

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

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<http://www.area54.org>

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**"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 A.A., © A. A. Grapevine, Reprinted with permission*

## A Word From Our Delegate

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

Before I came to AA, I was not a very Responsible Person. I often times had good intentions but I could not muster the power to carry through on my intentions. Yet I was under the delusion that "in the reality of my own mind I was self-sufficient and in control. I had responsibility for people, places and things that were none of my business. I continued in this flawed thinking until I hit bottom came to A.A and began to apply Spiritual Principle in my life. Even today, I must be reminded that my perception may not be the reality of the situation. Today I realize that I had always lived in the kindness of others.

In A. A., I learned that I was responsible for my actions, that I was Powerless, not only over alcohol but also people, places and things. I needed a power greater than myself. I needed a God of my own understanding. In the chapter We Agnostics it states "Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there." I was told that I must find him now. I proceeded to develop a relationship with God of my understanding a Higher Power through the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. These Spiritual principles that, I have incorporated into my daily life allowed me to develop both fellowship and relationship with the God of my understanding. Today I know that God, my Higher Power brought me to Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous brought me to God my Higher Power.

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

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

Today I am Responsible. I tap into a Power Greater than myself each day. I do this through the power of Prayer. The Eleventh step talks about Praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry it out. I need that Power to do the next right thing. I don't always want to do the next right thing. So I need a power greater than myself to tap into. As a famous Saint once said "Of myself I am nothing, My Father doeth the work".

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Calvin L., Delegate, Panel 65, Area 54

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### GRATITUDE IN ACTION

The theme of the 41st annual mini-conference here in Northeast Ohio this year was “Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions, and Concepts”. The weekend was full of activity in support of this theme. Our sobriety and recovery is not just something we do for an hour at a meeting, several times a week. Our ability to stay sober long-term, after all the consequences have been cleaned up and our life gets pretty good, rests on our belief that AA really is a spiritual way of life. We take the Steps to get sober, but we don’t finish them and put them up on a shelf. Life will always throw us a curve ball that those Steps can help us to cope and thrive despite adversity or change.

The Traditions slowly become second nature to us as we integrate them into this way of life. Not only do the Traditions preserve Unity within our groups and area, but their daily practice has practical application in our family, our career, and our community. The same can be said for the Concepts although space prevents me from convincing you how they are applicable in our daily lives. Check the online archive of past issues of this *Recorder* for the series of articles entitled “Step One inside Tradition One inside Concept One”, “Step Two inside...” etc.

Our spiritual way of life can become so personal and individualized to us that we run the risk of forgetting the importance of our service structure to the newly recovering drunk. We know, for example, that we can pick up the phone, call Central Office, and there will be someone at the other end of the phone line to answer our questions, to help us find help for a desperate prospective member. We depend on our services to always be there. Isn’t that the whole “I am Responsible” thing? Somebody will be responsible, right? Somebody will open the door, turn on the light, make the coffee, set up the chairs, display the literature, ensure a ready supply of Big Books and current meeting directories, line up speakers and chairs, greet the newcomer, serve as GSR, clean up after the meeting, stack the chairs, clean the coffee pot, and so on. Day after day, we assume that these things will dependably happen, just as we have experienced the same happening for years.

I may be Responsible, but am I dependable? Can my home group depend on me to honor my commitments and show up? Is our Central Office sufficiently funded through our own contributions to ensure that needed services are available when the next drunk reaches out for help? Is my group connected to AA as a

whole so that we can participate in the inverted triangle form of self-determination in AA? Or do we leave that business to those better qualified; you know, those other guys, “Them”, the politicians in AA...

Every one of us is necessarily a leader in AA, especially when it comes to sponsorship. Will AA be able to respond when my great-grandchild needs it 50 years from now? Yes, if I do my part right here, right now, as a sponsor, to ensure that this life-saving program is passed down as “unfooled around with” as it was to us. Each sponsor forms a link in an long, long chain of sponsor-leaders before us reaching back to the earliest days of AA. Am I forging those links to be strong and unbreakable, to be dependable? For on the strength of those links hang the heavy weight of something very precious and critically important to the future—the continued provision of vital services to the newly recovering alcoholic.

Bill W. said “an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.”

The General Service Conference (GSC) is an annual business meeting of trustees, staff, and representative AA members who meet to ensure the smooth continuation of our vital services from literature to public relations to international outreach. Our local mini-conference is a model of the GSC. During this weekend, the area gathers to showcase those services, to fellowship, to learn, and to strengthen those links in the never ending chain of servant-leadership in which we all share in AA.

Am I a dependable, weight-bearing link in the chain of AA?

~Your editor,

Jeff

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



# AREA OFFICER REPORTS

## Alternate Delegate's Report

I attended Area 53's Mini-Conference (Central & Southeast Ohio) on March 11-13, along with our delegate Calvin L.

Friday afternoon Area 53 had what I would call a mini version of their GSR Workshop. I learned that there is a GSR Preamble.

### The GSR Preamble

We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of A.A.

We realize the ultimate authority is a loving God as he may express Himself in our Group Conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship.

Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our group and A.A. as a whole.

Area 53 started the Committee meetings On Friday from 8:00 – 10:00 pm. We reconvened at 9:00 Saturday morning. We met until 12:00. We began the Committee Results at 1:00.

Some of the things I learned: 1) We should not place the same agenda item on two different committees! (It really became extremely problematic) 2) How to handle abstentions – Roberts Rules. Best Answer: According to Robert's Rules of Order, voters who abstain are not counted.

However, Robert's Rules does point out that, technically speaking, an abstention might as well be counted towards the winning side because that vote, if cast "yea," would NOT have affected the winning side; however, if it were cast "nay," it WOULD have affected the outcome. (Source(s): <http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror->)

I always learn something by attending another area's Mini-Conference. This helps me to see the mini-conference not only how we conduct our mini-conference, but how the other Ohio districts conduct theirs, which in turn helps me to consider AA as a whole and not just area 54 as stated in Tradition 4.

