the other, and in abiding faith they knew they must find their real strength. And this they did find, in measure to transcend all the defects of their frail craft, every test of uncertainty, pain, fear, and despair, and even the death of one.

Having briefly established the "Why?" of Unity, let us now look at the "How?" of Unity in the Home Group. When we take a close look at our 12 Traditions, what we discover is that the First Tradition gives us the "Why?" The other Traditions give us the "How?" But today, in the short time allotted us, we will continue to focus on the "Hows" which are germane to the First Tradition. A rather concise method of doing this is to take a look at our Traditions Checklist, originally published in 1969 through 1971 in the A.A. Grapevine as a series on the Twelve Traditions: A quick review of the 10 questions associated with the First Tradition will give us to food for thought:

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

These are what I like to call attitude questions. As we strive toward positive answers to these questions we establish a framework from which we might develop a unified front: We begin to develop an "attitude of gratitude", if you will. If I am not striving for a positive answer to these questions, then I am likely to find

*(Continued on page 7)*

**\*Heard at a meeting: "We are not the Guardians of the Traditions—we are their Custodians. So, put down the sword and pick up a broom..."**

## Talks from the Ohio State Convention, cont'd

(Continued from page 6)

myself in mental chaos. If I insist that everything must be my way or you can take the highway, I might find myself alone on that un-unified highway. And there will be no peace in the neighborhood of my own head, while the group goes on about their merry way. I have been in the situation of being a trusted servant, a guardian of the Traditions in my Home Group. The group is relatively young, with most members having no knowledge or information whatsoever about our Traditions. I was the first GSR they ever had. Arming myself with all of the information I had recently acquired from having gone to a couple of District meetings and Area Assemblies, I was ready to set this group straight. They were doing it all wrong! I had become the A.A. Police! But I was the one who was wrong. My job was to bring the information; not impose my interpretation. The group has since begun to actually have a conscience and the "Founder" is beginning to allow the group to "Come of Age".

Speaking of (or perhaps to) Founders, it seems that one sure way to stunt the growth of a group, sending it into disunity or even chaos, is to ignore the spirit of rotation. I recall – and I have heard similar stories countless times – the day when I first felt a part of the Group. It was when the group relied upon me to be of service. Similarly, I recall the first service position I was assigned at my area level. I felt really a part of general service when having the responsibility of the Area Floor Manager the last time Area 54 hosted this very event. But I also recall when the next committee was elected, and it was time

for me to rotate into another responsibility, how I felt leaving the position that I had come to love.

Concept Eleven of the Twelve Concepts for World Service embodies the spirit of rotation. One of the questions specifically asked about Concept Eleven in the Concepts Checklist Service Piece is "Do we practice rotation in our service positions?" Rotation might be the only way a newcomer to the neighborhood might get involved and feel welcome to the neighborhood.

Finally, let me relate to you a story that I found from an old edition of The AA. Grapevine. Published in the March 1991 edition, it is titled "The Home Group. Who's Sitting Next to You?" In this particular article, there was a visitor from out-of-town attending a particular meeting. Everyone at the meeting was really enjoying the fellowship of one another. Clearly, they were very comfortable and used to each other. They were all having a good time. However, they were so much into each other, and catching up on the latest news of each other, that no one noticed the stranger.

We need to be careful. We can be so at peace with each other, and so unified within our own little group that we fail to notice the new guy sitting in the corner. Fortunately, in the story, the stranger was not new to A.A. But to just give you a feel for this article let me quote,

"Who am I? You don't know, because you didn't bother to find out. Although yours was a closed meeting, you didn't even ask if I belonged there. It might have been my first meeting. I could have been full of fear and distrust, knowing AA wouldn't work any better than anything else I'd tried, and I would have left convinced that I was right.

I might have been suicidal, grasping at one last straw, hoping someone would reach out and pull me from the pit of loathing and self-pity from which, by myself, I could find no escape.

"... I sat silently through your meeting, and when it was over I watched enviously as all of you gathered in small groups, talking to one another the same way we do in my home town.

