

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

January, February, March 2012

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXII, Issue 5

## NOTE THE DATE

### January 15

Ohio State Planning 1:00 pm  
Area Assembly 2:00 pm

### January 22 and February 26

Mini Conference planning  
Meeting at Independence  
Doubletree Hotel 2:00 pm

### February 19

Ohio State Planning 1:00 pm  
Workshop 2:00 pm

### March 18

Ohio State Planning 1:00 pm  
Area Committee Meeting 2:00 pm

### April 6-7-8

37th NEOH Mini-Conference  
Independence Doubletree Hotel

### April 15

Area Assembly 2:00 pm

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



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## A Word From Our Delegate



The GV realized a net loss of \$32,267.00 which is better than the anticipated loss due to a windfall contribution from ICYPAA in September. They bought 605 on-line subscriptions for \$17,370. The year-end losses for GV were budgeted at \$94,000 and may be less, contingent on how the 4th quarter goes. Paid circulation for the last issue of the GV was 88,300 copies compared to 93,100 copies last year at this time. From the AAGV report: "Grapevine's print circulation has declined (-2,534) during the third quarter 2011 as did LaVina's (-204) when compared to 2010. Grapevine is currently holding back on new engagement initiatives, principally search engine optimization." ("Search engine optimization" is also known as "paid positioning" and involves paying Google or other search engines to list your organization among the top when searching for something.)

"A general decline in subscription and products remains likely in upcoming quarters given the downward trend of the print publishing industry and the absence of new and expanded engagement of new subscribers through the web and other media." (The GV Board has projected a \$100,000 profit for 2012 and there is much confusion as to where that will come from.)

Sales of Grapevine books and other items was \$452,000 versus a projection of \$520,000. (\$68,000 fewer sold than projected) For all items, cash orders are ahead of projection for 2011 by \$153,000.

The Grapevine is proposing cutting their print issues to 6 per year but making each issue almost double the size in order to save on postage, shipping, etc. There was a very "lively" discussion on this since originally they were not going to ask the Conference for input on whether to do it or not. The Chair of the GV said it was just a "format change" which doesn't require Conference input or approval. And, while that may be true, most of us felt it was not a good idea to keep the Conference out of the loop on this important matter. There was very strong support by the majority for having the GV take this to the

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Alternate Delegate's Report



While reviewing the results of our Area Inventory Workshop held in August, I came across this most awesome remark. **"We should do more to communicate the joy of service."** Although the remark in its entirety is quite profound, it is the last part of the remark that impacts me the most, **"the joy of service."** As refreshing as a soft summer rain shower that cools the air and settles the dust, so did this remark bring a distinct calm to my spirit and settle the negative murmurings that were taking place in my head at the time.

Experience has taught me that from time to time negative feelings will appear which have a tendency to compromise the joy that comes naturally from being of service. I have come to accept this, as in the day to day business of living, as just a part of the process. I do believe with all of my heart that God often sends me reminders such as this to restore and renew that joy. **"Not to focus on what is wrong, but to focus on all that is right."** (Bill W.)

*(Continued on page 6)*

## WHY SHOULD I ATTEND THE NORTHEAST OHIO MINI-CONFERENCE?

### From the Editor...

That's an interesting question and I hope that I can provide an adequately engaging answer. Below I will offer some good reasons why everyone, whether you are involved in General Service work or not, is encouraged and welcome to attend the 36<sup>th</sup> annual Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference.

**Exercise your voice and vote in A.A.-as-a-whole.** Don't let others make decisions for you! Express your opinion on the items of business that will be discussed and voted on by your elected delegate at the General Service Conference in New York City at the end of April. The mini-conference is designed to provide a forum for understanding the issues concerning the future of A.A. that will be decided, on your behalf, whether you choose to participate in General Service or not.

**Learn about service beyond the church base-ment steps.** Every service job in A.A. is important. Ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. An A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer, whether sponsorship of a new member or sponsorship of A.A. in a new country just getting started. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good public relations of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences.

**Why can't we just 'keep it simple'?** These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion. Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A. The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities.

Meet your Regional Trustee and a staff member from your General Service Office in New York City. Oh, and your delegate will be there, too. He'd like to meet you and hear your views on the pressing agenda items of the day. He will carry your ideas and the conscience of the whole area to the General Service Conference.

**Meet other A.A.'s who are interested in service beyond the group level.** Having trouble convincing some members of your home group that all that alphabet soup stuff is more than just 'AA politics'? Other General Service Representatives (GSR) and District Committee Members (DCM) have already faced that difficulty and have great ideas to share on how to build interest at your home group. Come and learn!

**See how your generous contributions are being used to help carry the message.** New literature has been released in recent months, including a revised edition of the Spanish Big Book. New public service announcements and DVD versions of your favorite conference approved videos have been produced this year. These and more will be shown or will be available for sale at the mini-conference.

So, hopefully, one or more of these has sparked an interest for those of you who aren't sure about attending the 36<sup>th</sup> Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference on the weekend of April 9-11, 2011 in Independence, Ohio. If you are a GSR for your group, or even if your group has no representative to General Service, please ask your group for a little financial assistance. Maybe they would be willing to pay for one of your nights at the hotel. Join us on the 'broad highway' of service to A.A.-as-a-whole and find out what you've been missing.

*In Love and Service, Jeff, your editor*

[Substantial material from the *General Service Manual* combined with *Twelve Concepts for World Service* was used in writing this article. Used with permission of AA World Services, Inc.]

**We welcome your service-related contributions, comments and questions. Tell us what you think of our redesign.**

**Send topic ideas or complaints to:**

[delegate5754@gmail.com](mailto:delegate5754@gmail.com)



## OFFICER REPORTS

Greetings from the Area Chair to all in Area 54. Our erstwhile Editor suggested that as we are halfway through this Panel's term, it would be a good time to take stock. I think that is an excellent idea. Several things come to mind. First, I am very proud of the GSRs, DCMs and everyone who has been attending Area Assemblies and Committee meetings. Attendance has been better than I remember in a long time, and that is healthy. However, with some 1,400 meetings in our area, an attendance of 80 at an Assembly is still only 5% of the groups. We can and should do better.

The second item is the handling of the budget. This has been a difficult year for donations from the groups and individuals. It is a trend we are also seeing at the Intergroup level, and I think reflects the economy more than anything else. Even home groups are seeing a decrease in the basket. The Panel has tried very hard to be good stewards of our money, and the overall spending is below budget. We are all very aware that each dollar we spend is a dollar that came to us, one dollar at a time, in a group's basket.

The Area passed a motion to start sending Area mailings via email to non GSRs and primary contacts, and the December mailing will begin that process. Each member who receives the mailing via email will have the opportunity to "opt-out" and continue to receive the mailing via snail mail if they wish. This will help to save money on mailings, one of largest budget items. Another practice we have instituted is to send the mailings with "Return Requested." This means that if an address is undeliverable, we have that envelope sent back to us. While in the short term that costs us 44 cents for the return, in the long run it is very beneficial because we are made aware of bad addresses in our database and can let the groups know they are not receiving their mail.