I was informed by our one of our committee chairpersons at our March 20th assembly that the GSR preamble is in our GSR workbook. I opened our Area 54 GSR workbook and there it was right after the Serenity prayer! It just goes to show me, I have so much more to learn if I keep my eyes open and look at the whole picture, not just a small section. Since becoming an actual part of and not just around AA's Three Legacies (Recovery, Unity and Service) I can actually admit that I was unaware of something and feel acceptable that

someone was making me aware the preamble existed in our own workbook. That is growth for me. I believe the more I involve myself in service, the more I will continue to grow during my journey in life. I LOVE ALCOHOLS ANONYMOUS.

Yours in Love, Service & Gratitude,  
**Jamie B. Area 54 Alternate Delegate**

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## Area Chairperson's Report

My journey as your Area Chair has been fun. I enjoy talking to folks and sharing what I have experienced. I did not realize that my work as a GSR and Alternate DCM and Area Committee Chair taught me so much.

When a crisis call or email comes to me, I suggest we take a step back. AA is not part of controversy but part of consensus. What will be the result of the response? Will it do more harm than good? I, of course, then send it on to the Delegate.

Bill Wilson did write that when the discussion in a business meeting of an AA group is heated, the discussion must be tabled until "cooler heads prevail." One time my home group tabled a discussion for four weeks until we came to consensus in a calm manner.

I am totally excited about Northeast Ohio hosting the Ohio State Convention. We have good lineup of speakers. The program committee is planning great panels and workshops. I think this will be the best convention ever. Anyone wishing to take a part and to help make this happen feel free to contact me, other panel members or our Delegate. Let us get you on a committee. If you have been unsuccessful reaching us; please try again. Sometimes my emails get lost in *never-never-land*. Jobs are large and small, time consuming or short and all of them are fun.

Please find a way to attend the Ohio State Convention, August 19-21 and get your registration mailed early. Make your hotel reservations early too. Our hotels now have early closing dates on the special rates. I have always been a "Last Minute Susy" and I find that getting things done early is much less stressful. This program of recovery is about change. (See website [www.area54.org](http://www.area54.org) for registration.)

Please mark your calendar for the June 26, Open House Picnic. District 11 with Val are working hard to host our June Open House Picnic. Bring your dish and your chair. Calvin L is the speaker. More details will be on the website, [www.area54.org](http://www.area54.org).

Yours in Love and Service  
**Susan R., Area Chair**

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## AREA OFFICER REPORTS

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### Come Journey with us to Area 56

Just recently a few panel members traveled up to Southwest Ohio to the Area 56 Mini-Conference. The conference theme was: "Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions, Concepts." The conference chair Roger C, opened with a rousing welcome and a few announcements pertaining to changes at occurred at the weekend conference. Afterwards, Laura G. Area 56, Panel 66 Delegate reviewed the agenda items with everyone. She also encouraged everyone to enjoy the weekend, to discuss and learn a lot. Once the welcomes were over, reports and conversation were given by our trustees, both Class B and A (B-alcoholic and A-nonalcoholic).

Bill F., East-Central Regional trustee gave a General Service Board report on the Board Weekend that occurred earlier in the year. Bill shared that the Grapevine readership has been on a steady decline for years, but was pleased to report that decline has slowed a bit, especially in the month of January. Also, he shared that the overall Grapevine losses that were projected to be large, were decreased because sales from the International in Atlanta were better than expected. Another positive he shared was about increased donations. YEAH!!! Donations were up \$256,000 more than last year, but GSO still had to dip in to the prudent reserve to cover costs for 2015 expenses. Next on the dais was our non-alcoholic Class A trustee, Michelle Grinburg, sharing her journey toward becoming a trustee for AA. She started with given shout-outs to the state areas for our annual mini-conferences. She shared this was the "best conference training" for the General Service Conference. Our tradition has encouraged her own Area, West Virginia, to hold their own "mini-conference" for the time this weekend, in her home state. Michelle shared her personal journey to becoming our trustee, that was heart-warming and very thoughtful. I really enjoyed her talk. The evening ended with Bill F. sharing his AA message.

The conference convenes on Saturday morning with a reading on the purpose of the mini-conference and its importance. Afterward Sandy H., read through "How the General Service Conference Operates", guidelines used as a standard to lead the discussion and voting process during the conference week. Soon, the committee session broke out in different suites to discuss the agenda items. Jamie and I sat in on the Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities and Public Information committee. Rousing discussions were had by everyone involved with our breakout session. The morning gatherings ended with us having a sumptuous lunch at the hotel restaurant.

In the afternoon, the voting portion of the conference started with Immediate Past Delegate Garwood F., as the chair. Each breakout group came to the podium to share the outcomes from the morning committee sessions. This part of the conference can have a lot of questions and answers, but

that's important so everyone can get a clear understand of each agenda item and can make an informed decision when they vote. The afternoon ended with general sharing on brainstorming items for consideration by the 66<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. Laura G., the Area 56 delegate felt it was important to get the groups' thoughts on various ideas brought by the Conference. The evening ended with several enjoyable activities. First, there was a delicious dinner along with a lot of laughter. Next, during the evening we heard reports from DCM's from Area 56 and All Ohio Area Delegates. Afterwards, Sharon F., Past Delegate shared her AA message. There were about 85 attendees. Finally, the night ended with a stimulating game of "Big Book Throw Down". As the conference closed in on Sunday morning, we had to leave early to make it back for Area 54 scheduled meetings. The Journey to Area 56 was filled with several learning opportunities, meeting new people and a really pleasurable experience.