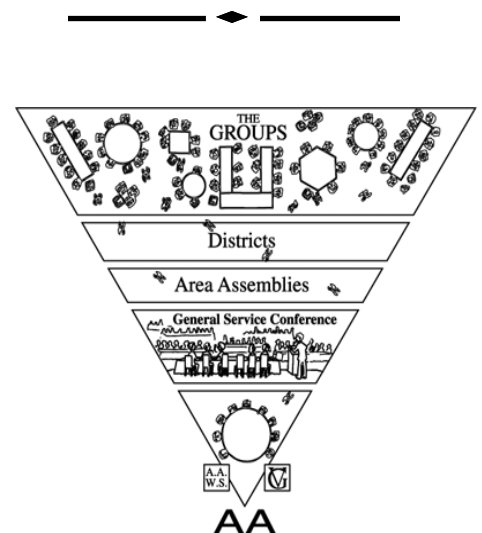
"... You and some of your friends were planning a meeting after the meeting at a nearby coffee shop.

"... I stopped by the bulletin board to read the notices there, kind of hanging around without being too obvious, hoping you might ask if I wanted to join you, but you didn't.

"... I made a gratitude list. And you were on it, along with your friends. I know that you were there for me, and that I needed you far more than you needed me. I knew that if I had needed help, and had asked for it, you would have gladly given it. But I wondered . . . What if I hadn't been able to ask?

"I know who you are. Do you remember me?"

Yes it is wonderful to have peace at home and in the neighborhood. It is a marvelous thing to maintain unity within the home group. It is great to see all of you having a good time together in fellowship with one another. But let us not get so at peace that we become complacent. Let us never forget that the whole point of Unity is so that this Fellowship will be here for the next person who comes wandering through that door looking for a help. Let us not get so comfortable with our various A.A. responsibilities that we forget our primary responsibility is to help another alcoholic.



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](mailto:newsletter@area54.org). Please send your letters and articles in plain text or MSWord-compatible formats. Deadline for inclusion in the next issue is Gratitude Sunday, November 20th.

### My General Service Experience

By Quincetta M.

My introduction to service began with a ride home from a group member who happened to be our group's GSR (Group Service Representative), of which I knew nothing. On her way to dropping me off at home she announced that she was making a stop at the service meeting of the Cleveland North Coast Multi-District. I sat there in the meeting afraid to say anything because I didn't have a clue what everyone was talking about; it was a mystery. At that time I believe I might have been about 4 months sober and still very foggy. Being a new person, the things I heard sounded strange. I recall some discussion about the Second Tradition which reads longer in the Short Form than it does in the Long Form. "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants they do not govern." At that moment the mystery was solved, and I knew that God had guided me, an alcoholic of the hopeless variety, to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous to be of service. I began to feel and believe that God had guided me here to get sober *and* to serve. Through that guidance from God, came the understanding that any position or job that I may be blessed to hold and to perform in AA makes me only a trusted servant. I also began to understand that the language that I thought was so foreign to me in the beginning was actually "The Language of the Heart."

I was elected alternate GSR, and continued to go to the multi-district meetings once a month. Not long afterward the GSR stepped down and I was voted GSR, which I was for three years. During my first year as GSR I discovered through our conference approved service literature that serving as GSR may be the most important job in AA. I guess that's why no one else wanted to serve as GSR. Isn't that something? At 4 months sober I had what may be the most important job in AA! And I learned what General Ser-

vice is. The AA Service Manual states that service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer. General Service is movement –wide services, performed by anyone in the General Service Structure (GSR, DCM, delegate, etc.). My home group sent me to my first Area 54 Mini-Conference, and the same year to the Ohio State Convention in Columbus as their GSR. They actually paid my way! And I was hooked on service, convinced that I had found my niche in A.A. My job as GSR was to bring information back to my home group so that we could have an informed group conscience.

I have also been blessed to serve as secretary of The Cleveland North Coast Multi-District, Alternate Chairperson, Archivist, and coffee pot cleaner of my home group. At the area level I have been Special Needs Chair. Presently I serve as DCM of Area 54 District-34 (Downtown Cleveland) and Cleveland North Coast Multi-District Chairperson which includes seven (7) Districts. I am also my home group's treasurer.

Through service I have become an extremely busy person, always trying to give the best I have. You see, during my drinking years I was always willing to go to any length to get drunk. So why would I not be as willing to go to any length to stay sober and to try to help others to achieve sobriety?

While writing this I realized what a blessing service has been to me. I suppose that for me the biggest benefit of all this is being part of something, however small my part may be. There were times that I shed many tears while putting these thoughts together, knowing that God was right there, guiding my thoughts and my heart. Now, I'm here with you guys, and I'm feeling a strong sense of being part of all this amazement. I never ever thought that I would be part of anything, and surely not a member of a society of recovering alcoholics in thought and in action. I believe that the unity along with the spirituality that our fellowship provides is service's biggest and greatest benefit.