Finally the Area Inventory we took in August was a great success. Many good suggestions came out of that, and changes will be made as a result. The last issue of the *Recorder* carried the summary of what was discussed, and the December 18 workshop will be used for feedback from you on how we can address the issues that arose. Overall everyone was happy with how things have

been handled at Assemblies and Committee meetings, but we need to do much more to reach out to those who do not attend.

On a personal note, I have learned much in the past year. I have designed a spreadsheet for myself on all the things I am responsible for so I don't miss anything or blow a deadline. I have greatly enjoyed presiding over meetings, and have learned on the fly. One thing I am very proud of is we have never had a debate on an issue that became contentious, everyone has followed principles before personalities. I must always remember that while I may completely disagree with your position on an issue, we both only want what is best for Alcoholics Anonymous. My most difficult task is to not join in a debate, or tilt the discussion towards how I feel on an issue. If I am doing my job right, you should have no idea how I stand on an issue while the debate is going on. I have not always succeeded in that, and will continue to try to do better.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holidays, and look forward to a great 2012.

**Jay M., Area Chairperson, Area 54**

## DISTRICT REPORTS

### District 1

Bill H. reported that he has visited various groups in his district stressing the importance of having proper group structure and an informed group conscience. He has also requested assistance with Gratitude Sunday, since the Akron Multi-District was host this year. He'd like home group participation in this year's event.

### District 10

Steve B. reported that the district distributed a letter covering our past activities, spreading the message of service so that it does not stay a secret. We urged our groups to get active and mentioned the importance of the spirit of rotation. Included in the letter was the addresses for our four service entities as a reminder for participation in our 7th Tradition at all levels of service. District 10 awaits next month's vote on redistricting our six northern

meetings into District 11. We will be printing new meeting schedules. Our local district meeting schedules are well received additions to our Akron intergroup schedules. We discussed making sure our Wayne County STEPS program receives them as well as distributing them to local doctor's offices, hospitals and probation departments.

### District 13

Gary C. reported through some growing pains. District has received a contribution from a formerly dark part of the district near the Ohio River at East Liverpool. He requests more attendance at the district meetings on the second Sunday of the month. All friends are invited.

### District 19A

Ellen W. reported that she is visiting meetings again in her district after returning from a medical leave.

### District 23

Chris McG. reported that she was elected DCM for District 23 at the Dual District meeting September 18, 2011. With over 50 meetings in the two districts, only 9 attended the meeting. She hopes to start bringing people into service as she was taught to do by Alice H., beloved past delegate.

**Cleveland North Coast Multi-District:** incl. districts 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, & 45

Quinsetta M. reported that the CNCMD has a new home at 3000 Euclid Avenue in Cleveland. First meeting was held there on October 1, 2011. They also hosted a workshop on October 15 on Self Support and the Seventh Tradition. The area treasurer, the finance chair and the literature chair each presented on the topic. November 5, Bob D., area delegate, gave a report on the General Service Conference. We strongly encourage all groups to participate in the Ohio State Convention coming up in July 2012. North Coast Multi-District has volunteered to assist in hosting the hospitality suite at the convention.

### District 30

Shyrl B. reported that many folks in her district express interest in learning more about General Service. On Sep-

*(Continued on page 4)*

## AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Continued from page 3)

tember 17, 2011 the district hosted an area mailing party. A few locals helped the area committee with the heavy lifting. A newcomer with only 19 days sobriety who regularly attends meetings at the club where the district meets pitched right in and helped out. Now there's an example for all of us! It was our pleasure to have members of the panel and reps from other districts in attendance—thank you. One day at a time, one event at a time, we grow in our recovery and service.

### District 34

Quincetta M. reported that the downtown group Shine on Me is in need of support with only four active members. Empty Bottles reports ten members.

### District 35

Edward U. reported that there are four new groups in D-35 which brings the total to about 24 active groups. Some of these do not have elected GSRs however, and are not registered with GSO. He is working with them and hopes to have all registered by the next meeting.

### District 39

Tim H. reported that things are good in District 39. We could use more GSRs however. If everyone would bring one more person with them to the next monthly meeting of the Dual District, we could probably solve this problem.

### District 61

Nelson M. reported District 61 now has two GSRs and one alternate GSR. People say that they don't have time or don't want anything to do with General Service, but he will continue to gauge support on the local district scene.

## INTERGROUP REPORT

### Ashtabula Intergroup

Tim H., secretary to the AAIGO, reported that 35 people attended the Alice H. Memorial golf outing in support of the Office. The Office carries all of the Conference-approved literature plus items from Hazelden like the 24 Hour book and coins. Their hotline is staffed 24 hours a day.

## Archives

Tim H. reported that the Archives Committee continues to collect area minutes and to place them in our area archival repository.

## Cooperation With the Professional Community

James T. reported that he has participated in telephone and email conferences with the CPC/PI chair in Area 53 in preparation for the Ohio Catholic Education Association convention. The OCEA was held in Columbus October 3-4, 2011 and all four areas in Ohio were invited by GSO to cooperatively staff a booth. The OCEA is a gathering of teachers and administrators from Catholic Schools across Ohio. Neighboring states also send members resulting in a CPC outreach event with thousands of educators who are on the 'firing line' responding to early onset alcoholism in their students and classrooms.

## CORRECTIONS

Tina C. reported that she visited Akron's correction committee on September 18, 2011. Together, the two committees hope to get better reception for corrections work in Youngstown. She hopes to visit other corrections committees in the near future.



## Grapevine

Steve B. reported that the committee is well stocked with Grapevine materials. 2012 calendars and pocket planners will be ordered in time for the new year. A staff member from AA-Grapevine, Inc. contacted Steve to set up a display at the recent Ohio Young People in AA Convention (OYPAA). He spoke to many about subscribing and about asking their home group to take a group subscription. The new Grapevine catalog is now available online and in print. Two new books

became available this past fall: *Step by Step* and *Emotional Sobriety II*.

## Group Services

Jerry P. reported that several people make up the Group Services Committee: Bill P., Bill H., Karl W., Diane K., and Patti R. The committee met in September with many productive items discussed. Some minor revisions were made to the area presentation "GSR School Workshop". The committee seeks to encourage greater dialogue with central offices and intergroups in our area. He hopes that each central office will send a representative to attend our area assemblies and committee meetings. Each central office and Intergroup association has one vote and a voice at the area level. Mansfield's central office has invited the committee to give the presentation for them.

## Public Information

Tonia B. reported that on a recent visit to a community center, she noted many beer and wine bottles scattered around the center. She asked the supervisor if the center provided any information on recovery from alcoholism. The supervisor indicated that they had none. An action plan is in place to carry the message.

## Treatment

Susan R. reported that in the spirit of rotation, she has resigned her chairmanship of the committee. Alternate chair, Gary C., is taking over the committee. The Committee is grateful it has several new active members in the Cleveland, Akron, Canton, and Youngstown areas. Gary indicated that there is growth in helping with the 26 treatment centers in the Youngstown area. More help is needed to work with AA meetings at the treatment centers in Area 54. The committee also needs more people to help with the transition of patients from treatment to outside meetings of AA upon release.