Love and Service, **Shyrl B., Area Treasurer**

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### A Journey to Area 55

I traveled to the Area 55 Mini Conference with Calvin L., our Delegate, and Jamie B., our Alternate Delegate. We arrived at the Holiday Inn French Quarter with no issues. Jamie and I had an awesome conversation while Calvin snoozed on the ride over. The conference itself was jam packed with speakers and a mock conference. I was on the Literature/Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) committee. It was really awesome to hear our Delegates from other areas speak on their experiences more in depth. One of the leads that I really enjoyed was Kristi H. from Area 53. Her experience strength and hope was very enlightening and it made her more relatable to me. I was able to fellowship with a lot of AAs from throughout Ohio and that is one of the best perks to service work is getting to meet other AAs. In Area 55, they do their voting and mock conference different than what I have experienced in other mini-conferences and it was very interesting to see another way of doing the mock conference than the way my area does it. The conference was very enjoyable although I had issues with the layout of the hotel I had an awesome time and they have the best ice cream/pop cycle machine around.

Tina C., Area Recording Secretary

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### Our Finances

In 1947, Bill said "Voluntary contributions or pledges of A.A. members ought to be A.A.'s principal support, and, eventually, its sole support." "Now where do A.A.'s services—worldwide, area, local—fit into our scheme of things? Why should we provide these

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## AREA OFFICER REPORTS

functions with money? The answer is simple enough. Every single A.A. service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office to arrange hospitalization and sponsorship, or the world service Headquarters [now the General Service Office] to maintain unity and effectiveness all over the globe. "Though not costly, these service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion—to our survival as a Fellowship. Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to recognition on our part that A.A. must everywhere function in full strength—and that, under our Tradition of self-support; we are all going to foot the bill." Bill W., October 1967 Grapevine

When we embrace Tradition Seven and decline outside contributions, we take on the individual responsibility to pay our bills from group and member contributions. This is a responsibility that every member of the Fellowship shares. Shared responsibility only works when every member shares. One (\$1.00) US dollar in 1960 was worth 1 dollar; however the buying power of that dollar has changed drastically. What you could buy for \$1.00 in 1960 would cost you \$7.46 today. Looking at it the other way, what you can buy for a dollar today cost only 13 cents in 1960! This is a new year (2016) if we can put more than one dollar in the basket at AA meetings – we should!! Remember: I AM RESPONSIBLE – When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there and for that, I AM RESPONSIBLE.

Ron O., Area Mailing Secretary

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### Anonymity on the internet

AA tradition asks us to maintain anonymity "at the level of press, radio, and films." At the time this tradition was written these were the only general public level media. Television was largely an experimental phenomena and the internet was not even dreamed of. I personally have had no problem keeping my name as an AA member off of these earlier media and TV and likely could not make it onto any of them even if I tried hard. This is not the case with social media on the internet. I'm only a few easy clicks away from breaking anonymity there. So far I've avoided this.

When I mentioned this at an area assembly, past delegate Jeff Y. reminded me of an article on this that Cleveland member Dave S. had published in the October 2010 AA Grapevine on this very subject. Cleveland AA put a copy of this on their website at: <http://www.aacleve.org/anonymity-on-the-internet> so please read it there. In 2013, the 63rd General Service Conference affirmed that "the Internet, social media, and all

forms of public communications are implicit in the last phrase of the short form of Tradition Eleven, which reads: "... at the level of press, radio, and films." This and more information is contained in GSO's guidelines on the internet: [http://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/mg-18\\_internet.pdf](http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/mg-18_internet.pdf).

In Cleveland, anonymity was necessitated at first since the newspaper publicity about AA resulted in over 500 calls for help from the then only 13 active members--had their names been printed they would have been inundated with pleas and demands for help. Later it was realized that AA celebrities would create jealousies and connect us with outside issues and organizations and a relapse by a notable might seriously affect our growth. And now we know that the humility of anonymity helps us maintain our spiritual fitness. The Big Book tells us that, while we are never cured of alcoholism, we have a "daily reprieve" from it contingent on our maintenance of this spiritual fitness.

The cover of that October 2010 Grapevine had an illustration of a possible posting thread:

***Jim Smith: I have six years today! (One Day at a Time)***

***John Johnson: Congratulations! FYI I've had the best sleep in these six years. I really don't miss you waking me up at all hours of the night, LOL!***

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I would like to thank the members of AA and groups who helped the Cleveland North Coast Multi-District host the Hospitality Room for Area 54's Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference. There was a lot of planning and announcing at meetings that we needed contributions for this event. The donations of money, food, and volunteers helped make the event successful. The room was always filled with laughter and good ole AA conversation. It was a great pleasure and a learning experience for me to be the Chairperson of the Hospitality committee. I would like to thank Alcoholics Anonymous for allowing me to be responsible and involved.

**Arnetta P., Alternate Chairperson, Cleveland North Coast Multi-District (Districts 29, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, & 45)**

### Let's Go Green!

Area 54 General Service is inviting you to Go Green! Get your Area flyers, information, and an EXPANDED web-only version of the [Northeast Ohio Recorder](#). All the information that comes to your USPS mailbox now can come to your inbox.

The [NEOH Recorder](#) you're reading now is 8 pages long—that's the page limit to keep postage weight within our budget and so that it can be folded to fit in an envelop. But we have so much more Area 54 news for you! The web version of this issue of [NEOHR](#) is 14 pages packed with experience, strength, and hope.

Let Ron O., your Area 54 Mailing Secretary, know that you would like to save a tree or three (and save the area some \$Green\$) with a message at [mailingsecretary@area54.org](mailto:mailingsecretary@area54.org)

Please note: if you do nothing, you will still get your Area mail by USPS and by email (if we have your email address) as you always have.

**Expanded Content (16 pages!) and a Color-Enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/NEOHRecorder.html>**

# MINI-CONFERENCE VOTING RESULTS

## Agenda/International Conventions/Regional Forums

### **A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2017 General Service Conference.**

The suggestions for the theme of the 2017 General Service conference were reviewed by the committee and recommend, (1) Carrying The Message Keep it Simple; (2) How - Honesty Open Minded Willingness; (3) AA for the Suffering Alcoholic and Drug Addict.

