

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

July, August & September 2012

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXII, Issue 7

NOTE THE DATE

July 8

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

July 20, 21 & 22

Ohio State Convention*

August 19

Workshop 2:00 pm

Sept 16

Assembly 2:00 pm

October 21

Election Assembly 2:00 pm

November 18

Gratitude Sunday 12:00 pm
Old North Church—Canfield OH

* These events will be held at the Beachwood Hilton hotel



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

Inside this Issue:

Editorial	2
Officer & District Reports.....	3
Area Committee Reports.....	4
Unity Day Address	6
62nd GSC Advisory Actions ..	7
Steps-Traditions-Concepts.....	10
Ohio State Convention.....	14
Upcoming Events	15
Contact Information	16

A Word From Our Delegate

Adventures in Service and A.A. seem to becoming more and more rewarding as my journey continues. After returning from the 62nd General Service Conference, my travels took me to a meeting in Euclid, Ohio, where I grew up. I was then off to the Cleveland Multi-District Service Panel. We enjoyed lots of service experience sharing. At Unity Day in Brunswick, we heard from committee chairs, GSRs, DCMs and panel speak about service, unity, and diversity in our fellowship. I reported my experience at the 62nd General Service Conference.

The following week was District 6's Picnic at Waddell Park in Niles. Next day, District 30 held their first service event, a picnic in Wickliffe, Ohio where I lived for 15 years. Reports have it that they have doubled their number of GSRs. Congratulations to those active members who have re-lighted a previously dark district.

June took us to Founders Day. What a blessing we have here in Northeast Ohio with all the historic treasures at our doorstep. We hung around with Steve B. at the Grapevine display. One of the highlights was to meet in person a lady and her family from Hawaii who requested information from me a month ago. I was able to meet old and new friends. Got to say the Third Step Prayer at Dr. Bob's House. We listened to Lyle P whose story is in the 4th Edition of the Big Book. Grateful to share the event with my brother Bill whose has 37 years.

The 60th Anniversary of Rosary Hall on June 12 affirmed the work of Sister Ignatia. What a treat to acknowledge the work of Rosary Hall and their staff. My father got sober at Rosary Hall when it first opened.

Because of great planning and dedication by our committees, we are looking forward to hosting the 56th annual Ohio State Convention. The program and activities they have planned for us should not be missed. If you cannot attend, please consider offering a scholarship registration to another home group member to have this exciting opportunity. Talk to anyone on the Panel and Committees for more details. If you would like to join the Committee our next planning meeting is July 8th, 2pm at the Hotel Hilton Cleveland East, Beachwood, at 3663 Park East Drive 44122. There are more service opportunities available. Events are posted at www.area54.org.

With love and service, Bob D., Delegate Area 54, Panel 61.

Alternate Delegate's Report

My most sincere and heartfelt thanks to all, for your prayers, cards, thoughts, tolerance and compassion shown during my recent period of mourning. There are times when "life comes at you so fast" that the calm of the spirit can be broken by emotional upset. But, with practice of the 12 Steps and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the calm of the spirit is soon restored. **"THANK GOD FOR A.A."**

Since becoming a trusted servant, I've been asked, "which of the entities is the most important?" There are four entities in Alcoholics Anonymous, and all are equally important. Each entity performs different functions with varying responsibilities. Each entity is composed of A.A. members, having but one primary purpose. "To stay sober and help others to recover from alcoholism". Taken together, we have A.A. as a whole and therefore, they can only be equally important.

It is my humble opinion that if any one of these were to cease to exist, the effect on Alcoholics Anonymous would be adverse and most devastating.

Reminder: Don't forget to register for the 56th Ohio State Convention July 20-22, 2012. There is a great line-up of speakers and a Spanish speaker meeting. On Friday night a DJ Dance and on Saturday night for the first time ever, a "Talent Showcase". All are invited to participate in the showcase. (contact Ola 216-662-8906) for further information.) Cut-off for the reduced hotel rates is June 29th.

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

From the Editor...

JOIN US THIS MONTH, at the Ohio State Convention, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service* by the AA General Service Conference.

These principles, composed by Bill W., are incorporated into twelve essays in the second half of the A.A. Service Manual. In the introductory text of the Twelve Concepts, Bill writes, “*We should always realize that change does not necessarily spell progress. We are sure that each new group of workers in world service will be tempted to try all sorts of innovations that may often produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes. Therefore it will be an important objective of these Concepts to forestall such repetitions by holding the experiences of the past clearly before us. And if mistaken departures are nevertheless made, these Concepts may then provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that might otherwise take years of floundering to rediscover.*”

In a 1962 General Service Conference publication, *Bill's Recommendations on the Structure of the General Service Board and the Trustees' Comments and Recommendations**, he sums up his feelings about his role in World Service upon this completed trilogy of writing on our Three Legacies:

“A.A.’s “Suggested Twelve Steps” were offered in 1939 as the best estimate that could be made of our future recovery and spiritual needs. In 1946, the “Twelve Traditions” were similarly offered as estimates to meet group needs. Of course these principles have never been forced upon anyone. We long ago learned the danger and futility of trying to coerce people into the practice of any code, moral or spiritual, well knowing that the voluntary acceptance of “suggested” principles is the only basis upon which A.A. can work.

“It is in precisely this spirit that the new “Twelve Concepts” and their related Recommendations are presently offered as the best estimate that I can make of our future World Service needs. These principles are now fully and I hope clearly, on paper. So it would be far out of order if I were to go on debating them in the Conference, or anywhere else.