## STEP ONE, INSIDE TRADITION ONE, INSIDE CONCEPT ONE

When we came into Alcoholics Anonymous, whether it was yesterday, last year, or many years ago, we all faced the same question; "Were our lives unmanageable?" Some believed it was because of alcohol, others believed it was because of "how we were raised," and still others believed it was because of "personal relationships."

While the Big Book never says, "now that our lives are manageable;" it clearly explains the dilemma we faced in personal relationships and why our lives were unmanageable. This simple statement on page fifty-two (52) can give us an understanding of Step One, Tradition One and Concept One:

*"We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change our point of view. We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people ....."*

Armed with these facts about ourselves, we looked about us, and saw that some of these people sitting on their stools were not wobbly or about to fall off their stools. What held them up, what made them secure on their stools?

They were seeing and hearing something that had changed the individual recovery of others, but how could they, the newcomer, help give away this life saving knowledge? How could the knowledge of the "Big Book" come alive in their lives?

The group they belonged to may have been active in "service," and had discovered other groups, like their own, were active in helping other groups too. Those groups, like theirs had found by helping others they too had begun to manage their groups' affairs; thereby, accepting the spiritual concept of removing a need to run other groups, and accepting their role in "Service" for their group only; and became willing to join "in unity" with the other groups.

Just as our group had shown us the way out of these individual bedevilements, our district, through other groups had made our group stronger; we looked beyond our districts to our neighboring districts. We soon realized the whole "Service Structure," from the individual to our corporate boards needed this same basic understanding of "personal relationships!"

If any member of Alcoholics Anonymous believes they, or the people they sponsor, are so correct that the others need to follow them blindly, they plainly do not understand the significance of their recovery!

The Herbert Spencer quote at the end of Appendix II "Spiritual Experience" offers each of us the wisdom to un-

derstand; that, by not giving credence to another person's position, we show contempt for that person's position, but also show contempt for the person as well. When we do this, we keep ourselves in "everlasting ignorance!"

Each member of our Fellowship owes their recovery to every member present and to those who have come before them. For our continued growth it would appear that each of us is required to grow in understanding to that ownership. We are in this "Fellowship" together; in unity, not just ourselves alone, nor just our group, nor our district, nor our area, but to each and every member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We understand this responsibility through the "Responsibility Statement" given us in July, 1965 at the International Convention, in Toronto, Canada and "A Declaration of Unity" in Miami, FL in July, 1970:

### ***I Am Responsible....***

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

### ***A Declaration of Unity***

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

Therefore, as we grew in our recovery (Step One); we became aware of the errors shown in our inventory that created our problems with relationships, and became thankful our group showed us the way out of those bedevilements.

This humility allowed us to grow in service to the groups around us (Tradition One), and this act of gratitude carried us to every level of service, even down to the lowest rung we have, that of our corporate boards (Concept One).

In July, 1955, in the Keil Auditorium, St. Louis, MO we the fellowship declared we had, "Come of Age." Ten years later, we acknowledged that commitment to each other in Toronto; and now today we can recommit ourselves to that simplest of tasks.

Be humble enough to allow each other the "right to be wrong," while not insisting or demanding the ones with the most votes are right.

We need always be reminded, only God can teach us; how to have "Personal Relationships" predicated on spiritual principles.

Let's all sit comfortably on the three-legged stools God provides.

***Contributed by Leonard D., Ishpeming, Michigan***

## REPORTS FROM THE DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE DELEGATE

(Continued from page 1)

conference. (1) It affects AA as a whole (88,300 subscribers) (2) The service Manual states the GV is "the international monthly journal" (3) The Articles of Incorporation for GV state "Its purpose is to establish a monthly magazine for distribution principally to members of Alcoholics Anonymous."

The Grapevine Board approved discontinuing the publication of the digital version of the Grapevine Digital magazine by December 31, 2011.

LaVina had a 15 year anniversary in California which sold 800 subscriptions amounting to approx. \$8,000. However, losses for the first 9 months are \$48,550. Circulation averages 8977 and is down 204 from last year at this time. (as earlier stated) The year-end losses on LaVina are projected to be \$114,697. I would be surprised if LaVina loses an additional \$66,000 in the 4th quarter so we are likely to see losses below \$114,697.

### A.A. WORLD SERVICES:

Gross sales on literature was \$9,668,492. with non-AA purchases accounting for 18.7%. Gross profit on literature was \$6,008,400 compared to \$6,054,400 for the same period last year. Contributions of \$4,480,000. were \$96,000 or 2% less than budgeted and \$31,500 (or .7%) less than last year. In summary, total revenue (plus interest) for the 9 months was \$10,488,857 against expenses of \$10,194,978 leaving a profit of \$293,879.

The Reserve Fund is at \$14,473,823 representing 10.7 months of operating costs. (Which includes GV operating costs) The 2011 year-end profit for AAWS was budgeted at \$340,000 and I believe that will easily be realized. The AAWS Finance Comm. received a preliminary draft of the 2012 budget indicating a very slim profit margin of only \$173,600.

The AAWS Board approved a recommendation to post "Daily Reflections on GSO's web site, with an optional daily e-mail delivery service. Cost to be determined.

**Love, Light and Service**  
**Bob D., Delegate Panel 61, Area 54—**  
**Northeast Ohio**

(Continued from page 1)

The joy of service for me is being afforded the opportunity to give back of what was so freely given to me, being of service to others. I am not really sure, but I believe that it was *Dr. Bob* who said that service work is a *true labor of love*. As our entire society is based on spiritual principles, I function on a altruistic rather than a material plane. In the place of material gain, I am receiving a wealth of spiritual growth.

Since the spiritual quality of our principle of anonymity requires the sacrificing of those natural desires for prestige and personal distinction, the contrary behavior that exists on most business fronts should not exist here. But, because ours is a society made up of people from all walks of life with varying backgrounds, it becomes evident that there is some difficulty letting go of that contrary behavior. In Concept Nine, Bill writes about this behavior pointing out that, "*They power-drive, they are "politickers," they make accusations. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip and general scuttle-butt to gain their ends— all for the good of A.A., of course!.....*" Not much joy here. But, herein lies the crux, he goes on to say that "*their behavior need not be really destructive at all, depending very much on how we relate ourselves to them.*"

The joy of service that came when I began to sponsor others, serve in various positions at my home group and then as GSR, was a wonderful experience. However, that joy was catapulted into another dimension when I learned that by way of divine intervention, as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, we have been entrusted with the safe keeping of one of Gods most valuable gifts: Our message of hope.

Today, as I descend the steps our service structure, it is this responsibility that will keep the joy that I derive from my service work, deep seated and undaunted despite

of all that I may perceive to be negative. **"God is our ultimate authority."**

A word to the new GSRs, I know you must be thinking, what joy can there be when you are met with resistance at the home group. Well, what eventually worked for me was something that my mother used to say "*you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.*" So, I began using a technique known as "gentle persuasion" and repetitive persistence (something I learned from Greg J.). Just remember, don't take the resistance personally, it's not about you. As I heard our regional historian say, it's about a feud between two guys who are now dead. Once you have done your best to carry out your duties, the joy will come. And never ever forget.....Joy comes not from what you do, but from *why* you do it.

