

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

October, November, December 2013

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXIII, Issue 4

"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., February 1961, From: "The Shape of Things to Come", *I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA*, © A. A. Grapevine, Reprinted with permission

A Word From Our Delegate

Understanding Tradition 11: the Two Spiritual Parts
Attraction Rather than Promotion
Maintaining Personal Anonymity

During the earlier years of my journey in this awesome fellowship, not much of my attention was given to our traditions. Although I read them, and was often called upon to read them at meetings, I did not at that time fully comprehend their significance nor their meaning. What drew my attention to the traditions, even before coming into General Service, were the frequent and sometimes heated debates (if you will) over the interpretation of Tradition Eleven. In particular, the use of last names on flyers, programs, taking photographs and recordings at A.A. functions. My many inquiries about this tradition only led to more confusion on my part.

On two separate occasions, my perplexity about this tradition reached its peak which caused me to launch a full scale investigation into the matter. While preparing flyers for my home group, I made a spelling error and just as I was about to drop them in the trash, it occurred to me that there were last names on them and if by chance, someone saw them, I would be giving away their anonymity. Of course, I ripped them up and then I picked up my copy of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and began to study Tradition Eleven. The second occasion came after coming into General Service. I was asked to speak on a Traditions Panel and was assigned to do Traditions 10, 11, and 12/ the anonymity traditions. While preparing for this panel, I came across a statement made by Bill W. to a reporter, who asked "why do you have to be anonymous" to which Bill replied, "**Because we take no credit for our sobriety.**"

This made perfect sense to me, after all in Chapter 6, page 85 of the Big Book of Alcoholic Anonymous it states, "**We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically.**"our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it.the problem has been removed. What really drove this home for me can be found in Chapter 5, page 60, of the Big Book.

"That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism."

"That God could and would if he were sought."

As I continued to research this issue, everything that I had read and much of what I had heard began to fall into place. "**Because we take no credit for our sobriety.**" This statement made it clear to me that in order to better understand Tradition 11, I must first come to fully comprehend the immense spiritual significance of Tradition 12. Further, it also became apparent that the key to understanding our "spiritual principle of anonymity" is **sacrifice**. I must be ever mindful that as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have sacrificed those natural desires for *distinction, prestige, power, self-seeking and personal ambition*; that the temptation to scramble for these natural desires is ever present, both within and outside of the fellowship. In the *Twelve and Twelve*, page 187 it states that, "**.....anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which keynotes A.A. life everywhere.**"

It was our policy of "attraction rather than promotion", and maintaining personal anonymity with the general public" that so delighted the Press (newspaper, magazine, etc.) early on, that lead to the many articles that were published about our amazing fellowship.

As an average member of Alcoholics Anonymous, the general public for me is restricted to my family, my friends, my community and those with whom I interact on a professional level. However, experience has taught me that if I am to be an attraction to someone who may want what we have, it is personal anonymity not grandiosity that will allow me to be of maximum service to God, and to others.

As visionaries, our co-founders were careful to include all forms of public media that could prove disastrous for the fellowship. Press, Radio, and Films; It is therefore, my humble opinion, that this statement is meant to include Internet, social media, and all forms of public communications. What the internet did was to combine press, radio, and film. It is anything written, visual, or audible in the realm of public media.

In Loving Service
Ola P. - Delegate
Panel 63, Area 54



Why Do We Need a Conference?

In this issue of the *Northeast Ohio Recorder*, we focus on the importance of communication within our A.A. fellowship. Starting with this Panel volume, a newly-designed masthead appears on the first page including this message:

"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God." - A.A. Co-Founder, Bill W., February 1961

From: "The Shape of Things to Come", I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA, © A. A. Grapevine, Reprinted with permission

That charge from Bill remains the mission of this newsletter.

Also featured in this issue is a talk by our Alternate Delegate, Calvin L. given at this summer's East-Central Regional Convention: **How can we better communicate the conference process?**

In our quarterly feature editorial, ELD shares his experience, strength, and hope about the Ninth Step, Tradition, and Concept. Each, in its own way, addresses the ever-present need for better communication up and down the triangle of service and in all of our affairs.

Finally, I leave you with the thoughts of the late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then-chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure. He answered our title question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 General Service Conference.

"We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need

it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.

"We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over-integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

"We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

~Your editor, Jeff

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



Alternate Delegate's Report

How can we better communicate that the conference process is more than one Spring Week in New York?