“As we have seen, the underlying theme of the Recommendations is that A.A. has come to the time of full responsibility; that A.A. can and should now take primary charge of its own affairs. Deeply convinced that this is true, I gladly leave these newly-stated principles of World Service with the conscience of our entire society to do with them what is right and best.

“For these reasons, I feel that my long-held personal responsibility for the future of A.A.’s World Services will have come to an end with the publication of this letter to the Conference.

“My tour of over-all service to A.A. began just twenty-four years ago. To all of my associates in this wonderful adventure I shall be everlastingly grateful. For it is because they have done so much for so many, and for me, that I can now in good conscience say to myself, “Let go and

let God.”

Please join us in celebration July 20-22! See p.14>

-Your editor, Jeff

*Although no longer in print or available from the A.A. General Service Office, “the 1962 General Service Conference asked that this pamphlet be prepared and delivered to the Conference Delegates and Area Committeemen.” The original 1962 press run was 1,000 copies. Your editor, as a delegate to the 57th/58th GSCs, requested a copy be provided to the Conference Trustees Committee to assist it in its deliberations of the 2007 Minority Report. The GSO Archivist graciously located and placed an *original* copy from the archives into my hands for viewing, and provided an electronic copy for the work of the committee. Those wishing to see this document may request one from the editor of the NE OH Recorder.

We welcome your service-related contributions, comments and questions. Send topic ideas or complaints to: newsletter@area54.org



OFFICER REPORTS

THE VOICE OF THE GROUP

Alcoholics Anonymous is set-up in such a manner that it operates from the bottom up. This means that the groups are responsible for operating/directing AA.

Each group in AA has an opportunity to have a voice in AA. This is done through an informed group conscience. It is the responsibility of the Group Service Representative (GSR) to report this information to the District Committee Member (DCM), Assembly and/or the Area Delegate who passes it on at the General Service Conference.

However, if your group has no GSR then your group has no link/voice in AA as a whole. The GSR not only communicates the group's informed conscience to the DCM, Assembly and Delegate. The GSR also brings back to the group communication/information from the Conference, Assembly, Delegate and the District.

The GSR is a vital communication link for the Group. Your group needs an active GSR. One who is informing the group and relaying the group conscience. If not, your group has no voice in the matters of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Groups, don't sit around and complain about what is happening in AA. Elect a GSR and know what is happening. Even more importantly, have a voice in the operation, direction and business of

Alcoholics Anonymous.

Calvin L., Area Treasurer

Despite all of the evidence to the contrary throughout my life, I continue to go through the routine of day to day life assuming nothing will ever change. I think we all do that, we think the job we have, the family or boyfriend or girlfriend will never change. Then one day the owner of the company I work for called me into his office. That was not unusual, I report to him. What he had to say was, however. I was offered the opportunity to take over our office in New Mexico.

In one fell swoop everything changed. This was, as Vito Corleone in the Godfather used to say, "an offer you can't refuse." Despite that career-wise it was a no-brainer, it still took me a week to decide. I was facing leaving all of my friends, everything I knew, and going into the unknown.

I fell back on the Steps, and took a Tenth Step inventory on why I was hesitant. After a number of hours of digging into the minefield of my brain, I discovered it boiled down to two things: fear and ego. The fear part was easy, I don't like change. The ego was a bit harder to get to the roots of.

I have worked hard to make my way down the ladder of service positions to the point

that I am now the Area Chairman, and God willing, would have a chance to be the Area Delegate one day. If I took this job, I would be in Area 46, which is the entire State of New Mexico and have to start over! What hubris. Who am I to decide what my destiny is in service in Alcoholics Anonymous? It dawned on me that this move might have absolutely nothing to do with my job and everything to do with something God has for me to do that requires I be in Albuquerque.

I also went back in my inventory to 1998 when I landed in Akron, with my family gone, a terrible job, and little prospect for the future. I knew nobody, every door was closed to me. Every door but one. When every door is slammed in your face, when every person is telling you to go away, the doors of AA are open and the members are happy to see you. With 15 years of sobriety, I started over in the loving hands of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Because I went to a meeting I met Gail. Because I met Gail I went to the Intergroup and joined the Archives and Intergroup News Committees. Because I was on the Committee I met past delegate Joan A. who used spiritual trickery and took me to my first Area Assembly. One Saturday she asked me if I could give her a ride the next day. Now I was taught when an old-timer asks you to do something, you do it. Little did I know what that simple yes would yield. A human's life is not shaped so much by what he or she

(Continued on page 4)

OFFICER REPORTS

(Continued from page 3)

pretends to be or even by the compulsions that he tries to root out and burn away; instead it can just be a matter of a wrong turn in a lazy moment and a disregard for its consequences. Fortunately I did not take the wrong turn and say no, after all the Browns were on and isn't that far more important than going to some stupid service meeting? Despite the fact I didn't want to go I listened to my sponsor go off in my mind and did what I should, not what I wanted.

What has happened to me in the past 14 years has been way beyond my wildest hopes and dreams! I have been to incredible places, met incredible people, and have incredible friends, all because I went to an Area Assembly meeting and then did the next thing in my path. I became a GSR, then a DCM. I slowly figured out what was going on and came to love service deeply. I think in large part it is because all of you love Alcoholics Anonymous and are willing to give of your time without thought of reward.