It is my hope that as a trusted servant, by way of word and example, I am "communicating the joy of service."

I would really like know who made this awesome remark— "Communicating the Joy of Service." It would be a great theme for the General Service Conference.....(just my opinion, of course).

May God continue to bless you and yours in this, and the coming New Year.

In Loving Service

**Ola P. – Alternate Delegate (61/54)**



### Speaking of the Four Entities

or...

#### *...the diary of a novice GSR*

It's a morning meeting in a basement somewhere in the hills of southern Indiana. They need a volunteer to make coffee. At first blush it sounds simple: show up a few minutes early, load up a pot, plug it in, then sit down and look pretty until the folks arrive. Even an egomaniac with an inferiority complex like me could handle that, right? I raise my hand. An old-timer fellow shows me where the stuff is stored and passes on a tidbit of wisdom: "The superintendent will have the door will unlocked when you get here. Keep coming back!"

You can probably guess what happened. Next week when I showed up for duty the door was sealed tighter than Fort Knox and it took me fifteen minutes to find the superintendent and his key; the coffee urn was a 1937 relic that took a half-hour to make magic and the decaf canister contained a half-teaspoon of really stale coffee. Unfazed, I stalwartly plugged everything in, only to discover later that I'd chosen the one wall socket that was prone to tripping a breaker. Oh yeah, I almost forgot. The folks at this particular meeting liked to show up a half hour early and have a chat over (what else?) a cup of coffee.

Needless to say there were a few unhappy campers that first morning. But nobody gave me a hard time and most attendees offered hugs or handshakes. By the end of my month of coffee service I had enough training to open my own Starbucks. If I had a mind to. A.A. has taught me one thing: complaining will get me nowhere.

Fast-forward five years. I've moved up in the world and now I live in Cleveland. Big city! Yeah! A stone's throw from the birthplace of A.A.! Other things haven't changed. My home group members are just as persnickety about their coffee. There are still lots of hugs and handshakes. I manage to mind my own business for a while and then one sunny afternoon at a group conscience meeting someone says, "I move we send money ONLY to Central Office. What do the folks at World Service do for us anyway? And Area 54 doesn't care beans about us! District? What's a district?" Any discussion? Well, yes. I calmly point out that we don't even have our own General Service Representative. Who are we to complain? "We need more information," I say.

You can guess what happened next. By the end of the meeting the group had elected me GSR. My mission was to check out Area 54 Assemblies in Brunswick and find out what the hell was going on down there! It's been six months since that auspicious day. My General Service Office welcome packet has arrived in its colorful envelope. It included a Service Manual. Service Manual? Lot of other stuff for me to read and absorb. I regularly haunt the

monthly North Coast Multi-District meetings and Area 54 Assemblies. I've registered for my first General Service Board Regional Forum (November 11-13, 2011 in Miamisburg, OH.) Stay tuned.

On the surface it seems like a lot of wholesome activity. But have I actually accomplished anything worthwhile? Probably not, but at least I'm beginning to learn what the hell is going on with three of the four entities. That's worth something, right?

You'd think I'd be happy, maybe even float in serenity for a day or two. But this particular discontent is restless, irritable and semi-retired with a lot of free time on his hands. He decides to pop into Central Office for a few Advisory Committee meetings and a Workshop for new secretaries. Just to find out what's going on.

The investigation continues. I'm getting to know each of the four entities, beginning to determine what contribution, if any, I might be able to make to the whole process. Any conclusions? Not yet. But a few observations: Service, the third Legacy of A.A., can be a cumbersome animal. The twelve concepts and World Service Manual are sometimes difficult to understand. There is occasional disagreement about the exact application of the Twelve Traditions. But sheltered within all of these defects of character is an intrinsic consistency that is unassailable. It has protected this organization from deterioration or collapse in a way that is unprecedented. Like a sage old-timer explained to me, "A.A. works. It's not your job to reinvent it."

So what next? Listening at service meetings has revealed the not-so-startling fact that each of our four entities faces virtually the same problems: a lack of money, the need for better communication and how best to maintain the unity that current and future members deserve. It gets me thinking. A.A.'s structure encourages autonomy. But that doesn't mean that the four entities can't or shouldn't cooperate and share resources. Are we doing everything we can to make sure that the different service agencies within A.A. are communicating in a way that is beneficial to A.A. as a whole? Good question.

At a recent GSR meeting I raise my hand during "What's On Your Mind," that portion of A.A. Service meetings when any attendee is invited to take the floor. I ask, "Is there a committee whose specific purpose is to explore ways that the North Coast Multi-District can cooperate with the Cleveland Central Office?"

You may have guessed what happened. I got drafted into a committee. Anybody else want to join? Memberships are cheap.

*Contributed by Bill C.,  
Bratenahl, Ohio*



## COMMUNICATIONS—CHALLENGES

Communication has been, is, and will be the essence of A.A. Our fellowship's accepted task, our primary purpose, is to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic; to communicate with each new member about what we were like, what happened, and what we are like now; to communicate our experience, strength and hope to every individual constantly throughout their travels to sobriety and then on to recovery from a hopeless state of mind and body; to communicate with each other in such a way that we can work together on the problems which slow all of us down on our journeys towards being happy, joyous and free; to communicate our collective obligation to carry this message further along the Road of Happy Destiny with the knowledge that the common welfare of all must come first.

On the face of it, this looks like a straightforward process. One person communicating with another, passing on the message of how it works until a vast safety net for alcoholics is woven and stretches across the globe. But it isn't that simple or that straightforward. Communication might be the very thing that challenges us presently, in our 76th year of existence. It may very well be the most critical test which will decide whether we are made of the same stuff as those who made it possible for us to get here. The manner in which we handle our communication with each other might possibly be the most determining factor of whether we can meet today's pressures as the previous members met the pressures of their days.

If we look at Alcoholics Anonymous in 2011 in the context of our history, we are made aware that these early members built what we now have, a block at a time, as they faced issues which arose as they tried to carry the message effectively. They have left us with volumes of their shared experiences about dealing with such problems. Their pooled information and shared conclusions about what worked best, what got us into trouble, and what was plain useless up to that point in time is well documented for our review and examination. The early members recorded their experiences and conclusions masterfully. They seemed to have been looking at A.A. as always being in a state of becoming, never completed. In so many places in his writings, Bill is very explicit about their fears that we become rigid and thereby unable to realistically assess and meet new challenges.

He thought that the principles and procedures that had been developed to ensure the effective operation of

A.A. services should be recorded. At the 1960 General Service Conference Bill told the delegates that he was working on a series of essays for twelve "Concepts" which would attempt to "codify the principal needs and relationships" in our structure. He felt that the spiritual principles in our Twelve Steps had been extended to the Twelve Traditions, and now needed to be extended to "Concepts" for the conduct of our service affairs. Bill told the delegates that our spiritual principles had been set, and he wished to describe the manner in which they applied to our service structure. The Concepts, Bill assured the Conference, would not describe a new set of principles or suggest changes in the service structure as it then existed. The "how" of the service structure was described in the Service Manual; the Concepts would describe the "why."