Every year in April and sometimes May, ninety-three members of Alcoholics Anonymous from all over the United States and Canada come together for the General Service Conference that lasts for one week in New York. These are the Delegates who represent the members of Alcoholics Anonymous in the 93 Areas of the United States and Canada. They are to bring to the conference the Informed Conscious, opinions and feelings of their respective Areas. In addition Trustees, Directors and staff combine, so that approximately 134 people make up the Conference. These individuals collectively decide on issues brought before the Conference. One week that's all there is for the Conference. But it is a year long process and not just one spring week in New York. The Conference is a living entity.

In December first year delegates are selected by lot to serve two years on a committee. Questions and concerns suggested as agenda items for the Conference are assigned to the appropriate committee. Then there is the Board meeting in January where Committee Chairs, Trustees and Staff come together for a preliminary review of the material. In February background material for these items is sent to the committee members in advance of the Conference for study and review. In April the conference begins and committees meet so that these items may be considered, discussed or reviewed. The committee reaches a conclusion and presents its recommendations to the full body for discussion and determination. Then there are the Floor Actions that come to the floor of the Conference that must be decided upon.

As soon as the Conference ends, the process begins for the next Conference. Some Conference advisory actions take years to come to fruition. The Conference started the process to create the Fourth Edition of the Big Book in 1997 and it was not published until 2001. During the year Advisory actions that were not approved will be rehashed in Areas of origin. New actions will emanate from our group members. One of our members is at home reading our Conference approved literature and gets an idea for change or a new pamphlet. The members of

Alcoholics Anonymous generate many of the items that come before the Conference. Then there are the items that come from Committees and Trustees. Some items are sent back to committee for further review. In our Group, District and Area Assembly meetings members may present new items for discussion. This information is then voted upon and if approved sent to the General Service Conference Coordinator. The deadline being January 15, this will change to December 15 in 2014. This data is then compiled and assessed for submission as Agenda items. This is a process that never ends.

Now most people in General Service understand some of the Conference process. Unfortunately a lot of people in our fellowship know little of the General Service Conference or its process. This is a problem in the Area I serve in, which is area 54. How can I better communicate the existence of the Conference its purpose and its process?

As always the communication process starts with the General Service Representative at the group level. The GSR should communicate to his/her group the Conference purpose and process. This should be a year round process. Group members should not only be made aware that the conference is taking place and the results of said Conference, but also that it is constantly in process. What effects do the different Agenda items have on Alcoholics Anonymous? What does this mean to my Home Group? Perhaps periodic discussions of the General Service Conference and its results could be topics of discussion in the group meeting. This same information is already being shared in our District, Multi District and Area meetings. The Delegate brings back a report and shares it with these entities beginning in May. But the attendance at these events is small and mostly made up of General Service Representatives and District Committee Members. As they say in Church the Minister is preaching to the Choir. In addition the Delegate when invited takes the report to Group meetings. There are not many Groups giving the invitation to bring the General Service Conference Report to their meeting. There have been less than Five in our Area. Groups should be encouraged to hear the report. In early August the Final Report of the conference is distributed to the Delegates. These Reports should be distributed to the District Committee Members (DCM) and Gen-

(Continued on page 13)

Area Officer Reports

Cultivating Tomorrow's Fellowship

Growing Vertically: Diversity in AA

Growing Vertically-using the area around plants (walls, fences) to create a garden

Diversity-the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety especially the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization < programs intended to promote diversity in schools >

In the room of AA as a whole we are diverse group, but there are many different levels. For example, having experience two international conventions it's amazing to see the many different types of peoples who attend these conventions. We come from all walks of life. During my first international in Canada, I met another alcoholic name Joe who couldn't speak English (and I couldn't speak Polish) but we were able to introduce ourselves and connect to the fact we belong in this fellowship. These occurrences happen throughout the internationals. However, just recently a totally different experience occurred. I went to a regional conference with our delegate and alternate. While I thoroughly enjoy it and learn so much more about general service at the regional level, the racial diversity was severely lacking (about 5 people of color were seen). I have seen the

same occurrence at the area level in Northeast Ohio and throughout our state. Experiences within the district and individual meetings in my area it can be a mixed bag depending on the area of the meeting..... So the question that I ask myself "What I (we) do by the using what we have in my area to improve diversity in AA in regards to general service? What can I use to plant a "garden" of general service involvement?