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. Service work is like that, it is magic but very hard to explain. Alcoholics Anonymous and service work has taught me that the measure of one's life finally reduces itself to the possession of the moment, then the moment after that, moving through each of them in sequence from day to day, letting go of yesterday and asking nothing of

the future than asking to be there for it.

The next thing in my path is Albuquerque, New Mexico. I can't wait to see what God has in store. My plan (that noise you hear is God laughing) is to work 3-4 years and come home to retire. I will be back each Founders' Day and in Decembers, so it is see ya' later...not goodbye.

Thank you all for your lives.

Jay M., Area Chairman

Special Needs

On May 10, Ron & I met with Joanna at Green Leaf to discuss the bidding process for ASL interpretation of the 2012 OHIO STATE CONVENTION. While there, she mentioned the possibility of starting an AA meeting at their facility. We also talked about her teaching ASL Basic skills for a six week course for 10 people at a price of \$50.00 per person. She also made some suggestions on the Special Needs brochure. Waiting for the brochure to come back from print and to be accepted.

Love & Respect

Roosevelt T., Special Needs Committee chairperson

Want your committee and district news published here? Send reports to newsletter @ area54.org

REGIONAL FORUMS AND SPECIAL FORUMS

Regional Forums originated in 1975 at the suggestion of the late Chair Emeritus of the General Service Board of Trustees, Dr. Jack Norris. They are weekend sharing and informational sessions designed to help the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., the Grapevine Corporate Board, the Grapevine Staff, and the General Service Office Staff stay in touch with trusted servants throughout the A.A. service structure.

At the invitation of a region, four Regional Forums are held each year. Since the U.S./Canada service structure is composed of eight regions, a Regional Forum may be held in alternate years in a particular region on a rotating basis.

The location and agenda for a Regional Forum are decided jointly by the Regional Trustee, Area Delegates and G.S.O. The responsibility for direct contact with the hotel is assumed by a local A.A. Host Contact working with the Regional Forums Coordinator and Regional Trustee. The Regional Forums Coordinator at G.S.O. distributes registration forms and invitations to groups and service workers through the region and, working with the Host Contact and Regional Trustee, coordinates the details of the Forum.

A region may request a Special Forum which has fewer par-

(Continued on page 15)

2012 East Central "Additional" Regional Forum

With our U.S./Canada General Service Board
Of Alcoholics Anonymous



August 10-12, 2012
7pm to 10pm Friday
9am to 9:45pm Saturday
9am to noon on Sunday



Holiday Inn
222 Potomac Blvd.
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

**FIRST TIME FORUM
ATTENDEES-WELCOME!**

There is no Registration Fee

We Are Coming Together To Share Experience On Several Topics:

- ❖ Why should I care about A.A. beyond my home group?
- ❖ A.A. History-Boring or incredible spiritual journey?
- ❖ How does support of G.S.O. help A.A.s worldwide?
- ❖ Does your home group use the A.A. Grapevine or La Vifa as a Twelfth Step tool?
- ❖ The upside down triangle-how are the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. and Grapevine Boards accountable to the Fellowship?
- ❖ How do I have a voice in A.A.?
- ❖ What do the Traditions and Concepts have to do with my home group?

Purpose of this Forum

This Forum is put on by the A.A. General Service Board and is "open" to A.A. members or to anyone interested in A.A. Forums originated in 1975 at the suggestion of the late Chairman of the General Service Board of Trustees, Dr. Jack Norris.

Forums are designed 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. Forums offer a meeting place to ask questions and spark new ideas to help carry the A.A. message of hope to the still-suffering alcoholic.

This Forum provides unique opportunities for A.A. members throughout the East Central Region to share their experience, strength and hope.

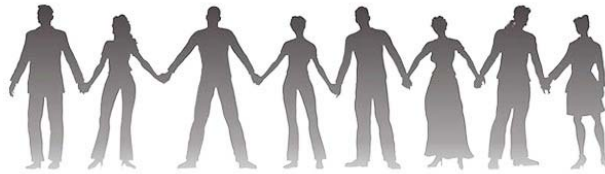
UNITY DAY ADDRESS

THE UNITY DAY Committee asked me to come before you on this special day to share about the relationship of the CPC Committee and our Second Legacy – Unity. And I believe the relationship between the two in this day and age is critical. But first, let me just say a word about our theme for today – Harmony in Unity. In one of the paths that I walk, it is my privilege to direct a male chorus. We rehearse weekly in an effort to sing harmoniously. The basses sing their part; the tenors sing their part; and the baritones sing their part. Each part is different, yet we all sing together in unity, and when each part is sung according to the music, the song is beautiful and harmonious. You could say that remarkable things happen when all are of one accord. Likewise, in A.A. we all come from different walks of life. But when we are all participating together according to our traditions, we can be of one accord and the results are remarkable. I could talk about the spiritual benefit that occurs when all assembled are of one accord, but that would be for another time at another podium.

So, to begin our talk about CPC and Unity here is a little background material – very little! Our founders believed early on that we should have a cooperative relationship with the professional community. From the very beginning Bill W. relied upon his relationship with a professional - Dr. Silkworth - in defining alcoholism from a disease concept. In the Forward to the First Edition of the Big Book we find an open invitation for cooperation with the professional community when we read, "Inquiry by scientific, medical, and religious societies will be welcomed." As stated in the Forward to the Second Edition, "the ministration of friends in medicine, religion and the press, together with innumerable others

who became able and persistent advocates [in other words, cooperation with the professional community] is another reason for the wide acceptance of A.A." At the first International Convention of A.A. the medical director of E.I. Dupont de Nemours & Company, in reporting to the "A.A. in Industry" meeting, stated that "cooperation with A.A. was the most successful way to handle employed alcoholics."

