

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

October—December 2016

<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

I am truly grateful to have had the privilege of serving as delegate Panel 65 Area 54 Northeast Ohio. My rotation will end this year and I will become a past delegate. I have made many new friends and acquaintances in Northeast, Northwest, Southwest, and Southeast Ohio, the East Central Region and in New York City. What a wonderful experience to serve as Delegate of Area 54 Northeast Ohio. Little did I know that when I surrendered on August 14, 2000 that some fourteen years later I would be elected delegate of area 54 Northeast Ohio. The late Al J., Panel 43 Delegate was a member of Mustard Seed. The home group that I joined. He made sure that General Service was an integral part of the Mustard Seed group. The group has continuously been involved in General Service. Was it a coincidence that I joined the Mustard Seed group? I don't think so, "God doing for me what I could not do for myself."

I am grateful to the Mustard Seed group for allowing me to serve as GSR in my early years of AA. I am grateful to all the people who showed me the way at the Cleveland North Coast Multi-District where I served as a District Committee Member (DCM) for District 29 and later became Multi-District Chair Person. Let me not forget Clarence G. who always encouraged me to go down the ladder in General Service. I am also grateful to the late Mary B, Panel 39 delegate for the smiles, hugs and words of encouragement she always provided me. I am grateful to all who encouraged me and told me I could be a GSR, DCM, Multidistrict Chair, Area Treasurer, Alternate Delegate and Delegate. There were many of you and I will be eternally grateful to you all. I was always told to just show up and do my best. I would learn as I performed the duties of each office. They told me that when I learned what to do it would be time to rotate out of the position. That has absolutely been the case. You learn the position and become somewhat comfortable in the two years you are in the position and then you rotate out of the position.

When I came into General Service I always heard that we were delegates in training. I now

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see that by attending and being active in Group business meetings, District Meetings, Area Assemblies, Mini Conferences and Conventions that I was a delegate in training. Most importantly I learned that God qualifies those he chooses. I thank God for allowing me to serve both in and out of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our text talks about being of maximum service to God and our fellow man. I love the quote

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AM I GRATEFUL ENOUGH?

The Ohio State Convention was held August 19-21 in Westlake. It was an opportunity to view new service positions up close and to ask questions. There were excellent speakers and panels, a full Al-Anon program, visits with a GSO staff member and our regional trustee.

As the year comes to a conclusion, we look toward area panel elections this fall for Panel 67 delegate and area officers. Have you given any thought to your next service commitment? Perhaps a committee chairmanship or serving as a DCM to re-light a dark district? All those which meet the attendance requirement over the last two years are eligible and are encouraged to stand for an area service position. Discuss these questions with your service sponsor and family. October will be here before you know it.

It seems there are a class of AAs who constantly proclaim their inability to pay back AA for all they have received. I call them the "professional flagellators". Almost every meeting, I hear them work this into their comment or lead; "I don't do enough for AA." and "I can never begin to pay back what God and AA has graced me with as a result of getting sober..."

Perhaps instead of professing their never-ending powerlessness, these folks might consider making a beginning in the form of some small service commitment. Pick someone up and take them to a meeting. Put your hand up when the secretary asks who is available to sponsor. When was the

last coffee commitment you took? Are you doing your fair share in your home group? Does your group have a GSR and an Inter-group Rep? Have you visited an oldtimer who is confined at home lately or called a home group member who has missed a couple meetings? Are you sponsoring anyone in our three legacies of Recovery, Unity, AND Service?

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Just as the newcomer takes that first step toward getting sober, by physically stepping into a meeting hall, so also may we be a good sober example of the next step, and the next step, and the next step. Service keeps me sober, how about you?

*~Your editor,
Jeff*

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



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“Of myself I am nothing. My father doeth the work.” This I know for sure today.

I just returned from the 60th Ohio State Convention held in Westlake, Ohio. Our Area did a wonderful job of hosting the convention. We had wonderful speakers, panels, fellowship, food and fun. Sandra W. our General Service Staff person who sits on the Literature desk spoke on Friday night and delivered a great message as did all our other speakers. Note, our Ohio State Convention hosted by Area 54 was her very first venture from G.S.O. to speak at an AA event and she did a great job of sharing her message and answering questions concerning A.A. during the convention.

I am grateful and proud of the Convention Planning Committees for all the work they did to make the Convention a success. Special thanks to all who came out and joined in to help make our Convention a wonderful experience for all who attended. We received many compliments for a job well done. One person can make a difference thank you for making a difference.

Love and Service

Calvin L. Delegate P65/A54

Alternate Delegate’s Report

I have learned that in order to continue to grow I must also learn to forgive others, in order to do this I first must learn to forgive myself. I am practicing some of the methods I have learned in Alcoholic Anonymous to

achieve this goal:

Method 1 – Practice Self Forgiveness

Forgiveness is hard. Admitting that there is a problem, and then conducting a solution takes time, patience, and bravery. When I have to forgive myself for my actions, this process can be even more difficult. The path to forgiveness is not an easy one. By practicing self-awareness and understanding that life is a journey and not a sprint, I can learn to forgive myself.

Method 2 – Letting go of the Past

Realize that no one is perfect. I may want to forgive myself because of actions against another. I must realize that I am not to blame for other people’s actions. We all make mistakes and we all have times in our life that we do not act our best. I cannot dwell on past mistakes. Learning from past mistakes is good, but dwelling on them can stunt self-forgiveness. Investigate my past choices. I do not want to dwell on mistakes, but I must learn from them to move forward in a healthier way. One way to forgive myself is to identify the trigger, or cause, of emotions in the first place. If I identify what I did in the first place, then I can change my outlook for the future. Ask myself: “What did I do the first time, and what may I do to avoid the same outcome?”