Sponsorship-encourage sponsees and other support group members about the joyous aspects general service and what it can bring to your personal recovery

Stimulate interest in general service. On page S23 in our service manual in the second paragraph, good communication is key to the recovery process and even more vital when encouraging general service work. "It can be hard work to get the attention of alcoholics but with a creative approach, they can be encouraged to take time out from the nuts and bolts of recovery to think about another phase of their new lives. Once A.A. members are **well informed about service**, they often want to become involved and take on their own service responsibilities" (p. S23 paragraph 2).

In Bernard B. Smith statement of "Why we need a confer-

ence", He talks about the importance of making sure the doors are open for anyone who needs it. To me these words can apply to why we need to encourage becoming involved in general service work at different levels. "We need it (general service work) to ensure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholic Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is" (Service Manual p. S 22 last paragraph). Regardless of whom we are or where we come from, we have a right to become a part of AA and general service if we wish and that's my right, which since 2008 I chosen to exercise.

For me, exercising my rights as member of AA has allowed me to put aside the "contempt prior to investigation" attitude and see what is involved in participating in general service. Ultimately I have found an avenue to enhance my sobriety and there by deepen my commitment to recovery.

In Love and Service
Shyrl B., Area 54/Panel 63 Recording Secretary

Want more? Expanded Content and Color-enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/NEOHRecorder.html>

Area Officer Reports

REAP WHAT YOU SOW

A.A.'s Spiritual Principles in Action

I am going to talk about Spiritual Principles that make AA work and help us to grow, individually and as a society. Our 12 Steps, our 12 Traditions and even our 12 Concepts are based on spiritual principles, Principles that hold us together as individuals - and as a society. Being a basically unprincipled alcoholic, I decided that I needed to look up the definition of the word "principle". 'An important underlying law or assumption in a system of thought'; 'a fundamental, primary, general law or truth from which others are derived'; 'a standard of moral or ethical decision making'; or 'fundamental rules, laws, or values that represent what is desirable and positive for an individual, group, organization, or community to help it determine the rightfulness or wrongfulness of its actions'. They are more elementary than policy or objectives; they are actually supposed to govern both policy making and decisions. Spiritual is of God - or of the intellect; not material or corporeal. So, putting all of this together, I take this to mean that our 12 Steps, Traditions, and Concepts are God-given. Actually, I didn't figure that out on my own, my sponsor and all of you told me that a long time ago.

We came to AA broken, yet full of ego; full of anger, fear, suspi-

cion, and full of ourselves. These grew out of not so spiritual principles that served us well in the past (or seemed to). But we found out that if we wanted to recover from alcoholism, these things were an impediment to any real recovery we could hope for. We needed to deflate our egos, as they say; that is, learn of humility. Not humiliation, we knew all about that in handcuffs in the back of the cruiser, but humility- knowing our rightful size and place in the universe. In fact, humility is one of the most important, if not the most important, of the spiritual principles that make AA work and grow. Humility is like the soil in which we can grow, it is one of the most vital things we learn as we go through the Steps and eventually serve others. The more we live by Spiritual Principles (sowing), the more we learn, the more we can help the next guy coming through the door, and usually we are more serene (reaping). These Principles get us sober and then allow us to become useful and happy. We learn to maximize our service to God and the people about us; we learn to *rightly relate* ourselves to God and the people around us - humility. Seeds sown of spiritually experiencing these Principles become the harvest in God's hands, and in His time, that we pass along to others. The Steps are humility learned, The Traditions are humility defined, and the Concepts are

humility in action.

When Bill W. wrote the Steps, he had some guiding principles or tenants that he learned from his time with the Oxford Group. They derived these six tenants from the Bible. He expanded them to 12, so that us rummies couldn't wriggle through the loopholes so easily.