With so-called scientific ad-



vances in the area known generally to the professional community as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency" in which alcohol is regarded as just another drug, there has also grown this idea that there is no difference between drug addiction and alcoholism. Hence, among professionals not afflicted with our common malady, particularly those in a position to make referrals or, in some cases, orders and mandates, anyone suffering from "chemical dependency" might benefit from the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

So, you ask, "What does this have to do with Unity?" I'm glad you asked that question. Though our first tradition gives us our reason for unity, one of the common threads that holds us together – keeps us unified – is embodied in our 5th tradition, often thought of as our singleness of purpose tradition. We deal with alcoholism, and we deal with it quite well. So when people are referred to us who may suffer from what we might call other forms of "chemical dependency", and insist that we should adopt this broad characterization,

and, yes, I'm talking about those who have been taught that it is not only appropriate, but necessary that they introduce themselves with an identification which includes the broader disease of addiction, we often become side-tracked and lose focus of our primary purpose.

A few years ago I interviewed several long-timers, people who had been part of our fellowship over 50 years, and asked what they saw as the biggest difference in our fellowship between the time they first came in and now. Invariably they responded, "The program is the same; the people are different." One gentleman spelled out exactly what he meant by that response.

He saw the professional community's reaction to crack cocaine and heroin addiction, particularly among young people in epidemic proportion, as the biggest threat to our singleness of purpose. And so this is where your CPC Committee steps in.

The job of your CPC Committee, in simplest terms, is to provide the professional community with information regarding what Alcoholics Anonymous IS and what it IS NOT – what we CAN DO and what we CANNOT DO. We do this with our conference-approved literature. In short, your CPC Committee impacts unity in A.A. by helping professionals distinguish between the disease of alcoholism and the broader disease of chemical dependency.

But let me be clear: This is not to suggest that we ignore our Third Tradition, which states that the only requirement for A.A. membership is a DESIRE to stop drinking. Regardless of whether a person considers herself to be an alcoholic, a desire to stop drinking — not an admission of alcoholism — is the only requirement for membership. It does not matter to me whether you are a pill popper, a crack head, a glue sniffer or what-

(Continued on page 7)

UNITY DAY

(Continued from page 6)

ever, if you have any desire to stop drinking then you are in the “right place”. What I am saying is that by our bringing information to the professional community, those referred by them might have a better understanding coming in the door of who we are. It is up to each individual to decide whether this is where he or she belongs.

We often attribute our expression “Keep it Simple” to Dr. Bob. Bill W. mentions these as being Dr. Bob’s last words to him, uttered in the context of formulating the idea of a General Service Conference. But in his final speech to the fellowship given the very next day after the 12 Traditions were adopted by the fellowship, Dr. Bob referred to the simplicity of our program in the context of our Second Legacy, Unity. And he warned us about the very thing that I have spoken about this afternoon. He said, “There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis; one is the simplicity of our Program. Let’s not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work.”

I regard these final words of Dr. Bob not only as a precaution to each of us, but also as marching orders for CPC work to have an impact on our unity. Scientific minds may see no difference between drug addiction and alcoholism, but alcoholic minds who would come to us should respect the manner in which we remain in unity with one another in terms of our singleness of purpose; for it is true that our common welfare must come first. My personal recovery depends upon it.

I thank the committee for this opportunity, and I thank for your kind attention.

Given by James T., Area CPC chair

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS OF THE 62nd GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS were approved by the 62nd General Service Conference and the General Service Board: It was recommended that:

The General Service Conference supports the General Service Board’s development of a plan to restructure the current A.A. World Services, Inc. and A.A. Grapevine, Inc., corporate and governance structures. The plan may, among other things, address the separate corporate existence of both entities, as well as issues of governance and operations. The plan will be designed to increase unity, better reach and connect the General Service Office and the Grapevine to the broader Fellowship while addressing financial stability. The plan will be submitted to the 63rd General Service Conference for approval prior to implementation.

The limit on one-time bequests from A.A. members to the General Service Board be increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

The theme for the 2013 General Service Conference be: “The General Service Conference Takes Its Inventory – Our Solution in Action.”

The following be presentation/discussion topics for the 2013 General Service Conference:

The Triangle – More Than a Shape

The General Service Conference Inventory – Why is it Necessary?

Self-Support – What Does it Mean to the Fellowship?

Primary Purpose – Carrying the A.A. Message

The current statement regarding “Singleness of Purpose” in C.P.C. literature which reads:

“Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as ‘substance abuse’ or ‘chemical dependency.’ Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Anyone may attend open A.A. meetings, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings.”

be revised to read as follows:

“Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as ‘substance abuse’ or ‘chemical dependency.’ Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Nonalcoholics may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed A.A. meetings.”

CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS, cont'd

The text in the "What A.A. Does Not Do" section in the C.P.C. pamphlets "A.A. in Your Community", "If You Are A Professional" and "Members of the Clergy ask about Alcoholics Anonymous" be replaced with the text in the section "What A.A. Does Not Do" in the "A.A. at a Glance" flyer and the entire section read as follows:

What A.A. Does Not Do

A.A. does not: Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover...solicit members...engage in or sponsor research...keep attendance records or case histories...join "councils" or social agencies (although A.A. members, groups and service offices frequently cooperate with them)...follow up or try to control its members...make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses...provide detox, rehabilitation or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment...offer religious services or host/sponsor retreats... engage in education about alcohol...provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money, or any other welfare or social services...provide domestic or vocational counseling... accept any money for its services, or any contributions from non-A.A. sources...provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

The revised draft pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" be approved.

The pamphlet "A Message to Corrections Professionals" be revised with the following changes:

Replace the first paragraph under the section "Release and paroles" with the following paragraph:

"One point which usually needs to be explained is why inmates have any need of A.A. while they are incarcerated. The answer is that the A.A. program is far more than staying away from alcohol. A.A. has been called a way of life, and its success for groups that meet while in custody shows that this program

can help the alcoholic inmate live a sober and contented life, both while in custody and after release."

Change the title of the section currently called "Release and paroles" to "Re-entry and Parole." The current statement regarding "Singleness of Purpose" in the last paragraph, which reads:

"Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency." Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Anyone may attend open A.A. meetings, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings."

be revised with wording that is consistent with the description of the difference between Open and Closed meetings in the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" on page 13, to read as follows:

"Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency." Nonalcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Nonalcoholics may attend open A.A. meetings as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed A.A. meetings."

The trustees' Corrections Committee develop a draft replacement for the section "A.A. in correctional facilities" in the pamphlet "A Message to Corrections Professionals" to be brought back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Corrections.

The annual delegate's contribution be increased from \$1,200 to \$1,600.

AA Grapevine, Inc. move forward with an audio strategy to have members call in and record their story on 3rd party recording technology.

- The stories will be subject to the same editorial process as print stories.
- The Audio endeavor will, at a minimum, break even financially.
- The committee requests that the board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time.
- The committee requests that a status and financial report be submitted to the 2013 Conference Committee on the Grapevine as background.

A.A. Grapevine, Inc., carry out the "Sunset" proposal for

CONFERENCE ADVISORY ACTIONS, cont'd

Grapevine items. The “Sunset” proposal is a plan to phase out older or slow-moving Grapevine items and archive them digitally or make them available in another format.

The revised pamphlet “A.A. and the Armed Services” be approved.

The short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service be added to the book *As Bill Sees It*.

The final revision of the Living Sober booklet, with changes to outdated language or practices, be approved with minor editorial changes.

The pamphlet “Circles of Love and Service” be revised, and requested that the trustees’ Committee on Literature prepare a draft pamphlet or progress report for the 2013 Conference Committee on Literature.

Satander Bhalla and Daler Mathadu from the General Service Board of India be admitted to the 62nd General Service Conference as observers.

Roger Bédard alternate delegate, Area 89, North-east Quebec Canada, be seated as a Conference member at the 62nd General Service Conference because Estelle Falardeau, Panel 61 delegate for Area 89, is unable to attend.

The 65th General Service Conference be held April 19-25, 2015 since these dates do not conflict with any significant holidays or hotel availability.

The use of electronic devices at the General Service Conference be approved in keeping with the “Guidelines for Electronic Device Users at the Conference” as presented to the 2012 General Service Conference, superseding the 2004 Advisory Action regarding the use of personal computers at the Conference.

The Membership Survey pamphlet and the one-way Membership Survey display be updated to reflect the findings from the 2011 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey with minor editorial changes.

The video public service announcement for the Spanish-speaking community, “Tengo

Esperanza,” developed by the trustees’ Public Information Committee, be approved with minor edits.

The video public service announcement for the Spanish-speaking community, “Tengo Esperanza,” be centrally distributed, tracked and evaluated at a cost not to exceed \$40,000, in addition to the work of local committees, and that the information gathered from the process be forwarded to the 2013 Conference Public Information Committee for their review.

The revised “Anonymity Wallet Card” be approved.

All changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* be noted by vertical margin change bars in the edition in which the change appears for the first time.

The following term and definition be added to *The A.A. Service Manual* in Chapter One: Introduction to General Service in the section titled Glossary of General Service Terms:

Rotation – the spiritual principle of sharing the responsibility for A.A. through changing leadership.”

The current illustration on page S16 [of *The A.A. Service Manual*] be modified in the following manner:

Replacing the bottom section of the illustration that deals with the General Service Board and its two operating corporations with the corresponding section from a previous version, minus the table-and-chair graphic.

Changing “District Committees” to “Districts.”

The slates presented of trustees and directors be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. in April 2012.



STEP THREE, INSIDE TRADITION THREE, INSIDE CONCEPT THREE

PULL UP YOUR WOBBLY STOOLS and let us look at some more crazy stuff in our fellowship today!

Decisions, decisions, decisions, let us use a decision for the Third Step, the Tradition, and the Concept; because each one provides its own set of difficulties.

My first sponsor, O'Brian (O'B), was a devout Roman Catholic. He never stopped advising me about my lack of "spiritual insight." When using profanity, which I'm still using, he would never hesitate to explain if I would say the Rosary, I would stop using profanity! O'Brian passed away in the 1970's and this was an area of AA I had not yet grasped.

Later on in recovery, I sponsored a guy who expected his god to make him perfect. We would read [BB] page seventy-six more times than one would care to admit. Then one day the wisdom of Step Three came to both of us accompanied with O'Brian's wisdom.