**B. Review presentation topics/discussion topic ideas for the 2017 General Service Conference.** (1) Alcohol and Drugs (2) How honest do I have to be to be sober? (3) Am I willing enough to accept new ideas?

C. Discuss report on the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta Georgia. 1 – Given the issues in Atlanta, AA should give more consideration for those with Special Needs; 2 – Issues with Talley Management Group; 3 – Do a better job of screening speakers; 4 – Future conventions should stick to their budgets.

## Cooperation with the Professional Community

### **A. Consider discontinuing the pamphlet “Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W.”**

The committee considered this request with much care and recommends discontinuing the pamphlet.

35 YES 19, NO; on reconsideration, 2<sup>nd</sup> vote:  
53 YES, 10 NO

### **B. Consider adding text regarding A.A. and medications to the pamphlet “If You are a Professional”**

The committee recommends adding text regarding AA and Medications to the pamphlet. Committee voting session

63 YES, 6 NO

**C. Consider adding text regarding small businesses to the pamphlet “Is there an Alcoholic in the Workplace?”** The committee recommends adding text regarding small business to the pamphlet.

57 YES, 3 NO

## Finance

### **A. Review suggested area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference.**

The committee reviewed the suggested area contribution for delegate expense for the Conference, and recommended an increase to area funding by \$200.00 to total \$1,800.00 to defray Delegate expenses. Committee voting session passed the recommended suggestion above.

71 YES, 1 NO

**B. Review the Conference approved level of \$5,000 for individual bequests to the General Service Board from A.A. Members.** The committee did not return a recommendation.

**C. Review the Conference approved maximum contribution to the General Service Board from an individual A.A. member of \$3000.** The committee recommended an increase from \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00

64 YES, 5 NO

### **C. Discuss material from A.A.W.S. Self-Support Committee**

The committee did not return a recommendation.

## Grapevine

### **A. Consider the list of suggested Grapevine book topics for 2017 or later**

The committee suggests the following from the list of book topics: Young & Sober, volume II; Atheists & Agnostics AA Members; Steps 4 & 5; Beginners, volume II.

57 YES 5 NO

## Literature

### **A. Consider developing plain language version of the Big Book , Alcoholics Anonymous.**

The committee did not return a recommendation.

### **B. Review progress report on “pagination” of Conference-approved digital books.**

The committee did not return a recommendation.

### **I. Consider request to update the pamphlet “Twelve Traditions Illustrated.”**

The committee recommended updating the pamphlet.  
64 YES 5 NO

## Public Information

### **A. Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan**

**1. That a proposal be developed for the implementation of both a Google-for-Non-Profits account and a Twitter Account for Carrying the message of AA to the Public.** The committee did not return a recommendation.

**2. That a Guideline be developed on “Carrying the**

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## UPCOMING DATES FOR THE AREA AND BEYOND

# NOTE THE DATE

- April 17**  
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**
- April 17-23 — New York, NY**  
65th General Service Conference
- May 7—Columbus, OH** **11:00 am**  
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting
- May 15** **Lit sales**  
Unity Day—Delegate’s Conf. Report **2:00 pm**
- June 10-12** **GV sales Saturday only**  
Founders’ Day at Univ of Akron
- June 26**  
Area Open House Picnic hosted by District 11
- July 17** **GV Lit sales**  
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**
- August 12-14—St. Charles, IL**  
East Central Regional Conference
- August 19-21—Westlake, OH**  
60th Ohio State Convention @  
DoubleTree Westlake
- September 8-11 — Concord, CA**  
National AA Archives Workshop
- September 18**  
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**
- October 16** **GV Lit**  
sales **2:00 pm**  
Panel 67 Elections @ Assembly
- November 5 — Columbus, OH** **11:00 am**  
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

### The AA Cleveland District Office is Moving



The AA Cleveland District Office has found new office space and will be moving soon! While a definitive date has not yet been set, we do know we will be in by May 1, 2016. Our new address will be:  
**1557 St. Clair Ave NE  
Cleveland, OH 44114**

This location is conveniently located in Downtown Cleveland and includes:

- 10 parking spaces in the back
- Metered street parking
- Beautiful interior finish
- Conference room, break room, server, office supply rooms, 3 lavatories

We are very excited about the move and will be having an open house once settled in.

**November 20** **GV Lit sales**  
**Gratitude Sunday** **TBA**

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

## RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our A.A. experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, expressed through 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, GSRs, 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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# MINI-CONFERENCE VOTING RESULTS

(Continued from page 6)

## AA Message Online and in Social Media.

The committee did not return a recommendation.

### E. Discuss a request to reconsider the 2011 Advisory Action regarding the "Policy on Actors Portraying AA Members or Potential AA Members in Videos produced by the General Service Board or its Affiliates.

Additional Consideration - That the Public Information Trustees Committee explore the idea of embedding an ASL Interpreter into all videos with Closed Captioning in three languages (French, Spanish and English).

## Archives

### A. Explore ways to encourage groups to write or update their Histories.

Additional Consideration #1 - That a section be added to the Archives Workbook explaining the importance of encouraging groups to submit their Group Histories to local central Office/intergroups, Local Archives Committees, and the General Service Office; and that sample forms be included in the Workbook similar to those developed by the Cleveland & Akron Central Offices

Additional Consideration #2 - That a Group History form be included in the DCM Kit for distribution to the groups of his/her District.

Additional Consideration #3 - That Central Offices/Intergroups be encouraged to promote the availability of Group History forms via direct mail to groups and via their websites.

## Report & Charter

### B. The A.A. Service Manual, 2016-2017

#### 1. Consider adding definition of "SERVICE MANUAL" to Glossary of Service Terms

The committee recommends adding the definition of "Service Manual" to the Glossary of Service Terms

Additional Consideration: That a definition of "12 Concepts of World Service" be added to the Glossary of Service Terms.