When we could muster enough "Self - Honesty" to admit our alcoholism, we came to "Hope" that this Power greater than ourselves could restore us to some semblance of sanity. On "Faith" we decided to turn as much of what we understood of our selves over to this Higher Power. It took "Courage" to face ourselves on paper, and "Integrity", then completely alien to most of us, to share what we found with another human being. As we became "Willing" to have our shortcomings removed, we were told we needed to "Humbly" ask to have these defects to be taken away. We then made a list of all the people who we wanted "Forgiveness" from and we found that "Self Discipline" was necessary to go out to make things right in the world that we had harmed. As we "Persevered" in this process day in, day out for a while, we found ourselves thinking less of ourselves and more of others and what we might be able to do for them - yes, more humility. During this process, we heard somewhere along the line we were told that

(Continued on page 6)

Area Officer Reports

(Continued from page 5)

we should be praying and meditating. Humbly “Abiding” in His presence, we found a deep gratitude that began to express itself in service to others. Indeed, Love and Service to others or “Gratitude in Action” is the Spiritual Principle of Step 12. We had to conform to these Principles in order to get sober and to begin living to useful purpose, to recover. To paraphrase what Bill said in his essay on Tradition 1, “At first we go along because we must, but later we discover a way of life we really want to live”. The 12 Steps are spiritual, but only 1/3 of the AA Triangle of Recovery, Unity, and Service. Recovery is the base, it is basic to our lives as sober human beings, but without the other two, and you’d get a rather one-dimensional program. Maybe as individuals we think we don’t need the other two legs of the triangle; those are things for other people, the Intergroup or G.S.O. to worry about, all that stuff doesn’t affect me. But without Unity in our Home Group and Fellowship and without the Service of our Intergroup or General Service Structure, there would be no AA. AA would’ve collapsed under the weight of our alcoholic egos if we had no one else to care for but ourselves. No AA, no Recovery.

We sowed the seeds of our individual and collective experience in the fertile soil of humility as we worked through the 12 steps. We cultivated and cared

for the seedlings as we sprouted into sponsorship and service work. These Principles were like rain, sometimes a gentle spring shower, sometimes a violent summer storm.

Now, even being sober, some of us still couldn’t play well with others. Well, we weren’t use to it; we were used to getting things our way, or throwing a fit if things didn’t go our way. Just as our earliest members and groups had to go through a time of growing pains learning to work and live with others in and outside their groups, we, as individuals, had to learn to get along or get dispirited or worse, get drunk. Get along or get gone, I’ve heard it said. We needed a set of rules that we could live by, just like the Steps; a set of Principles that could be generally applied to a lot of various yet similar situations.

It was found that people could stay sober more easily in a group; I get drunk, we stay sober. So, to keep the group from falling apart, they found that group “Unity” was most imperative. Living together in “Unity” with the fellow alcoholics in our Home Group became a whole new level of trial and error – and growth. Just as A.A. grew through the trials and tribulations of the early 1940’s, our “adolescent period”, we as individual AA’s had to grow into a new set of Spiritual Principles; new ones that would help us to get along with others. And AA had to

find a set of Principles that would guide them into the future. As these problems occurred and were solved, our Founders were fortunately paying attention; they kept records of these problems and their subsequent solutions. A small sampling of these happenings can be found in Bill W.’s essays on the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts. These solutions became the 12 Points to Assure Our Future; a series of articles in 1946 that Bill wrote for the Grapevine. AA history is so much fun! Then these became our Twelve Traditions; principles (fundamental truths) designed to solve problems common to most AA Groups. Bill and our other Founders found out what worked and then what worked best; as Bill was fond of saying, “the good is often the enemy of the best”. So, they found solutions to our growing pains, and then improved them, and then Bill wrote them down for us as guidelines, to show us what worked for Groups in AA’s adolescence. And thank God he did, too; if he hadn’t, AA wouldn’t be here today. Like I said before, AA would have collapsed under the weight of our collective egos.

Maybe at your Home Group meeting or at your Area Assembly, you said to yourself, “God, I can’t take these people!” And in that prayer, you were actually talking to the Ultimate Authority of AA. Way back in Step 3, we

(Continued on page 7)

Area Officer Reports

(Continued from page 6)

found we had a new Employer, Being all – powerful, He provided what we needed. Humbly “Abiding” in His presence, we found that we are but a small part of a greater whole- humility. If your journey was anything like mine, it about this time you discovered the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions book, and that everything you were going through was already experienced and was written down – what a help! And if you are anything like me, you read that book, ignored it, and then learned the hard way; butting heads at your Home Group business meetings and asking embarrassing questions.