O'B had the idea that if Step Three is experienced more than once, then the person should learn how to read. The step reads "Made a decision . . ." (decision is singular NOT plural) therefore, we, who have experienced this step cannot take it back, unless we are more powerful than the god we gave our will and life over to the care of. Page seventy-six says, "I pray that you (God) now remove from me, every single defect of character which stands in

the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows...!"

While not making excuses for my profanity or any other defect I have or have had, I believe I can say, "*We, who have experienced Step Three have acquired knowledge that something very profound has happened to us; and that something is spiritual in nature.*"

Profanity was not the only flaw in my character, or the worst. A flaw that continued for more years than I care to admit was "passing judgment on others."



This flaw was to reveal itself in my home group first: Clarence had a limited formal education. His reading was below third grade level, but he would attempt to read chapter five at our meetings. When he read, I would cringe; hoping someone else would read instead. I was brought up short one night when he said, "you can't get drunk if you don't take the first drink." I had heard that statement many times, but somehow when he said it that night, I finally heard the fatality inside

these words. "For us to drink is to die!"

The blind prejudice inside me kept the wisdom of God, spoken through Clarence, from entering my judgmental mind. This may be a more glaring defect of character than using profanity.

This judgmental mind would keep me in everlasting ignorance on many other occasions, but mostly when it came to differences of personality.

Two resentments that I carried long into my recovery had to deal with my brother and father.

If one were sick or feigned sickness or anything else to get an advantage; you would incur my wrath. My brother not only did those things, he conned my father, and I would end up doing the chores he avoided.

I would never fully understand how this flaw in my character would have so much effect on so many personalities in my life. I developed the most exclusive personality character. No one was allowed entry into this highly exclusive group, other than those of my choosing. It was a small group!

Bill W., in writing on Tradition Three, expounds on this exclusive nature of alcoholics. I will be forever thankful Bill used the words he did. There is not a two or three month period I'm not reminded to look up "exclusive and inclusive". It is fashionable or PC

(Continued on page 11)

STEP THREE, INSIDE TRADITION THREE, INSIDE CONCEPT THREE

(Continued from page 10)

(politically correct) to include many people whom you do not associate with and might not ever associate with except inside your head or speech. If given the opportunity to be with or extend a hand of help to those of our thoughts, what then would be our decision? Whether in my work life, my family life, my church life, yes, even my A.A. life, how exclusive am I? Can the decision made in Step Three reveal my exclusive nature regarding Tradition Three?

How exclusive are the decisions made by our servants within the “Service Structure?”

Correspondence between the Trustees’ and early servants of the service structure and Bill revealed strong differences of opinion on the Concepts. Concept Three had its share of this controversy.

Their love and respect for each other never wavered, despite their differing views. This was a time when “principles” were the overriding factor in all deliberations; but the opinions, though principled in nature, carried strong spiritual messages back and forth between the “home group” and the “board of trustees!”

It was here that Bill attempted to win the votes of the GSC in 1963; and he did.

I advise all students of the Concepts to read the exchanges that took place between Bill and

the trustees during these years; (1957 to 1963) because it may be here, that the issues confronting our groups, our districts, our areas, our regions, our General Service Conference, and even our corporate boards today could have been prevented. Before these exchanges are read please learn the full meaning of “inclusive and exclusive.”

Decisions, decisions, decisions! Before I end with Concept Three; let me revisit Step Three. You have taught me – by accepting me, and loving me, you showed me how God accepts and loves me too. Thus, turning to you, and then to God, my life took on a whole new, “life of its own,” a life full of wonder, a life full of grace, a life full of boundless service through people such as you. Let me now thank each of you, for helping me make that decision. In loving you, I learned to love myself. Step Three allowed me to love God, therefore, to love you, therefore, finally to love me. We are all-inclusive.

When the wisdom to love me meant no one could be excluded from this love of God and the inclusiveness of AA was born; I fully understood an old spiritual axiom, “love your neighbor as yourself,” the principle of this spiritual harmony permeated the A.A. of 1962. I will be forever thankful that this unselfish giving of oneself was taught me by a loving, caring sponsor.

Principles and personali-

ties will always find a home in AA, but let us never forget the words of Robert ‘Bob’ H., who, when rotating off as GSO General Manager in 1977, gave us an excellent account of Concept Three:

“The “Rights” within the Concepts must always be tempered with an “Ego” that has been spiritually grafted to the Concept, thus allowing that if you give anyone the “Right of Decision,” the owner of that right must fully understand the right is theirs only by the Grace of God, who gave the fellowship the right to pass it on.”

Whoever is making the decision, the newcomer, the member, the GSR, the DCM, the committee member, the area member, the delegate, the GSO staff, the director, or the Trustee, each may need to come to realize God has entrusted them to serve and not be served.

Contributed by Leonard D., Ishpeming, Michigan, Area 74



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.

STEP FOUR, INSIDE TRADITION FOUR, INSIDE CONCEPT FOUR

GOD WILLING, the legs of our stool are made with the strength of oak. This inventory begins with an individual and ends with the Board of Trustees.

Where does this personal inventory begin? Mine started long before calling for help. As a young boy, it became apparent life was not fair; there were favorites within our family! Not understanding why, but knowing there were favorites, and never receiving instructions on how to deal with this unfairness, the methods used, while not acceptable, created unrest and chaos in the family! The family history that followed, and what I chose to do with the unrest and chaos helped create the character that still needs examination today.