YES 54, NO 1

#### 2. Consider adding text in the Third Legacy Procedure chart in Chapter One

The committee recommended adding text to the Third Legacy Procedure chart in Chapter One.

YES 64, NO 0

### 3. Consider draft text for a section on Local Forums to be added to Chapter Nine.

The committee recommended that draft text for a new section on "Local Forums" be forwarded to the 66<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference.

61 YES 2 NO

### 4. Consider removing endnote #4 in Concept Twelve of the Twelve Concepts for World Service

The committee recommended removing endnote #4 in Concept Twelve of the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

46 YES 2 NO

### 5. Consider request to revise text in the Concept Eleven essay regarding "male/female" distinctions in the Twelve Concepts for world Service. The committee did not return a recommendation.

## Corrections

### A. Discuss the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.).

The committee discussed the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) and recommended to keep the form CCS-3.

66 YES, 0 NO

## Treatment / Special Needs-Accessibility

### B. Consider removing "Special Needs" from name of Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities" and throughout the committee's Composition, Scope, and Procedure.

The committee did not return a recommendation.



## GSB GENERAL SHARING SESSION

*The General Service Board of AA held a General Sharing Session during Board Weekend at the beginning of November 2015.*

### **The topic of the fourth Quarterly General Sharing Session was, “Diversity in Recovery — The A.A. Experience.”**

On behalf of general service trustee, Joe D., who could not be present, Scott H., trustee-at large Canada, gave Joe’s presentation on the subtopic, “How do we communicate about the diversity of A.A. experience in the application of our program of recovery from alcoholism — both outside and within the Fellowship?” G.S.O. Staff member, Clay R. presented on the same subtopic.

“Our program” said Joe, “suggests a philosophy that is broad and open to divergent interpretations. This ideological flexibility permits its wide application across diverse cultures holding different beliefs and values while of course renouncing political affiliations and shuns associations with other social movements.” Joe went on to say, “In the history of AA, early intolerance was based on fear,” noting that it took many struggles to establish the practice of membership and very broad inclusiveness of today: “You are a member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out.” Joe pointed out that our core literature, our program of recovery and our way of looking at life has changed very little. But in terms of the numbers and diversity of our members, AA today would be unrecognizable to our pioneers.

Clay noted that “In the first edition of the Big Book, the first 179 pages set out the program of recovery that summarized the experience and the miracle of recovery of our first members, who then sought to bring this message to those who suffered far from

Akron and New York. The next 215 pages contained the personal stories of recovery from our early AA members. These stories allowed the reader to identify with the alcoholic experience on a personal level. The last story in the book was from a man who found sobriety without ever meeting another recovering alcoholic. He found sobriety after reading a pre-publication copy of the Big Book and identifying with the alcoholic experience.”

Clay, speaking about his own personal recovery story in early sobriety recalled, “My journey in AA began with one alcoholic talking to another sharing his own experience. This is the gift that I can share, my personal experience. For some, a firm hand and a march through the first 164 pages of the Big Book may be exactly what is needed. Others may need a welcoming hand, a kind word, and a safe place to learn about a new way of life. Our personal experiences are just varied enough that when newcomers arrive at our meeting, while they may identify at some level with most sharing. They will eventually hear a story that they can identify with at depth.”

“We may find a need to produce new literature addressing the concerns of problem drinkers who may fear that they are not welcome in AA as well some misconceptions held by some in the professional community about what AA is and is not. The question of spirituality is one we have just addressed in a pamphlet and other issues may arise that need to be addressed as well.”

After the presentations, moderator Andrew W. invited all in attendance to share on the theme and subtopics. In response one participant observed that it is important to pay attention to public perceptions of our Fellowship. Another asked whether we are staying open at the group level

to include atheists and agnostics.

A GSO staff member referred to AA members’ frequent calls to GSO when they spot a group that’s not conducting a meeting in the same format in which the caller is accustomed to, often stating that, “That group is not doing it the right way.”

An AA Grapevine director asked it tools that have been used to help support and carry the AA message Spanish groups be transferred to other minority groups such as Native American/First Nations.

A Class A trustee spoke of her experience while attending an “open” AA meeting, hearing a newcomer observe that the members stayed close with their friends rather than reaching out to welcome newcomers.

A GSO staff member said that in his experience you often have to be the power of example of diversity in order to attract more diversity. One past Class

A trustee shared that AA, is the most inclusive organization he has ever been a part of, underscoring the fact that AA has been a pioneer of inclusiveness dating back to the 1930’s.

Another staff member expressed concern that we may slowly be losing the spirit of trial and error in local service work, that our service workbooks and guidelines may sometimes limit members’ ability to trust their discretion and to experiment within service, to feel the freedom to carry the AA message in a way that best serves the community.

*Consolidated from the “Quarterly Report from GSO”, November 2015, F-41, pp 2-3, permission to reprint granted by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., © 2015*

# BUSINESS OR SERVICE?

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines business as:

1. a person's occupation
2. commercial activity
3. a commercial organization
4. work to be done or matters to be attended to
5. a person's concern

The first three would never apply, but would #4 or #5 apply as used in an A. A. Assemblies application? To answer that question where would one go to find the answer? Area 74 suggests we first go to The A.A. Service Manual. Chapter Four deals with Area Assemblies and Activities and looking on those pages I do see some mentions of business, but only in dealing with how the Assembly deals with the General Service Conference and the Area by using the General Service Office. Notice how the word service is used in these matters.

How does "OED" define service?

1. the act of serving.
2. a period of employment with an organization.
3. help or advice.
4. a religious ceremony.
5. a system supplying a public need.
6. a department run by the state.
7. (the services) the armed forces.
8. a routine inspection and maintenance of a vehicle
9. a set of matching crockery.
10. a serve in Tennis etc.