So, we have Unity, AA Unity, upon which depends our lives, the lives of our fellow sufferers, and the lives of those yet to come. Also, we have our Ultimate Authority, a loving God as He may express himself in our Group conscience. Now, what do we as a society do, and how do we do it in the best way? The Spiritual Principle of the Third Tradition is “Inclusiveness”; we ought not to exclude anyone who suffers from alcoholism. Our Fourth Tradition is all about “Autonomy”; doing things the way we want to, as long as they don’t mess with the overall serenity of AA as a whole. What do we do? What is our Primary Purpose? Tradition 5, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers; that’s all, nothing more, nothing less. Bill called us bankrupt idealists, de-

siring to take our experience out into the world to do good works (and possibly good money or a good name for our self) and perhaps watering AAs proven recovery experience down with new ideas and new experimental ways of getting sober that we as a fellowship have no knowledge of. Or possibly throwing money or the AA name behind some outside interest, perhaps smearing the good AA name! Tradition Six warns us about such things, because they take our minds off of our one Primary Purpose- we can be easily distracted (think about the meditation part of Step 11).

Now that we’re grown – ups and sober, we should pay our own way; earn our own living. Tradition Seven was probably the hardest Principle for us alcoholics to learn; doesn’t such a worthy cause deserve contributions from whatever source can be had? Outside contributions had to be declined, after all, we reap what we sow, not what someone else has sown. Freely was this gift given us, freely should we give it away. Tradition Eight lets us know that we are not professionals and as such, we shouldn’t get paid to give away our God – given gift. Tradition Nine is for all you AA senators and AA police and goes right back to Tradition Two; there is no one in charge in AA, we are all servants- some of us are even trusted. We take on re-

sponsibility, not authority. Tradition Ten keeps our fellowship anonymous, not letting the AA name become embroiled in any controversial outside issues. Tradition Eleven is the Spiritual Principle of Attraction rather than Promotion, reminding individual members to be anonymous at the public level. Just as AA doesn’t need a police force or politicians, AA can do away with public spokespersons and let our Principles be our attraction. This brings us to our possibly most important Spiritual Principle, Anonymity at all levels. Putting our Principles before our personalities, just like in Tradition Eleven, we are reminded that humility for us alcoholics must come first, last and always, because it was not us who got us sober, and it’s not us who keeps us unified as a fellowship. Tradition Twelve reiterates the sacrificial spirit of the other eleven Traditions, getting us and our alcoholic egos out of the way so that our Ultimate Authority can take care of our business and we can go about our business of helping the next suffering drunk.

As Bill said in 1946, A.A.’s Twelve Traditions are little else than a list of sacrifices which the experience of twenty years has taught us that we must make, individually and collectively, if A.A. itself is to stay alive and healthy. So, the Steps are what we DO to let God restore us to sanity; The Traditions are what

(Continued on page 8)

Area Officer Reports

(Continued from page 7)

we DON'T do to let God maintain AA's Unity. And the Concepts are our acknowledgement of our responsibility; to carry our message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Just as the 12 Traditions relate the experience, strength and hope of our Home Groups, the 12 Concepts relate the experience, strength and hope of our whole fellowship. As we moved out from our Home Groups, and into our Area Assemblies and our General Service Conference, we built upon our previous experiences and came up with another set of guiding Principles. We reaped a harvest of experience – seeds sowed a long ago in the soil of humility.

The 12&12 book and the 12 Concepts can be likened to the Almanac of our collective experience. The seeds of our Fellowship were sown in Bill and Dr. Bob in Dr. Bob's little kitchen when they thought this cure of ours might be ready to share with the world. They cultivated and cared for the sprouting Groups as they weathered storms of the Group Conscience; some died – bad experience, but experience that we can learn from. They then wrote down what they went through for us so we could have these to look at and learn from. Now, as we are cultivating our own seeds of experience, we look to these Principles to guide us. They are our fundamental rules, laws, or

values that we base all of our policies and decisions on today. It is our decisions that, on a day to day, minute by minute basis, help us or hurt us. If we as individuals or as a group or society base our decisions on Spiritual Principles then we can grow and continue to grow in a positive manner – spiritually. Spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection. I pray that we as people and as a society of alcoholics never get perfect; may we continue sowing seeds of new experience and may God continue to reap the harvest of our Service.

Jim S. Area 54 Mailing Secretary, from a talk at the 57th Ohio State Convention.

Droughts: When Times Get Tough

The Dictionary defines a drought as: a lengthy lack of something; such as 1) rain for the successful growing of crops; 2) a lengthy and serious lack of something. That something could be happy, pleasant, enjoyable period in life itself.