By recording the mistakes as well as the solutions, Bill wanted to document how the service structure had developed as it had, and why certain understandings had been reached. We would "thus be able to hold this experience before us" as our service structure grew and evolved. Bill recognized that there could be flaws in the structure and the future might make changes necessary. By means of recording the experience of the past, he hoped to forestall repetition of earlier mistakes. This was one more time our predecessors stressed the importance of willingness to change.

And what has this to do with challenges, communications, and 2011? In my view, this is a basic and crucial communication challenge – the challenge to communicate to those who follow us in A.A. a historically accurate sense of what A.A. is and how it works.

We have the obligation to help those who came into A.A. after us to understand that A.A. is an ongoing process, not an end point, so that these new members can continue to meet challenges in the spirit of A.A., looking at new problems from a wide variety of perspectives, trying out all kinds of solutions (including traditional ones), keeping an open mind to the problem and open ears to each other, and finally choosing the solutions which are best for that particular problem at that particular place and at that particular time. Only with this kind of understanding of our history will A.A. continue as the vital and effective carrier of the message.

Over the past years, we have gained a great deal of experience in carrying the message. From the outset the most effective passing of the message was through the

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## COMMUNICATIONS—CHALLENGES

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words of one alcoholic to another. But almost from the beginning, we learned that non-alcoholics could also spread the message and transmit our program. Our history tells of many groups being started by concerned relatives or professionals. The written word has also served us well. The press wrote glowingly about us and thousands upon thousands knocked on our doors. Suffering alcoholics wrote to what is now G.S.O. and were told how to find a group, or, if there was no group, were supported in their efforts to form one or to work the program by themselves. The Big Book was often the only source of hope, shared experience, and information about the program. Now, there is an extensive body of literature to serve the still-suffering alcoholic as well as those who seek to reach and help him or her. We have made superb use of new media as they develop – tapes, videos, films, and lately, computer networking. We still use most of the methods which we used in the past but we have honed them and extended them. You would think we could rest on our laurels, but that is not the A.A. way. There are still alcoholics out there who we are not reaching.

We are asking ourselves, how can we do a better job? Sometimes it seems to be due to a language barrier, and we have undertaken making translations of our basic literature. Sometimes it is because we have not yet made it possible for some alcoholics to identify with us. Some of our challenges to communicate arise out of our great success. We are sent large numbers of suffering people, in such numbers that they threaten to overwhelm us. Some are alcoholics who want our help; many are alcoholics who are not ready or willing to come to us; and others have problems other than alcohol.

We are faced with communicating to the courts, to treatment centers, and to hospitals what we can and cannot do. We are faced with communicating to courts and treatment facilities that would make us an arm of their programs, what the boundaries of our help must be. We are faced with somehow meeting the needs of those who do not, or do not yet belong to us, who prove disruptive to our meetings and our ability to help each other and those who do want what we have to offer.

We have made constructive beginnings. Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.), Public Information (P.I.), Correctional and Treatment Facilities/Special Needs – Accessibilities Committees, armed with workbooks which provide them with our pooled experiences, are seeking to open up communications, to use tried and true A.A. methods for resolving misunderstandings, meet-

ing with those who do not understand, trying to hear their problems and work out solutions for their problems with us and ours with them. We are experimenting with ways of orienting those they send to us so that we can serve them and yet continue to serve our own members and others who are ready for us. We are working on such concepts as Bridging the Gap sponsorship to connect their clients to us one by one instead of en masse. These ways keep communication channels open so that we can work together to meet the challenges.

Some of our experimental solutions, however, tend to close communication down. One hears of groups which have opted out of the challenge and withdraw in upon themselves. Some have resorted to classifying, judging who is a candidate to belong, making rules. All these cut them off from hearing and responding to the pain of people who come to them. One hears that we cannot help non-alcoholic sufferers, yet it is obvious that this is untrue. Twelve Step programs in myriad variety have followed our lead and have proved helpful to people with problems other than alcohol. Some groups have been hostile to such people. Some have heard the pain, understood the search for help, and guided them to the Twelve Step programs which are right for them.

These are only a few of the challenges to effective communication we face today. We need to think of more ways and we need to try them out. We need more communication with each other so that our pooled experiences can yield the best solutions, and it will take every one of us.

There is another major communication problem to be solved. What kind of communicating is necessary to persuade those groups who do not now contribute to the overall search for solutions to join the service structure and do their part? What kind of communicating is necessary to ensure that each member of A.A. becomes a part of carrying the message to those who have not yet heard it, and of supporting those who have heard the message and are taking their early steps towards recovery?

Our predecessors met the challenges which, in their day, seemed equally overwhelming. Now, the challenge is ours. Can we continue the processes of communicating which have been passed to us? Can we work out solutions in the A.A. way to the problems we have now? Will we stand strong and united towards the problems still to come?

*Contributed by Arnold R., Baltimore, Maryland*

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES WORKSHOP

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual AA Archives Workshop took place in Helena, Montana September 22-25, 2011. Its theme was "Mining the Past, Minding the Future." These workshops started in Akron, begun by Gail L. the then Akron AA Archivist. She chaired the first two and co-chaired the 3<sup>rd</sup> with NE Ohio General Service. Since these workshops were born in NE Ohio we have felt a responsibility for them and have tried to get at least one person from our area to attend each of them.

Special guests included our General Service Office's non-alcoholic archivist, Michelle Mirza, and the Executive Director of Stepping Stones, Annah Perch. Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills, NY was the home of Bill W. and his wife Lois and is now a museum. They each gave presentations on archival activities at their facilities. Five AA areas brought displays in addition to GSO, Stepping Stones, and Montana AI-Anon. In total, 144 people were in attendance.

Thursday evening began with a welcome and introduction followed by addresses by Linda C. (outgoing Chair of the Conference Committee on Archives) and Carl B. (past West Central Region Trustee). Linda spoke on the problems the Archives Committee had meeting with the Trustees and on how the agenda was to be modified to address this. Carl spoke on the processes leading to acceptance of our Twelve Concepts. I got copies of the extensive background material he used in order to help our planning for our State Convention next year based on that theme. Michelle Mirza also spoke briefly on the need for archives stories in *Markings* and also the Archives Workbook. The workbook is available online at our website (aa.org) as well as several past issues of *Markings*, the AA archives newsletter. This later publication can be subscribed to digitally also thru the website.