On entering Alcoholics Anonymous and having joined the Hematite Group, in Ishpeming, Michigan; my family grew. It became larger yet when my District became my family, the Upper Peninsula groups became my family, Northern Wisconsin combined with the UP became my family, and finally it became apparent why Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) worldwide, needed to become my family. Why were all these families needed to be included in my inventory?

It soon became obvious from my home group family; if a member chose not to take an inventory, while not causing expulsion from the group or any other group; it would influence the opinions affecting that group or other groups when forming a “group conscience”! Make no mistake; there was then, as well as now, personalities that influenced our group decisions, we took each other’s

inventories, and if a breach in principle was seen or evident; the breach carried enormous weight when reaching a group conscience.

My personal inventory therefore soon developed into what has become a daily exercise: are my principles and actions as outlined in our Big Book and Service Manual being used? Over the years, it has become abundantly clear why the first one hundred members wrote:

“Selfishness -- self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate.”



The creators of our “Big Book” knew these words on page sixty-two meant more than recovery for the individual; it also influenced the survival of A.A.. These destructive character traits must be removed or A.A. would die.

The need to let each group deal with its own affairs carried great risks and still does. If each member, and each group, ignored the principles laid out in Step Four in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, how would we deal with the chaos? It became evident early on, these groups, these districts, these areas must become principled; adopting the Big Book and Service Manual, or perish!

Before moving on to our Tradition and Concept let’s look once again at Step Four in our “12 & 12”, page 43, last full paragraph:

“How frequently we see a frightened human being determined to depend completely upon a stronger person for guidance and protection. This weak one, failing to meet life’s responsibilities with his own resources, never grows up...”

The 12 & 12 continues to describe the person who attempts to rule or dominate others. This domination can be witnessed in our Groups, Districts, Areas, and Trustee Boards; as well as, the offices’ that supply A.A. with the task of sharing our life saving experiences.

The new member relies upon the Group, the GSR relies upon the DCM, the DCM relies upon the more experienced servants at the assemblies, the Delegate relies upon the assembly, the GSR’s, the DCM’s, the areas’ past Delegates, and the wisdom passed on to them by second year Delegates and fellow Delegates in their Regions. When this process breaks down, at any level, all of Alcoholics Anonymous suffers. It is broken down by willful acts of people wanting to dominate others.

The member must become responsible to the group or the member and the group suffers. The GSR must be responsible, at all levels; in the group, in the district, and in the area, or A.A. suffers. The DCM must be responsible to the GSR’s, the area, and to the Delegate or A.A. suffers. When the Delegate fails to be responsible to the member, the GSR’s, the DCM’s, and to the General Service Conference, that Delegate has al-

(Continued on page 13)

STEP FOUR, INSIDE TRADITION FOUR, INSIDE CONCEPT FOUR

(Continued from page 12)

lowed, by their weakness, an atmosphere in which others dominate A.A., and A.A. suffers.

Yes, our Fourth Tradition does have many advantages for "spiritual growth;" but there are pitfalls in not following the principles implied with autonomy! It is troubling to witness groups, districts, and areas, perhaps including our own, violate this precious spiritual gift.

It is this willful disregard for others, the other groups, the other districts, and most disconcerting, a total disregard for their areas; the damage created by this form of reckless abandon may take years to heal when this gift is lost!

The struggle for an Area seems to be, fitting the "committee structure or guidelines" into, implementing and conducting our services to and for the area! Guidelines have been created to help us; but have we perhaps created more confusion than unity with their implementation?

Who is in charge of these implementations that bring harmony from this chaos? The Service Manual is specific, it belongs to the assembly! Do the GSR's, DCM's, area officers, and past delegates, all members of the Assembly, respect each other?

How do we demonstrate through the process that others can see how our selfish, self-centered, fearful, self-delusional, self-seeking, and self-pitying characters are being removed, thus allowing our area to grow? These flaws listed on page 62 need be inventoried at every level of service. When God removes them, spiritual growth is witnessed!

Each area has been given the "Right of Participation" since 1963, but how have we abused that right? Allow me to repeat; how have we abused that right? Again, consultation with page 62 of our Big Book would help!

Built into the Conference Charter, (the service manual for running the General Service Conference and A.A. as a whole), as explained in Concept Four in our service manual reads in part:

"The Conference Charter specifically provides that the Trustees, the Directors of our service corporations (A.A. World Services, Inc and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.) together with their respective staffs, shall always be voting members of the General Service Conference itself.

Therefore, the same principle of conformity to the inventory

process demands each member must follow if our "Society of Drunks" at the group, district, and area is to survive; so must the corporate boards, directors and staff to follow suit. If the General Service Conference loses its power, where is the watchdog? Who has oversight over the Boards of Trustees and Directors, how we view our spiritual program, our integrity, our mission for the alcoholic who still suffers, over their monies and how the money is spent to aid the "still suffering alcoholic?"

Has the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, as stated on page 43 of our *12 & 12*, become so irresponsible out of fear that we have let others dictate to us what our Fellowship stands for?

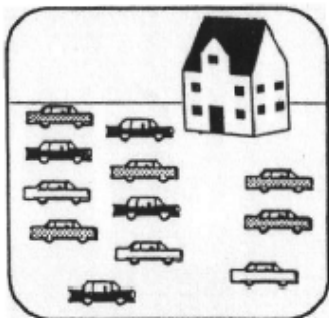
Concept Four raises these questions to our groups, our districts, our areas (assemblies), and the General Service Conference, and ultimately to our boards. Where does the inventory begin?