It is constantly reinforced for me that absolutely nothing happens by coincidence. I knew the title of our panel discussion would be "Let The Sun Shine": The Benefits of Staying Involved, but I had no idea what my actual part would be.

I have been in a drought this

year. Since January 2, 2013 I have attended the funerals of 8 close friends and/or relatives. Most of them were in the program. I was unable to attend the 9th one which was held this past Friday. This has certainly has presented somewhat a lack of happy, pleasant and enjoyable times. However, because of my involvement in AA, and service I am able to use the program and the suggestions of others (not all) in AA to help me through this drought.

Some of the things I have used to help me are parts of the Serenity Prayer, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the passing of a friend or relative. The courage to change the things I can, which would be my attitude toward the death of someone; and to be grateful for them being part of my journey in life.

Get out of my head; stop thinking about myself by helping someone else. Realizing that it's not about me.

Talk to my sponsor and or support group, share my feelings, cry (it's ok to release the grief I am feeling by crying) Go to a meeting.

Turn of some Inspirational music. Music helps me think about life in a positive way, it helps me to be grateful for the things I do have and experienced in life not the things or people I no longer have in my life.

Meditate – this calms me, helps

(Continued on page 9)

Area Officer and Committee Reports

(Continued from page 8)

me to focus on how grateful I am to be a part of AA, and to realize all it has, and continues to give to me.

Ways to Stay Sober When Times Are Tough

Use Physical Activity- If you feel the urge to engage in an addiction then physical activity can help. Instead of relapsing go for a walk, work out at the gym, or take a bike ride. When you exercise your body will produce feel good chemicals naturally, and these will lift your mood and make relapse less likely.

Go To A Meeting- In larger cities there are meetings for AA almost every night. Find out when meetings are held, and attend one if things get tough and you are tempted to backslide.

Talk Through It- Call or meet with your sponsor or support person, and talk through the whirlwind of emotions that you are feeling. Stress and anger can both trigger a relapse, but many times talking with your designated support person can help defuse these emotions and keep you sober.

Turn On Some Music- The old saying that is music can relax is very true, and music will help relieve stress and improve your frame of mind. Choose music that is soothing and enjoyable, and then concentrate on these sounds while blocking out everything else.

Take A Long Hot Bath- A long hot bath will relieve physical and emotional stress both. Soaking can prevent a relapse in some cases. Make the water as hot as you can stand it, and then try to empty your mind while you lay in the warm water and relax.

Go for a run. Physical activity releases endorphins in your body which provide a natural euphoria that can eliminate a relapse and help you feel great.

Perform yoga. Yoga helps to calm the mind and relax the body. This makes yoga ideal for relapse prevention.

Get a massage. Massage therapy not only helps you to relax but can also help with detoxification as well. The physical actions of this therapy helps remove any drug residues and toxins faster.

Remove yourself from temptation. Go somewhere that you will not be tempted to engage in alcohol or drug use.

Visit a therapist or counselor. Often a counseling session can help you manage your cravings without giving in and falling off the sobriety wagon.

August 1, Grapevine Quote “
The grace of the Fellowship and the principles of the program carry us through the tough spots as well as the times of joy.
Whether we are sober 33 days or 33 years, we each receive our

daily reprieve from active alcoholism by working this program to the best of our ability, one day at a time.”

Through relationships in and outside of the program, we can support one another in our darkest times. We can inspire each other to know that life is more than suffering, that there is a way through whatever we are facing with hope, light and love.

We are not meant to be on this journey alone. Asking for support and guidance makes our life easier and invites grace.

For me, being involved in AA is how I am able to stay focused not only on sobriety but being the person my Higher Power intended me to be, one day at a time.

Yours in Service Always,
Jamie B., Area 54 Chairperson
from a talk at the 57th Ohio State Convention.

Committee and DCM Reports from July 21, 2013 Assembly

Area Committee Reports

Treatment-Gary C.- We are doing fine. Have a list 20 Bridge the Gap. Also, have 54 people out of treatment. We are off to a good year. We needed committed members.

Corrections- Cathleen S. co-chair - Akron committee corrections

(Continued on page 10)

District and Committee Reports

(Continued from page 9)

did a wonderful job at Founders' Day. Multidistrict 7,8,&48 in Youngstown has elected Joel T as the chairperson. We going work with district 6 to get them involved in corrections.

Grapevine-Bob D.- Founder's Day sales were \$253.00. Thanks to Tim H., Susan R., and Wellington R. for all your help with setup and sale.