Friday began with a lengthy conservation workshop by David C. / Perry D. / Hal E. I bought the DVDs of "Conservation." Since I had attended one before and also have had the services, when needed, of Akron Intergroup's conservator Jim B. I attended the alternate track of workshops held at the same time. That was: "Archives on the Internet" by

Mike G., "Data Migration", and "Meta-Data" by Cody T. (who's on our area and Akron Archives Committees) and Arthur S. The first emphasized anonymity on the internet which is abused by some, often those who think the reason for it is the shame of being an alcoholic which has certainly lessened over the decades versus an expression of humility which has not. Migration covered three items: making extra copies as backups—at least one copy at another site, copying from old to newer media—e.g. diskettes to CDs, and updating versions—e.g. MS-Word 2003<sup>®</sup> to MS-Word 2010<sup>®</sup>. Much mention was made of Adobe Acrobat<sup>®</sup> as a media for copying printed or printable archives. The final item, metadata, addressed adding descriptive items, especially copyright information, to graphical data such as digital pictures. I learned that Windows 7's Explorer gives access to these fields by right-clicking the picture and choosing properties. You can then do the digital equivalent of writing on the back of a picture. Arthur shared his PowerPoint presentations with me. As Arthur said: "I never met a data I didn't like."

While I had offered to make a presentation, the program was set before that time. This changed when presenter Charles K. suffered a burst appendix a few days prior to the Conference. "Shakey" Mike G. was asked to put together a substitute, chose "Disaster Planning", and asked me at lunch on Saturday to help with it. I put together a PowerPoint on it that afternoon. I had given some thought to this but had not actually gone through the process. While I was lauded for my effort I did not feel it was my best work and have asked next year's program planner if I might do this as a topic then. This preparation took part of Friday afternoon so I missed the presentation by the "Montana Historical Society" but the following topics "Starting a Repository" and "Writing an Area History" are items I had experienced, plus I learned I would have later access to the recordings of these items. I did attend part of "Sharing between Archives" by Shane P. / Mike G. since I could also offer input, precluding

"Preservation of Modern Printed Materials" by Daniel B. which was at the same time. I took a box of "Free to a Good Home" extra copies of our area archives or items more appropriate to some other archives to hand out.

Friday evening began with an address by Michelle Mirza on GSO Archives. Much of their conservation efforts have been suspended due to budget cuts that mandate delay of these costly actions. Their current work primary entails cataloging existing materials in addition to fielding the myriad requests they get on a daily basis. Converted cassette tapes have to be listened to in order to confirm that they are indeed what the label suggested and to gather information for their cataloging. Retired staffer Susan U is helping with this effort. GSO Archives uses an extensive (and expensive) cataloguing system called "Re:discovery." Michelle emphasized attention to the scope of your collection, collecting only that which is appropriate to your archives. Her address was followed by a group of delightful old-timers. I skipped the final item of the evening, an ice cream social, to finish my presentation.

Saturday began with bids for the 2013 NAAAW by Denver, CO and Springfield, IL. This was followed by "The Three Legacies and Archives" by Carl B. / Arthur S. which I had to skip in order to attend "Collecting Histories, Oral and Written" by Tom W. / Laurie C. They encouraged interviewing with two people so as not to miss part of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They also urged researching the individual first and emphasizing the confidential nature of the history. "Shakey Mike" G's and my presentation on "Disaster Planning" followed opposite "AI-Anon Archives." These were followed by "Copyright and Fair Use" by attorney Don F. together with Michelle Mirza. Items created prior to 1926 are copyright-free but rights to use someone else's more modern work varies greatly depending on the nature of the use, type of material, and copyright of the material. Pre-1972 audio recordings are covered by state law. The 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act covers newer media. As Cody said earlier

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# ARCHIVES

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in the Workshop, "I don't want to be the person to break the Akron Archives." Even a small copyright violation could result in legal fees well beyond the resources of our entities.

Saturday afternoon began with "Preventing Damage to Display Materials" by Daniel B. opposite "The Archives Workbook" by David C. and Mike S. I attended the latter since our area has played a role in the creation and modification of this document. They are still looking for area experiences. I plan to send them some stories on our archives to them. This was followed by "AA Service Structure History" by Arthur S. and at the same time "Improving the NAAAW" by David C. / Vicky B. / Mike S. / Cecilia R. which I attended. Just like the old saw "Which part of Alcoholics Anonymous don't you understand?" The NAAAW struggles to keep to its scope.

The evening banquet was followed by an address by Annah Perch on Stepping Stones renovation and expansion. Their endowment was funded largely by Lois W's royalties on Bill's writings which continued for ten years after her demise on October 5, 1988. Income from this is barely enough to pay for minimal staff. They needed to seek grants to pay the high cost of needed restoration and were quite successful in this. She ended with a videotape of a play titled "Bill & Lois: In Their Own Words."

Sunday began with a business meeting where we appointed a webmaster and in an exceptionally close vote chose Springfield, IL as the 2013 site. The Workshop ended with a handoff to the Cocoa Beach, FL Workshop successors for 2012. These workshops never fail to leave those in attendance with renewed energy and fervor to preserve the history and message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

*Reported by Bob McK., Ohio State Archivist*

October 4-7, 2012, you will have an opportunity to attend the 16th NAAAW, in Cocoa Beach, Florida, which, by all indications, is going to be a remarkable experience. The official theme for next year's workshop is "Passing It On.

# DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBERS SOUGHT

**DCMs are listed opposite their district number. Empty positions note the district boundaries in the shaded boxes. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO RE-LIGHT THESE DARK DISTRICTS.**

1	Bill H	29	Tamra P
2	Roosevelt T	30	Shyrl B
3	David R	31	Tonia B
04A	Carol T	<b>32</b>	<b>Cleveland Hts</b>
<b>05A</b>	<b>Portage County</b>	33	Kimberly C
<b>05B</b>	<b>Ravenna</b>	34	Quinsetta M
6	Andrew R	35	Edward U
7	Joel T	36	Robert A
8	Jim S	37	Beverly R
9	Karla B	38	Mike F
10	Steve B	39	Tim H
11	Arthur E	40	Gene A
<b>12</b>	<b>N Canton, Hartville, Alliance</b>	41	Rena S
13	Gary C	42	Bruce B
<b>14</b>	<b>Tuscarawas, Carroll, Waynesburg and Minerva.</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>Willoughby, Willoughby Hills, Mentor-on-the-Lake and Mentor</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Canton, East Canton</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>Western Lake County, includes: Eastlake, Wickliffe, and Willowick</b>
16	Dan Y	45	Edith F
<b>17</b>	<b>Huron County</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>Bedford, Bedford Hts., Oakwood and Walton Hills</b>
18	Bill B	47	Glenn D
19A	Ellen W	48	Gary D
19B	Yolanda A	49	Jerry P
20A	Patty McM	50	Ron P
20B	Judith S	51	Jeff S
20C	Patricia R	52	Diane K
21	Dan M	53	Diane K
22	Nancy R	55	Eric P
23	Jon E	<b>56</b>	<b>Central Medina County, Medina</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Westlake, Fairview Park</b>	57	David A
25	Jeff H	58	Ed B
<b>26</b>	<b>Berea, Brook Park, Linndale, Middleburg Hts., North Royalton, Parma Hts., Strongsville</b>	60	Justin C
<b>27</b>	<b>Broadview Hts., Brooklyn, Brooklyn Hts., Brecksville, Independence, Parma, and Seven Hills</b>	61	Nelson M
<b>28</b>	<b>Cuyahoga Hts., Garfield Hts., Maple Hts., Newburg Hts., and Valley View</b>	SP	Aida C