### When Sponsorship Doesn't Work: Why?

By Diane K.

In the pamphlet "Questions and Answers about Sponsorship" it says "A sponsor does everything possible, within the limits of personal experience and knowledge, to help the newcomer get sober and stay sober through the AA program." This requires time and effort from the sponsor. It is a serious responsibility to "take on" a sponsee. After all, it is life or death. The 'AA program' is the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Sponsors take the new sponsee through the steps. An unwillingness to put time into sponsoring is one example of "When sponsorship doesn't work."

That led me to the topic of keeping our egos in check when sponsoring. We are not God. Really what we pass on is our own "experience, strength and hope." We can't possibly know all the answers. Newcomers don't get sober because of who we are. The solution is spiritual. We are there to pass on what was freely given to us. Overstepping those boundaries is dangerous.

The willingness of a sponsee is also crucial. Willingness comes "sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly." I never give up on a sponsee because of a relapse. If she wants to come back to AA, I welcome her with open arms and we start again. I have sponsored some girls 3 or 4 times!

One other thing, and probably most importantly, if the sponsee is not honest about her sobriety there is little hope of long term sobriety. After all, it is about "rigorous honesty."





## News from the Districts and the Committees, cont'd

(Continued from page 5)

### Corrections Committee

Maggie C. expressed concern about the Women's TCC closing. The inmates are being transferred to N.E. Pre-Release Center and to Marysville. We have a small amount of literature so contributions are welcome. Please make sure your home group has a Pink Can program.

### Thomas M., Corrections Chair

### Grapevine Committee

Our inventory of AAGV items was enlarged by an order placed in May. Since the order was more than \$500, we received a 20% discount. Founders' Day sales totaled \$786. We had an excellent location this year right in front of the restaurant in the student union. We distributed a number of subscription forms and a few GvR registrations. An order has been prepared to replenish stock after Founders' Day.

### Steve B., Grapevine Chair

### Group Services Comm.

We are in the process of making minor revisions to the GSR School presentation. We are will-

ing to present this workshop to any group or district that might be interested. The committee welcomes a new member, Karl W.

### Jerry P., Group Services Chair

### Treatment Committee

The Treatment Committee is pleased to report that the Youngstown area has been active in getting information distributed to institutions about AA. They given out information on Bridging the Gap (BTG) program and have included the Request for Temporary Contact Form in packets going to institutions. Gary C Alternate Area Chair of Treatment Committee and Thomas M Area Corrections Chair area leading the way on this. Thank you to all the Youngstown Intergroup Office and their efforts.

Wooster area is still working with "Steps" and bringing AA to their facility. They are continuing to work with the transition from institution to A.A.

Dual District 23/39 continues to support 2 open AA meetings at Glenbeigh and once a month presenting the Bridging the Gap Program. There is still a large volume of requests from Glen-

beigh for Western PA as well from Metropolitan Cleveland and the suburbs of Cleveland.

In the metropolitan Cleveland area and the suburbs of Cleveland, there is a large need for people to volunteer to be a temporary contact. The job of a temporary contact is to try to make contact with the person who is requesting a temporary connection to AA. You would work with them with your knowledge of the meetings in your area to help them get to AA meetings. If you can not give them a ride, you probably know someone who can give them a ride to an AA meeting. This is 12-Step work and just takes a little of your time.

If you are interested please contact me on my cell at 216.407.6049.

The role of temporary contact eases the transition from treatment to AA meetings.

### Susan R., Area 54 Treatment Chair



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

## Area Inventory

On Sunday, August 22 the Area gathered to take an Area 54 inventory. We broke into five groups with members assigned their groups on a random basis. A covered dish lunch was also enjoyed by all. Questions were gathered from similar inventories done by Areas 53, 56 as well as a couple outside of Ohio. We looked at questions concerning 1) Area 54 as a whole; 2) Participation, Officers and Elections; 3) Serving our members, GSRs and DCMs.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the past Delegates who moderated the five groups, Mary B., Bob M., Dan M., Tina H., and Danny F. This article is meant to be a summary only, a full report will be available to the membership and will be posted on the Area website ([www.area54.org](http://www.area54.org)). I will concentrate on suggestions and ideas. Overall, the inventory showed that we, as an Area, are doing a good job with areas that could stand some improvement.