Archives – James T.- The committee chair engaged in seeking input toward verification of the following question: How did Bill W. get from the Mayflower Hotel to the Seiberling Estate where he met Bob? We have contact many archives resources including GSO. Two theories emerge. He walked or the Seiberlings since a chauffeur. Neither theory is based on first-hand information. We believe these two theories have been passed on through word of mouth.

Dan F. — Dark District ad Hoc Committee -Work has been completed in the Lorain Multidistrict. They have by-laws and refined service positions. They also have an approved budget and forms. I have recently working with the Lake Shore Multidistrict. We have met twice. Anyone interested in being a part of this committee please contact me.

Literature -- Jerry P.- Unity Day sale \$237.17 According to treasurer report we been directed to complete a physical inventory by September 2013. Terry H. as

graciously offered to assist so we can have an accurate inventory. Orders will be on hold. Group Services –Diane K. – Group Services had another GSR workshop in Akron on May 18th.

Finance – Terry H. – Mention and reminded assembly about the pamphlet “Where spiritually and money mix” The chair is also available to give short presentation or announcement on the 7th traditions to meetings and multidistrict's

DCM Reports

Gary C.#13- We had a picnic to get new GSRs' involved in service work. We had about 45 people show up. . The district is strong. We also have a treatment committee in the district.

Edward U. #35-Have 3 new GSR's and I am still working on others groups. I want to get all groups in my district involved. David W #10-Various members have been busy in the district with district functions and arranging to attend Ohio State Convention in Columbus. We will have our annual picnic on August 4. Planning for Gratitude Sunday is well underway. We have a new district secretary, Christina W. GSR from WWW Triple 12 group. We also have new meeting that's on Sunday at the Trinity Unity Church of Christ at 8:00pm. The Sunday Night Recharge. Michael R #45- Still attending meetings in district , updating

groups and asking them to elect a GSR so they can informed and have a voice in AA as a whole. Still looking for an Alternate DCM.

Nelson A #61 I have seen 4 of groups out of 13 donates money to the Area. I am trying to get all 13 groups to donate .Some have no money, while other chose not to, but when I started a few years ago only two groups donated.

Robert A.—Cleveland Multidistrict-Announcing on our picnic is coming on August 17 at Forest Hill Park Cleveland Heights side. Also, want to thank Akron Multidistrict on their picnic yesterday. We had a nice time.

James A. (fill in) #38 Discussions were had about meeting with each other to attend a meeting in our district. We are encouraging some groups to get active in the district.

John McP. #5 – Groups attendance is increasing. A new men's treatment opened in Ravenna and the women's treatment is still operating in the town hall. Local construction of hotel in Kent is completed. We also making contact with Monday Young People about distributing funds. We have a new DCM for 5 B Mike G. One of the groups is having lease issues with the church where the group meets and is looking for a new meeting place.

Step Nine inside Tradition Nine inside Concept Nine

For those who wish to learn about our “spiritual way of living,” nothing is more valuable than our ninth step. It would take many years for this bit of wisdom, passed on by my first sponsor, O’Brian S., to fully impact my program of recovery. More often than I liked to admit, I found, when reading, I would add or subtract words to make a sentence read the way I wanted it to read and ignore the way the writer intended for the sentence to be read. Like the Herbert Spencer quote, this error, on my part, kept me in “everlasting ignorance.”

During our discussion on the ninth step, tradition, and concept I will explain how my errors, not only kept me in ignorance, but prevented me from being the person and servant God would have meant for me to be. This statement is not meant to be a step nine to all the people in and out of A.A. that I have harmed, but it might show others the hidden value in the ninth step, tradition, and concept. Understanding step nine begins with the understanding of step seven and how it is written on page seventy-six (76) of our Text Book without changing the words to satisfy our egos.

Reading the second paragraph on page seventy-six, without rearranging the words to satisfy my ego, please allow me to quote; with comment:

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.”

This sentence implies that God, the Creator, will determine what is good and bad, if I have turned my “will and life over” to His care.

“I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.”

This sentence implies that God, not me, will remove what He finds is “not” useful to Him or my fellows; furthermore whatever is removed, will be done now, meaning immediately.

“Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding, Amen.”

Grant means to consent to fulfill a request. I’m making a request to God to give me strength to

do His will. Bidding means command, request, invitation; all of these meanings removes my ego from the direction my life is to take. “Amen” is an ancient address to the gods meaning: “let it be said, let it be done.”