## DELEGATE PRESENTATIONS AT THE EAST CENTRAL REGION FORUM

*The biennial East-Central Regional Forum was held in Miamisburg OH, the weekend of November 11-13, 2011. This "travelling GSO road show" was attended by 350 AAs including seven trustees of the General Service Board, two GSO staff members, the publisher of the AA Grapevine and the Chairman of the GSB, Ward Ewing. During the weekend, several presentations were given. Here is a small sample of what the assembled group of AAs heard.*

### **Beyond a Buck in the Basket**

When I think about the topic of getting beyond a buck in the basket many thoughts come to mind. The first is that I do not know the answer to the question. When I came to my first 12 Step program in 1974 it was traditional to put a buck in the basket. Later when I came through the doors of A.A. in 1983 it was still traditional to put a buck in the basket. I remember quitting smoking in 1979 because cigarettes went to 60 cents a pack and I thought that was way too much money. In 1983 I could go out for coffee after the meeting and with a tip it didn't cost me more than a dollar. Several years ago we came out with a pamphlet which I think was titled something like "It takes more than a Buck". I can remember seeing them at meetings at that time yet most of us continued to put a buck in the basket. I do not think putting out another pamphlet is the answer. I've also seen posters showing the cost of some items over the years. I know that they have not been paid attention to either.

Recently I brought this topic up with several members after a meeting. Some mentioned it was a subject they hadn't really thought about. One person stated that she saw others putting in a dollar and thus assumed

that was the expected contribution. When asked what we could do to encourage larger contributions some suggestions were offered such as putting more than a buck in the basket, if you can afford to do so, and hoping others observe you doing so. Thus leading by example. Letting people know what the costs for the meeting are such as rent, coffee supplies, literature for newcomers, contributions to help carry the message at other levels of service (local central offices or intergroups, districts and General Service). Studying the traditions and what it means to be self supporting and talking about our 7<sup>th</sup> tradition to others.

The theme of the General Service Conference this year was "We are Responsible for A.A.'s Future – Let it Begin With Us". To me, if we are to get beyond a buck in the basket it has to begin with us ... specifically it needs to begin with me. I need to look at what can I put in the basket. We each have differences in our finances. We have members who are wealthy or who have high paying jobs. We have members who are unemployed and homeless. We have members who are on fixed incomes that are not rising in proportion to prices of daily necessities. Each of us needs to look at our own situation and based on that situation ask the question "Am I contributing my share?"

I love the story Bill told in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. You can read it on pages 162 & 163. Essentially it talks about

Bill giving \$5.00 to a prize slipee so that he could "look good" and later having trouble putting a dime in the hat when the meeting place needed money for the rent. I've done things like that in the past. We want to impress someone so we buy a round for the house, many times when we could ill afford it. One of the statements I've heard in the past is to put the price of a drink in the basket. I'm certainly glad I'm not drinking at today's prices. For myself I figure if I can afford to go to the coffee shop and get my favorite latte I can afford to put more in the basket.

What I have decided to do is to give a little more to my home group than I give to other meetings that I attend. I give at my home group whether I am there or not as the expenses continue and I want the meeting to be there for me. There have been times where I have forgotten to bring cash but I know that I am still welcome because our attendance is not predicated on having the price of admission. Everyone is welcome. What I need to do is talk to my sponsors about the importance of the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition and putting more in the basket if they can afford it, but if they can't they should put in what they can. I teach them the value of service and how we receive much more in return than we have ever been given.

I hope each of us asks the question "Am I giving what I can afford in the basket today?" Over time the amount may change as our fortunes change. I just need to know that I am doing what I can to ensure that A.A. is here for the alcoholic who still suffers today. I want A.A. to be here for my grandchildren if they should ever need it. I want A.A. to remain here for me ... and for that I am responsible.

*Nancy H., Delegate Panel 61, Area 75—Southern Wisconsin*



### Association vs. Participation

I found some interesting definitions and synonyms for these words that have impacted my life and sobriety.

Participate means to contribute, to partake, to join, to share, to be part of, and my favorite, to **chip in**.

Associate means to link, to connect, to relate, to correlate, and to parallel.

In the 1970's, I was going to meetings and life became good for me, very quickly. After very short time, I was just around AA. I went to meetings late, left early and did not talk to anyone. I became a seat polishing, coffee sucking, and donut vulture. I went backwards through the steps. After five years of research and development, I had my last drink March 28<sup>th</sup> 1982. In my first go round with AA, I never took part in any AA activity at all. I would not read and definitely did not comment or lead (speak). I was too scared to do any of those things. That is why I feel that I was only **ASSOCIATING** with you folks and by never getting close to anyone or anything.

Today, I am just not the same person. You gave me a remarkable non-refundable gift, and all I do is **PARTICIPATE** with you and others. I am allowed to be here one more day at a time. If peace, serenity, security, and stability are what I am seeking, what is it I am willing to do? The destruction of self came at a high price. I have to participate in my own recovery through prayer, through self-sacrifice and through service to others. Perhaps the heart of Step Twelve is "tried." For nearly each problem presented to me, the Big Book a solution is given. I must Trust God, Clean House, Help Others and, for me, Remain Teachable. My mind must stay open just like a para-

chute must stay open in order to work. Repeatedly in my sobriety, when I have tried to carry the message of AA to another suffering alcoholic, sober or drunk, I have been amazingly revitalized and lifted up. Perhaps it is because I am aligning myself with a mission of service or purpose, as outlined by those who came before me.

What is clear to me was that my wanting to do what was being asked was not required. One analogy I connected with early in sobriety was that of the orange. What comes out of an orange when we squeeze it? Why orange juice, of course! The reason orange juice comes out is because that is what is inside of the orange. It doesn't matter whether I smash it with my hands or whack it with a hammer or squeeze in a vice, cut it with a knife or run it over with my truck, orange juice still comes out because that is what is inside of the orange.

And so with me if I am reacting with fear, selfishness, resentments and dishonesty, that is what is inside of me. It has nothing to do with looking good on the outside but everything to do with what is inside of me. Amazingly, as I try to practice the principles of our program, what began to flow from me was courage, genuine interest in the well being others, self-esteem and honesty. Ultimately, I began to feel useful and whole as promised. Our Twelfth Suggestion is all about showing up. We get to try to carry this message with another alcoholic. We get the "privilege" of working with others. For me the difference between association and participation has made the difference between a good life and that of a great life.

*Bob D., Delegate Panel 61, Area 54—Northeast Ohio*

### Service is not work - Service is an opportunity

I recently heard a great analogy about service. Being a part of A.A. is like having an RV trailer. In the trailer, you've got your home group, your sponsor and sponsees, A.A. meetings, the A.A. Grapevine and all the A.A. events you regularly attend. Life is comfortable. In the back of the trailer is a door that says *service*. Some people may avoid it, thinking that door is for emergencies only. But what they may not realize is that that door leads to a fourth dimension of existence, beyond their wildest dreams.