"I looked in the mirror and found the enemy; it was I."

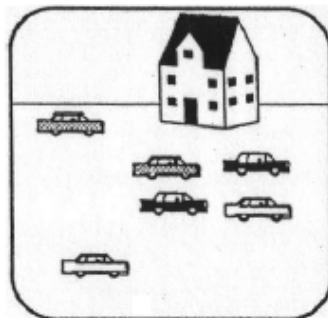
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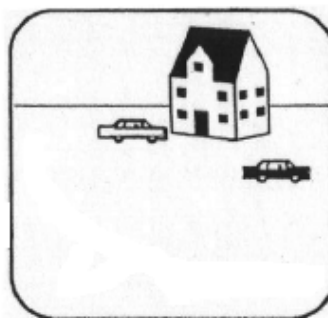
ALCOHOLICS have no problem with PRIORITIES....



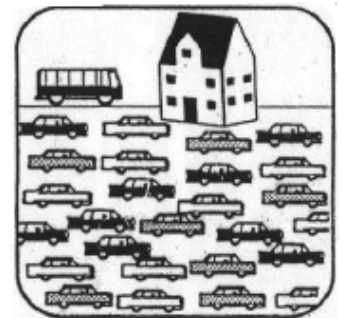
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>>>> Arnold R. – Past Trustee – Baltimore, Md.
>>> Dan M. – Past Delegate - Area 54 Panel 53

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Ohio, Regional...and Beyond

Elsewhere in Ohio

July 20-22—Beachwood, OH
56th Ohio State Convention

Aug 12-13—Independence, OH
OYPAA Convention

Nov 10—Columbus, OH
Ohio State Convention Planning
Meeting @ 10 am

U.S. and Canada

Sept 9-11—Saratoga Springs, NY
EACYPAA Camp Out
Contact Rob: 518-860-7614

Oct 4-7—Cocoa Beach, FL
National AA Archives Workshop

East-Central Region

August 10-12—Mt. Vernon, IL
East Central Region Forum

CHECK AREA54.ORG FOR UPDATES AND DETAILS!

(Continued from page 4)

ticipants from the boards and staff over shorter time periods. Special Forums require the approval of the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums. They may be designed for remote, sparsely populated or urban areas to serve A.A. members who would not normally be able to attend a Regional Forum. The Regional Forums Coordinator works closely with the Regional Trustee and Host Contact tailoring each agenda to local needs.

There is no registration fee for a Regional or Special Forum. The General Service Board covers the expenses of meeting rooms, transportation and hotel rooms for its board and staff personnel. In many places, area committees, districts and groups cover or defray the transportation and lodging expenses of the trusted servants representing them at a forum.

Forums are intended to be sharing sessions, thus no formal actions result. Forums provide unique opportunities to share and exchange valuable experience, ask questions and spark new ideas. Regional and Special Forums carry A.A.'s message of love and service by improving communication at all levels of our beloved Fellowship.

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Hosted by District 61

June 24, 2012 – noon to 5:00 pm

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**Please bring your lawn chair and a dish, beverage, or
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**For more information, to volunteer or to contribute,
please contact Nelson M. (440) 632-5384**

Visit the Area 54 Website <http://www.area54.org/>

RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

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

Confidential Contact List

Your Trusted Servants Committee 61

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

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

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

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

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

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

Committee Chairpersons 2011-2012

Archives	Tim H. 1944 Jefferson-Eagleville Rd. Jefferson, Ohio 44047	(440) 415-2960 archives@area54.org
Archivist	Kevin S. 289 Colgate Ave. Elyria, OH 44035	(440) 323-9217 archivist@area54.org
Correctional Facilities	Tina C. 29 South Maryland Youngstown, Ohio 44509	(330) 318-9168 cf@area54.org
Cooperation with the Professional Community	James T. 19104 Maple Heights Blvd. Maple Hts., OH 44137	(216) 322-7005 cpc@area54.org
Finance	Diane K. 5 Chippenham Court Rocky River, OH 44116	(440) 333-5432 finance@area54.org
Floor Management	Robert M. 1367 Grantleigh Rd. South Euclid, OH 44121	(216) 691-1605 floormgmt@area54.org
Grapevine	Steve B. 347 Lucca St. Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 347-1120 gvchair@area54.org
Group Services	Jerry P. 856 Comanche Trail Macedonia, OH. 44056	(216) 883-6095 groupservices@area54.org
Literature	Terry H. 2961 Essex Rd. Cleveland Hts., OH 44118	(216) 406-4089 literature@area54.org
"Northeast Ohio Recorder" Newsletter	Jeffrey Y. 1076 Woodview Rd. Cleveland Hts., OH 44121	(216) 496-7594 newsletter@area54.org
Public Information	Danny F. 2380 Suncrest Drive Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio	(330) 253-5036 pi@area54.org
Registrar	Dan M. P.O. Box 173 Chardon, OH 44024	(440) 853-6768 registrar@area54.org
Special Needs	Roosevelt T. 583 Montgomery St. Akron, OH 44301	(330) 459-1559 specialneeds@area54.org
Treatment Facilities	Gary C. 1530 Victor Ave. Youngstown, OH 44505	(330) 787-0927 tf@area54.org

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