Definitions #1, #3, and possibly #5 would be suitable definitions here. Some history in our service structure is now needed if we can understand the difference between business and service with reference to meetings. The greatest and most active use of meetings is our recovery meetings. I go to the "T and T group" and we hold our meetings on Tuesday and Thursday morning at 10:00 AM, you are all welcome to come if you are in Ishpeming MI on those days. Once a month we hold service meetings with topics of District importance including topics that might be of importance to the District, Area, or General SERVICE Conference. Whether these topics pertain to questions coming from a Conference Committee or Trustee Committee that would or should be forth coming in helping the still suffering alcoholic at any level it should be discussed at all levels. This is the greatest SERVICE we provide and to call this a

business meeting is profaning the word SERVICE and all those SERVANTS who have come before us in this Fellowship we all love.

Now I would like to end by discussing the words of Dr. William D. Silkworth and others whom Bill is quoting when telling Ruth Hock what to write in our beloved book Alcoholics Anonymous, our "Big Book". In the "The Doctors Opinion", Fourth Edition, page xiv, he quotes: "Though we work out our solution on the spiritual as well as an altruistic plane ..." Further on page xv, Dr. Silkworth states: "The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit, is indeed inspiring to one who has labored long and wearily in his alcoholic field. They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death."

The writers of the Big Book made it clear all our interest inside of Alcoholics Anonymous should be done on a spiritual and altruistic plane, therefore all the work we do to help the still suffering alcoholic is service we provide whether it is at a home group, district service meeting, an area service meeting were we discuss all those items coming from the groups and ultimately ending at the General Service Conference or coming back from the three corporate boards attending to the needs of the home group. We must understand Grapevine Inc., A. A. World Services Inc., and The General Service Board Inc. (GSB) will need to attend to the corporate BUSINESS of their structures; but all the endeavors are done to create a SERVICE for all levels spiraling upward to our home groups. This business is the only business done in and for Alcoholics Anonymous and ask any present or past Trustee when this work is done and they will tell you Monday or Tuesday following board weekend generally, but they meet on other occasions. On one of those occasions I will quote from work created for our groups by the GSB when they choose to take an inventory.

I will end this background by quoting from the A.A. General Service Conference Inventory page 3 par. 1 Introduction, History: "... .. These Concepts therefore aim to record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past and the lessons we have drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost."

Let us return to attending to the SERVICE of Alcoholics Anonymous by holding service meetings by helping our Delegate serve our area and the GSC serve the still suffering alcoholic. Let's remove from our present and future area writings the words *Business meetings* and replace them with *Service meetings*.

.....**Leonard D., Past Delegate, Panel 26, Area 74**

## Recovering from the committee in my head

*Beth H writes:*

We frequently hear talk in the rooms of AA about "the committee", or the different thoughts and voices swirling around in our heads, often giving us conflicting messages or bad advice. In my sobriety, I have benefitted tremendously by taking the time to identify those voices. I had no clue who the real Beth was when I got sober; I thought all of those voices were me, or else why would they be in my head?

*Will the real Beth please stand up?*

What follows is a list of voices in my head that are not the real me, and that have far less power over me than they did prior to being recognized, named, and distinguished from my own true voice.

### The Disease

The first voice I learned to identify, which is crucial to staying sober, is the one I call The Disease. Another fellowship calls this voice The Beast. It is the voice of addiction, the part of alcoholism that is cunning, baffling, and powerful. It told me, during one particularly difficult emotional time during my sobriety when I coped by overeating, "You're not in recovery. You just switched addictions. You might as well drink." Thank goodness for my friends in the program who assured me that was false.

In labeling this voice I am able to recognize that I don't want a drink; the Beast woke up and wants a drink. The Disease cares about its own survival, not my survival. This voice tries to employ many psychological tricks on me. Here are some of them:

**Deny.** "You're not really an alcoholic. It's not in your family. Your three siblings who were once in recovery have all been back to drinking for years now, and they don't seem to be getting any worse." It clearly is in my family if it has affected four of the kids. The Disease is trying to tell me I'm not an alcoholic because I may not have a genetic predisposition. It ignores the childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect that is another source of alcoholism. I don't know if my siblings are getting worse because I don't live inside their heads. I know they are not being arrested or hospitalized, but they may well be living with shame, guilt, and incomprehensible demoralization. Does that really sound like a better choice for me?

"Nothing bad will happen if I just have one or two drinks." Yes it will. It may not happen that night, but it will absolutely fan the flame of alcoholism lurking in my body and I will be off and running.

I know from relapsing on cigarettes exactly how it happens. I have one; nothing bad hap-

pens so a couple days later I have another; I have two because I think I'm still in control; then two a day, ok three; ok, now I owe so many people cigarettes that I have to buy a pack to repay them; I better buy two packs because I can't repay somebody and immediately bum it back (for alcohol, the Disease would say it's more economical to buy larger quantities); and now I'm smoking a pack a day and it took four weeks to get there.

The absolute worst thing that could happen to me is to have one or two drinks and believe I got away with it. Or I could lose control with the first drink. Neither outcome is good.

**Minimize.** "Your drinking wasn't really that bad. Not as bad as these other people's. You don't need to be here at a meeting." It was bad enough to get me here. I couldn't control it. I know in my heart of hearts that I cannot stay sober by myself, because I tried. I absolutely do need to be in a meeting. This is my own truth; that other voice is The Disease trying to get me drunk.

**Rationalize.** "Other people are drinking with impunity. Everybody does it. So can you." These are all lies. Some people may drink with impunity, but I now know a whole lot of people for whom that is not the case. Everybody doesn't drink, and many people who drink have adverse consequences. I have

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## Recovering from the committee in my head

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already proven that I belong to the group who cannot drink safely. The Disease wants me to ignore the truth and buy into its lies and get drunk.

"This book that is telling me things I don't want to hear has bad grammar and punctuation errors. I don't have to take advice from somebody who can't get those things right." The Disease is afraid that its power over me may be lessened if I actually hear the message. All the more reason I need to hear it.