**Area 54 as a whole** was moderated in two groups by Mary B. and Bob M. One common thread in talking about committees is while the structure is fine, the participation is not. Many committees have only one or two people. New GSRs encouraged to join a committee. Some felt that committees' duties overlap. A suggestion was made to have more cooperation and communication with the Intergroup and Central Offices. Each Committee should ask themselves the questions on p. S44 of the Service Manual. In the area of improving Area meetings, many ideas were expressed. Some wanted to go

back to the old way, some liked how we are now. The December meeting should be dropped. Finally, it was stated that we do not carry the message well enough because there are not enough GSRs coming. Transportation and the need for car pools were brought up. Area should encourage Service sponsorship more. Reach out better to the DCMs who do not attend, paying attention to Districts with a DCM in "name only." We need to do a much better job of reaching out, we see the same faces at every meeting.

**Participation, Officers and Elections** was moderated by Dan M. Turnover of GSRs was felt to be excessive, we do not do enough to make the new GSR feel comfortable, they get confused and discouraged. Too few do too much of the work and get burned out. It was felt perhaps CPC and PI should consolidate. Treatment was mentioned as too small a committee to cover 250 treatment facilities. It was suggested we get the newsletter to more people. It was felt we do choose out Officers with care, the service resumes were a great tool. Everyone felt we spend our money wisely, that the Officers are careful and the budgeting process works. Reimbursement of travel expenses for Area Officers was perhaps an area we could save. The prudent reserve was mentioned as an area of great misunderstanding. Groups see the money in the bank and don't feel we need contributions. A final mention was made that sometimes people make a good point or have a good idea at a meeting but nothing

is done to follow up. It was also suggested the Area do a better job of teaching Parliamentary procedure, people are intimidated by it and afraid to speak up.

**Serving our Members** was moderated by Tina H. and Danny F. Many members talked about the difficulty getting their home groups to hear reports. The misconception that it is "all politics" is widespread. The size of districts seen as a serious problem. Even a dedicated DCM cannot serve 25–30 groups properly. Need to coordinate with Intergroups and Central Offices because there are many groups that have not registered with GSO. Many groups do not register because they simply don't know, or think when they registered at the Intergroup that was all they had to do. A suggestion made that two times a year we send a flyer in the Intergroup and Central Office mailings about general service and Area 54. It was also suggested we have more GSR schools, move them around the Area and don't wait for an invitation. Almost everyone felt the Officers were listening to members concerns. It was felt we do a good job informing GSRs who come to the meetings, but not to those who register but do not come to the meetings.

The Panel will be addressing these issues and will be reporting soon on what steps could be made for improvement. I want to thank everyone who participated, and encourage anyone reading this who has ideas in this area to please send them to me at [chairman@area54.org](mailto:chairman@area54.org).

**Jay M.—Area Chairman**



## From the Archives...

*“A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches. Granting all its huge public benefits, this limitless world forum is nevertheless a hunting ground for all those who would seek money, acclaim and power at the expense of society in general. Here the forces of good and evil are locked in struggle. All that is shoddy and destructive contests all that is best. Therefore nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present imagination. Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego demands of our own people--often with the best of intention on their part. Against all this, the sacrificial spirit of AA's anonymity at the top public level is literally our shield and our buckler. Here again we must be confident that love of AA, and of God, will always carry the day.”*

The quote above was cited at the Ohio State Convention this August. Talking about our personal anonymity at the public level, it seems like pretty standard AA material on the Eleventh Tradition. It's particularly timely with the growing concerns about AA and social media sites on the internet. At least that's what it appears to be talking about—this 'vast communications net' obviously refers to the Net, right? A 'limitless world forum' - sounds like Twitter, doesn't it? You might be surprised, as I was the first time I heard it, to know that this piece was written by Bill W., and published in the **November 1960** Grapevine! A coincidence? We think not...

### Upcoming Events

#### 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.!

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

#### Elsewhere in Ohio

**March 2012—Perrysburg, Ohio**  
Area 55 MiniConference

**March 2012—Dayton, Ohio**  
Area 56 MiniConference

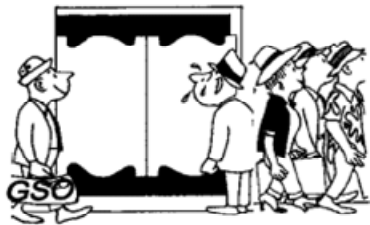
**March 2012—Columbus, Ohio**  
Area 53 MiniConference

#### East-Central Region

**November 10-13—Miamisburg, Ohio**  
East Central Regional Forum and Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

#### Save the Date

**July 20-22, 2012**  
56th Ohio State Convention  
Beachwood, Ohio  
**Hilton Cleveland East Hotel**



## 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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