This simple prayer on page 76, is teaching each of us how to view our relationships; our relationships with God, our relationships with family, our relationships at work or play, our relationships in A.A., and most important, our relationship with ourselves. All of these relationships will be under the direction of God, beginning from step one through step seven. God is present everywhere in step seven and that Presence enables each of us to work through our amends.

If God is in charge of directing our lives through the ninth step, then He is ready to direct our lives through the ninth tradition and the ninth concept also.

When making my amends, I was confronted with an anger problem that was driven perhaps by a greater fear. I was jealous of a co-worker. He appeared to get credit for work that I thought I deserved. This anger, exacerbated by the fear that others would see my jealousy, made me play the false role of being his friend. I knew the problem and the amends needed, but refused to “let go, let God,” until I was in the service structure of A.A. I was confronted with helping to select a committee that would help our area be served better. We needed to help the GSRs and DCMs get a better understanding of their role within our area. A person’s name came before our committee and I knew this person used unethical methods while serving our area.

I confronted the person and was greeted with an angry outburst. My fear of this happening again, attacking me publicly, kept me from rejecting the person for this committee.

The person while serving on the committee used these same unethical practices, thus harming our area because I had not stood up “on principle,” and confronted this person’s behavior.

I could have asked several questions that would have helped the area judge the person’s character, but my silence allowed someone who may not have been the best candidate for the committee we needed, be elected.

(Continued on page 12)

Step Nine inside Tradition Nine inside Concept Nine

(Continued from page 12)

changed the service structure atmosphere. These excuses to change what Dr. Jack had put in place “can or can’t” be refuted, then who should decide?

When the practice was stopped there were more than eleven (11) months operating funds in our prudent reserve; plus, the ability to travel had become easier, taking that burden out of the equation. The final argument becomes; when a non-alcoholic is asked if they wish to place their name before the nominating committee of the board, it is with an understanding there will be a burden on their time. The full weight of what is required of a trustee should be explained prior to a name being submitted for acceptance to our board. It might be wise and prudent that we, the Fellowship, remind the boards: the boards serve the fellowship; the fellowship does not serve the boards.

Before I close this reflection on the ninth step, tradition, and concept I would be remiss if I did not remind all of us in the fellowship, that to keep

spiritually fit, we must and need to ask God how He expects us to make amends for the harms we have caused by our acts of omission or commission.

Dr. Jack was concerned that we keep spiritually fit so we may serve those who will come after us. Unless we act in such a fashion, to prevent members from becoming disenfranchised; from the groups, from the districts, from the areas, from the General Service Conference, and ultimately from the corporate boards, we will thereby lose our “spiritual compass”. To accomplish this we need to elect the best people possible at every level of service.

Anyone who serves will make mistakes. The spiritually gifted servant will create an atmosphere of forgiveness when they admit their mistakes, thus teaching all of us how to serve better. Dr. Jack was one of those servants.

Contributed by ELD, Ishpeming MI, Area 74

(Continued from page 3)

eral Service Representatives (GSR) for distribution to the Groups. Topics for discussion abound in the Final Conference Report. We should also make an effort to distribute this report to the Districts without DCMs and the Groups without GSRs. The whole fellowship should be informed.

Before our Delegate goes off to the Conference we have a Mini Conference in our Area. We put on a mini General Service Conference and use some of the actual agenda items that will be discussed in the various committees. We start announcing this event in December and hold the event the first weekend in April. Our Area has over 1,000 groups and we are fortunate if we get 150 people to the Conference. Those that normally attend are the General Service Representatives, District Committee Members, Committee Chairs and Panel members and other General Service people from Areas 53, 55 and 56 of Ohio.

In order to reach the members of the fellowship I feel that we should begin to stand up in meetings and talk about the General Service Conference. Make copies of Bernard Smith’s talk on “Why Do We Need A Conference”? Post it on our bulletin boards. Provide copies to other groups to be posted and shared at their groups. We should read part or all of it in our meetings during the year. It is important that the whole fellowship be informed about the Conference and its results. This being said, the Conference floor only has 134 of us present who are but our representatives. As our First concept states: “Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.” We should not just talk about the Conference in the spring time. It must be talked about during all seasons. It is not just one Spring week in New York for the 134.

Calvin L. presented this at the East-Central Regional Convention held in Appleton, WI in July 2013.

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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