**Justify.** "You deserve to have a drink today because (fill in the blank)." Absolutely false. Nothing going on either outside of me or inside of me will be made better by drinking. My true self knows this. The Disease tries to convince me otherwise because it is fighting for its own survival, not mine.

**Intellectualize.** "Well, you know, the disease concept is highly debatable, and there's no reason you should be locked into it when it may not even be true." I don't need definitive scientific evidence that I have a problem with alcohol that I can't control by myself. I have lots of empirical evidence. Let the debate continue; there are lots of things we don't know for sure, but I for sure know my own experience.

These thoughts follow regular patterns similar to the exam-

ples I gave, and it gets easier to identify them with practice. Once I realize that I am minimizing (key words - "not that bad"), justifying (key words - "I deserve because..."), etc., the second step is to say, "Who or what is being served by this trick?" Any voice that is leading me toward the first drink is The Disease. Whiskey is OK if I mix it with milk? (Denial - whiskey is alcohol, no matter what I mix it with.) That is not me talking. That is The Disease trying to take control of my mind. Don't listen to it. It is liar. Don't trust a thing it says.

### The Critical Parent or the Voice of Shame

I have been plagued with this voice since long before I started drinking. In fact, I used alcohol to try to silence it. In sobriety I needed to find another way to make it go away. This voice says things to me like: "There's no excuse for you. How do you justify your existence?" (*Clearly my mother, almost a direct quote.*) "No man will ever be attracted to you." "No matter what you do, it is not good enough." (*Thanks, Dad.*) "No matter what you are, it is not enough." "You came in second; what a waste!" "You're lazy, selfish, and irresponsible." "I don't deserve to be taking up space or using up oxygen." "The world (or your children) would be better off without you." (The last two

are depression and shame uniting forces).

Although I still find it hard to believe at times, I do not actually have to justify my existence. Like it says in *Desiderata*, "You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars. You have a right to be here." "There is no excuse for you" is Mom talking, not me. Mom said it not because it was true, but because she was broken. Dad's advice wasn't good advice; he's not happy today and I don't want what he has. Even if never being "good enough" may have worked for him, it worked against me. Telling myself how terrible I am is not a good motivator for me. I respond better to support and encouragement. Fortunately I have the opportunity to listen to many other people's ways of doing things today, and I can choose what works for me.

I heard these things a thousand times growing up, and because they were mixed in with other messages such as "brush your teeth" and "look before you cross the street", as a child I took them all to be true. I'm an adult now, and I can sort out these messages and choose which ones I am going to hang on to and which ones I am going to toss.

When I catch myself berating myself, I stop and say, "Who is speaking, and is what they are saying true?" I run it past my

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## Recovering from the committee in my head

(Continued from page 13)

sponsor or a friend. Am I really being "lazy, selfish, or irresponsible"? There are times when I may be, but not all of them all the time. These are all lies that I do not have to listen to any more. Coming in second place is good.

I ask myself, "What would I say to a friend who's in my situation?" My best self would say something compassionate and empathetic. That's the real me. I can't think of a single other person on earth to whom I would say, "You are such a loser." It's highly offensive. The voice that is telling me what a screw-up I am is not me; it's mom or dad or some other negative message that I took in as a child, but I can choose not to listen to it today. I took enough emotional beatings back then. Today I have the choice to disregard rather than continue the bludgeoning. Mom and dad may not have known better, or been able to do better; it's not about blame. I tell that voice, "Your opinion is noted, but I also note that your opinion comes from your own deep places of pain and dysfunction. It reveals a lot about you but not much about me."

Shame also likes to participate in the interpretation of events. It is very self-centered. It says, "Whatever went wrong, it's your fault. You should have done more." "Everyone in this room is staring at you because - bad hair day, clothes don't

match perfectly, gained two pounds, any visible flaw." Really, as if people don't have more important or interesting things to think about! "No one in this room likes you." The way I've gotten past these thoughts is to actually check them out with trusted people, especially at my women's meeting. They assure me that they like me and that I'm being ridiculous, but not to worry, they do the same thing.

*I love this fellowship!* Where else would I find a safe environment to actually run these crazy thoughts past people to learn that they are in fact crazy thoughts? I've also tried experiments. "The people in this aerobics class are snubbing you because you're unattractive." No, they are reacting to my hang-dog expression and failure to make eye contact that tells them to keep away. One day I just went in smiling and said hello to people, and by golly, they were friendly.

### The Ego

When I refer to the ego, I'm talking about the voice that wants to be heard above all others, because it is RIGHT. This voice tends to shout, and goad and prod me to open my mouth when I probably shouldn't. It says, "These people don't know what they're talking about. You need to set everybody straight." It's the flip side of the voice of shame. It is as

driven as the shame voice is passive. In sobriety I have learned to find MY truth; not everyone else's. My truth can be spoken quietly. The more insistent this voice becomes about being heard, the more I need to remain silent and talk to a sponsor or friend. Maybe I'll write the email, but not send it until I review it again tomorrow.

The Ego also pipes up when it feels I need defending. It invents bad things about other people, or explanations for their behavior or motives, that make me look good in comparison. I sometimes feel overwhelmed by my career and get scared. Then the Ego says, "Your co-workers don't work as hard as you. They're not as dedicated as you." "I can't believe they didn't know that!" "They are so lame!" When this starts happening, I ask myself, what about me feels threatened, that the Ego would feel the need to intervene. Better to identify the threat, determine if it's real or imagined, and deal with that. In the meantime, don't talk. The Ego quiets down when I'm at peace with myself.