My introduction to service began when I became a member of my home group. One night, after one of my regular A.A. meetings, a member asked if Kemper Road Big Book was my home group. I asked, what is a home group? When Jon told me it was a group I committed to go to every week, I agreed it was my home group. He then informed me that I needed to stay after the meeting for the group conscience. My only 'service work' in staying for the group conscience was a monthly, 20 minute commitment, but what staying for the group conscience gave me was a feeling that I was a part of that group. I had the opportunity to consistently show up, get to know people and allow people to get to know me. I felt ownership for my home group. Later, I became the secretary, Intergroup Rep and G.S.R. for my home group. By accepting responsibility for these service positions, I had the opportunity to serve the group by listening, taking notes and to practice Tradition 1 through linking my home group to A.A. as a whole.

Being part of a home group is not the only opportunity to be of service. After I was sober a couple of years, I

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## DELEGATE PRESENTATIONS AT THE EAST CENTRAL REGION FORUM

*(Continued from page 13)*

got the chance to be a part of the Cincinnati Conference of Young People in A.A. The biggest gift serving on the CINCYPAA committee was that is where I found my voice. It was the time in my sobriety where the 5<sup>th</sup> step promises were starting to come true. It was a great place to learn how to look people in the eye and witness my fear of interacting with people just fall away. I learned how to ask for help, how to negotiate a hotel contract and present a bid for Cincinnati at the 1996 ICYPAA in San Diego. After I turned 30, a therapist suggested it was time to leave the young peoples' group and hang out with the adults.

I became an Intergroup Representative for my new home group and it wasn't long before I started volunteering for service positions. Being involved with Cincinnati Intergroup, I got to learn how A.A. started in Cincinnati. I got to consider where we should move the Alcathon so it would be more accessible to people dependent on public transportation. I got to write lots of inventories and had ample opportunities to practice principles before personalities. I got to make amends and learn to move on gracefully, so I wouldn't have to make amends in the future.

After my commitment at Intergroup, I became involved with general service work. I served as the G.S.R. for the Spiritual Basis Group, the Literature Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar, Alternate Delegate/Chair and Dele-

gate. I had the opportunity to meet my current sponsor, to work cooperatively with other chairs and officers, to learn about the 12 Concepts, I developed confidence through presenting reports, attended my first East Central Regional Forum in Chicago and I got to trust God, no matter what.

Being the Panel 60 Delegate for Area 56 has given me more opportunities for growth than I can possibly express. During my term, I had the opportunity to exchange information from Southwest Ohio and the General Service and Grapevine Offices. I got to hear about problems and solutions from delegates throughout Canada and the United States. I got to be a part of the group conscience for Southwest Ohio and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. I had the opportunity to speak on a panel at A.A.'s 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party in San Antonio, Texas, as well as speaking in my city, state, area and other states. I had the opportunity to learn about how we carry A.A.'s message online. I got to attend meetings at my computer with people from around the world. By sharing how I carried A.A.'s message online, I was given the opportunity to observe how 12 Step volunteers on the A.A. Online Intergroup share A.A.'s message of hope to people in every time zone, around the world, twenty four hours a day. More than anything else, I am amazed at how I have been given the power be

a leader in Alcoholics Anonymous. As I became willing to play the role God assigns, I somehow, blossomed into this person who is stands before you now. I am able to get over my self-centered, introvert tendencies and talk about it. Service isn't work. Service is an opportunity to let the Creator show others of its power and love. Being of service is a manifestation of the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

My A.A. trailer hasn't grown or become fancy as a result of my service work. I am still a drunk amongst drunks at my home group. I still need to practice the principles and my 10<sup>th</sup> step reads the same as yours; it says 'when' I'm wrong, not 'if' I'm wrong. But, my trailer has been to incredible places. Places I never even knew existed. I am truly blessed beyond measure. I try to practice a genuine humility that I don't get spoiled by these great blessings. And, I try to live in thankful contemplation to my Higher Power and for Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for this opportunity to be of service.

*Alicia R., Delegate Panel 60, Area 56—Southwest Ohio*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

# Service - What a Concept!

## Celebrating 50 Years with 12 Concepts



# 1962-2012



July 20-22, 2012

The Ohio State Convention commemorates the Golden Anniversary of the introduction of the Twelve Concepts for World Service this summer with a program jam-packed full of Recovery, Unity and Service.

### 2012 Area Events

**January 15** – Area Assembly      **Gv Lit**  
**January 22** – Mini-Conf planning meeting  
If inclement weather, then March 13<sup>th</sup> also  
*DoubleTree Hotel – Independence, Oh*  
**February 19** – Workshop TBA  
**February 26** – Mini-Conf planning meeting  
*DoubleTree Hotel – Independence, Oh*  
**March 18** – Area Committee meeting  
(and MC planning snow date)  
**April 6-8** – 37<sup>th</sup> NEOH Mini-Conference  
*DoubleTree Hotel*      **Gv Lit**  
**April 15** – Area Assembly  
**May 20** – Unity Day TBA      **Lit**  
**June 8-10** – Founders' Day      **Gv**  
Grapevine sales on Saturday only 6/9  
**June 17** – Area Committee Meeting  
**June 24** – Area Open House Picnic  
TBA  
**July 15** – Area Assembly      **Gv Lit**  
**July 20-22** – 56<sup>th</sup> Ohio State Convention  
*Beachwood Hilton*      **Gv Lit**  
**August 19** – Workshop TBA  
**September 16** - Area Committee Meeting  
**October 21** - Area Assembly  
*Area Elections*  
**November 18** - Gratitude Sunday      **Gv Lit**  
TBA  
**December 16** - Area Committee Meeting

### Ohio, Regional...and Beyond

#### Elsewhere in Ohio

**March 9-11**—Lore City, OH  
Area 53 Mini-conference  
**Mar 16-18**—Perrysburg, OH  
Area 55 Mini-conference  
**March 23-25**—Miamisburg, OH  
Area 56 Mini-conference  
**May 12**—Columbus, OH  
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting  
@ 10 am  
**July 20-22**—Beachwood, OH  
56<sup>th</sup> Ohio State Convention  
**August 12-13**—Independence, OH  
OYPAA Convention  
**Nov 10**—Columbus, OH  
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting @ 10 am

#### U.S. and Canada

**Apr 22-28**—New York, NY  
61<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference  
**Sept 9-11**—Saratoga Springs, NY  
EACYPAA Camp Out  
*Contact Rob: 518-860-7614*

#### East-Central Region

**February 10-12**—Miamisburg, OH  
Conference of Delegates, Past and Present  
**August 10-12**—Mt. Vernon, IL  
East Central Region Forum



## RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our AA experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, as He may speak in our group conscience, is our sole Authority. World Service is the heart of our Third Legacy. Our meetings are informative and educational. They are held so that the Committee Members, GSR's and all interested members may be better equipped to carry the message of World Service back to their home groups and individual members, thus giving a better understanding to our purpose, our hopes and our work.

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