### The Generalized Other

"What will people say if I \_\_\_\_\_?" "If you do that, everyone will think \_\_\_\_\_ about you." "What if someone comes to the door and sees my house isn't perfect?" "How does it look to society when I don't ful-

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## Recovering from the committee in my head

*(Continued from page 14)*

fill the roles it has defined for me?" This last one frequently pops up in the form of "I'm a bad - wife, mother, employee, etc." These questions are all based on the false assumption that there exists a unified "people" or "everybody" or "society" or "someone". When one of these anonymous voices starts telling me how to behave, I have to call it out. Name one single person that will actually think that. (I usually can't.) These voices tell me that I'm failing to live up to certain standards. But, are they my standards? Do I care more about someone who might come to the door than the people who are actually in my home? Is wife or mother a rigid concept or a human being? It took many years in recovery, maybe 20, before I actually had enough self-esteem to say, "This is what I think. This is my standard. I'm not here to live up to anybody else's, least of all these people who do not exist."

### Depression

I apparently had been self-medicating an undiagnosed depression with alcohol. At two years sober I was so miserable, I thought, "If this is what I feel like when I'm sober, then no wonder I drank!" Fortunately I got outside help, but the depressive thoughts still come and go at times. Depression says, "Don't bother. There's no hope. It's not worth the effort. Things will never get better."

I've had two really serious bouts in sobriety that lasted about two years each time. I was able to get through the second because of what I learned from the first one. When I start hearing this voice in my head, now I can say, "That's the depression talking. That's not reality. That's the way things look when you're depressed. Be patient. It will get better." I don't buy into the hopelessness; I just wait it out and get help if needed. I can't think myself out of depression, but I can ride it out much better. This sentence, "That's the depression talking; it's not reality," has saved my life.

Learning to identify the different voices in my head, and understand what their game is, has given me a new-found serenity. I've made friends with them.

Oh, Disease, are you back again? Okay, do what you got to do; meanwhile I'll just go about my business. Hello, Ego. My, you certainly are sure of yourself. I know you're trying to help me, but it's okay, I've got this. My old buddy Shame - I'd scarcely know myself without you. You may think you're protecting me by beating everyone to the punch - no one can think less of me than I think of myself, so no one else's opinion can hurt me - but you are built on lies and hurt me much more than you have ever helped me. I can take it from here.

I have been sober for 30 years and still attend four meetings a week. If not for AA, I would never have heard the term "the committee"; I would not have learned how to handle it; I would not have developed the habit of self-reflection; and I would not have had a safe learning environment, where I could reveal what's going on inside of me and also hear many other ways of handling things besides my way.

When I'm in a meeting, I reflect on my thoughts and behavior as they relate to the topic. I learn to live my life consciously, instead of on auto-pilot or just reacting to things. Without this self-reflection, I would never have found my real sense of self.

I love that we come in all admitting that we're flawed from the get-go. There's no pretense. I can share my crazy thoughts out loud and get a reality check. At first I had to shout down these voices in my head, but over time they have lost their power through this practice of naming them and recognizing their lies. A lie only has power if it is believed. Thanks to AA, my head is now a much more peaceful place than I could ever have imagined.

Contributed by Beth H.

<http://aaagnostica.org/2016/02/04/recovering-from-the-committee-in-my-head/#more-10824>

## IT ONLY HAPPENS TO ME

I hope you can see the humor in this. I had the pleasure of accompanying Calvin, Jamie, and Shyrl to Dayton for their Mini-Conference. At the time, my better half was recovering in the nursing home, and unable to be her usual help to me in packing. She would make a list of things I should take and then check them off as they went into the suitcase. This time, I packed everything myself. We were staying three days and two nights in Dayton. I took one suit, two sport coats, 4 shirts, 4 tee shirts, 4 pair of underwear, 4 pairs of socks, and an extra pair of shoes. My two bags were very heavy.

Calvin and I checked in, and I went to set up my Bi-Pap machine. I had my mask, hose, and my power supply BUT I had left the Bi-Pap machine itself at home. In addition, I had packed NO toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, and no Ibuprofen for pain. However, for some reason, I had packed 4 days worth of my nightly medications.

When we went to bed on Saturday night, I tried to set the alarm WITHOUT MY GLASSES ON for Sunday morning for 6:30 AM. The alarm went off at 5:00 AM. I knocked my cell phone/alarm off the table and I was unable to find it in the dark. Then I put on my headlamp so I could see, not realizing it would light up the whole room!!! I believe Calvin thought that the Martians had landed in the room!!! Once Calvin realized it was only me, he was able to go back to sleep, and slept until 6:30 AM.

## ANONYMITY ONLINE

*(Continued from page 5)*

**Robert Williams:** *What do you mean, you "have" six years?*

**Mary Jones:** *Six years SOBER! So amazing, how did you do it?*

**Michael Martinez:** *Congratulations! You are an inspiration to us all.*

**William Miller:** *Wow, I didn't know you were in AA-- good for you.*

**Patricia Jackson:** *AA?*

"Jim Smith" didn't actually break anonymity himself. He just hinted at it and his "friends" did the rest. Few, if any of us, would take out a newspaper ad to announce our "six years" but such is becoming all too common on Facebook or other media. Maybe we could revert to old-school and just announce our anniversaries at our home group and perhaps some other groups we attend. And it may be advisable to keep it out of Facebook as a gesture of humility and in respect to our knowledge that we really do work our program "One Day at a Time." Relapse is all too common for lots of diseases and alcoholism is no exception, even with many years of sobriety. And the embarrassment of coming back after a relapse is exacerbated by having held up yourself as a sterling example of recovery far and wide. Be careful!

**Bob M., Area Public Information Chair**

We got the car loaded, had breakfast, and drove to Brunswick so we could attend our Area 54 assembly meeting. I rode back home from the Area meeting with Vince W, who commented, "Why are your bags so heavy? You were only staying two nights!" I thought for a minute and said that I had over-packed. I never gave a thought before about my wife's list. To tell you the truth, my wife is home now and she will have the list and I will pack my bags under her direction.

Love and service,

**Ron O., Area Mailing Secretary**