Method 3 – Communicating Forgiveness to Myself and Others

Forgiveness is a two-way street. I may not be able to forgive myself unless I

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learn to forgive others. To forgive myself, I must be aware of what I need to forgive.

Method 4 – Taking Responsibility for My Actions

Be honest with myself about my actions. Before I can forgive myself completely, I first need to acknowledge my actions. Stop rationalizing, and start taking responsibility for what I say and do. One way to be honest to myself is to accept the consequences of my actions. If I have done or said something wrong, I need to own the action before forgiving myself for it. One way to achieve this is by letting go of stress. The more stress I hold inside of me, the more damage I do to myself. I should analyze my needs versus my wants. One way to forgive myself for feelings of inadequacy is to identify what I need in my life versus what I want. I may blame others out of my own insecurity and this increases the feeling of guilt. If I find myself blaming others, I should take a step back and acknowledge why I say or do certain things. This may help me on the path to self-forgiveness.

Service in alcoholics anonymous has afforded me the ability to grow into becoming a better person and helping others to the best of my ability one day at a time. I really love this program

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

Area 54 Chairperson's Report

Thanks to the Committee Chairs for their displays and participation in the 60th Ohio State Convention. All the State Planning Committees did themselves proud. I had such a good time and enjoyed all the great messages. I was blessed to connect with friends from other areas of the state too. Although I was busy, I did get my batteries recharged. Thanks to everyone.

Thanks to District 11 and the Akron Multi-District for a lovely Open/House Picnic. We enjoyed plenty of food and great fellowship and thanks to Calvin for the message of hope and recovery.

Looking to the end of the year and a new panel getting elected in October, I am looking forward to handing off my gavel. I know we have qualified folks ready to stand for positions. Please if you are planning to stand for a position, I ask you to **read carefully the Area 54 Guidelines** on each position for which you wish to stand. I assure you that Area Delegate is not the only **great** position to hold.

My experience as Area Chair has been challenging and offered me the opportunity to work with all the Area Standing Committee Chairs and I was able to share my experience as an area chair. It was an honor to work with District Committee Chairs in organizing events such as, Unity Day, Area Open House/Picnic and Gratitude Sunday. Thanks for standing up and hosting these events in great style. My experience being part of hosting one of these events gave my insight to share.

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I used my experience of working with numbers and Excel spreadsheets in my real job to help me when I was Area Treasurer. The year before as Mini-Conference Treasurer gave me more experience. Also the support from the past treasurer carried me through the learning curves.

To learn more about a panel job, talk to a current or past panel member to find out exactly what you need to know. Just as we need an informed group conscience; we need informed panel members.

Getting off my soapbox, I have been proud to be part of Area 54 Northeast Ohio General Service and to serve you.

Susan R., Area 54 Chairperson, Panel 65

It's hard to believe that my two-year term as Mailing Secretary is about to end. I want to extend my thanks to everyone for helping me grow during my service term. The friends I have met from all corners of the state have been unbelievable.

At the beginning of my term, I had to work with the U.S Post Office to secure the Bulk Mail Permit. Then, I had to arrange for a printer for the Newsletter and flyers, and locate a company to print the envelopes/bar codes per U.S. Post Office Requirements. I also had to secure Area 54 and GSO Donation envelopes to go in the mailings. In addition, I had to develop the mailing schedules for 2015 and 2016

Here is just a snapshot of what we have done as the mailing secretary job during the past two years:

- Ten mailing parties from different areas of Area 54 were hosted by ten different home groups.
- One thousand three hundred (1,300) postal trays were strapped for mailing.
- We mailed out 12,147 envelopes (no tongues were harmed during this process).
- Considering that most mailing contain 6 items, that means that a total of 72,882 items have been mailed out over the past two years.(6 x 12,147 = 72,882).

I wish I could personally thank each and every one of you for all the help I have received over these past two years. Please remember "When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

Love and Service,
Ron O., Area 54 Mailing Secretary

As I sit and reflect back on this second and final year as the Area's Recording Secretary, I can honestly say it has helped my recovery tremendously. Being a trusted servant has helped me to follow my dreams in my personal life to strive towards ideas I never thought possible. I have learned about my own issues of Boundaries, Expectations and how important the Traditions are. By being in my position the past 2 years it has helped me to learn to take my personal feeling out of situations (though it's very hard at times) and Tradition 12 is very important in helping me to do this and to continue to do it. Early on I

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didn't understand the importance of removing my feelings and the 12th Tradition helps with my work on this and soon it was apparent that my Higher Power thought this was a good time for me as well and I continue to work on these areas now. I have learned a lot in this position — balance, commitment, dedication. I am looking forward to whatever is next in my recovery as it helps me to grow in all aspects of my life. The most important part in this journey is to remain teachable in all areas.

We are told that our recovery and higher power will help us through anything. Early in recovery I didn't understand that. I thought (and I still struggle with) that I have to do everything myself. But now twelve years later and many years of service work/recovery under my belt I am finally getting it, even though I still try to do everything myself. The thing that changed is I'm not afraid to ask for help. My service work and my recovery guide me in dealing with real life. No matter what those situations may be. Yes, I still tend to freak out and get a little crazy, I have learned to trust in my recovery and what it has taught me and to tell on myself when I get discombobulated, panicked or scared. All of these feelings can prevent me from thinking and processing and doing the next right thing.

These tools we are taught in recovery from day one. It is important to use these tools to help us to cope when things get crazy or are going great. However, lately for me my service to the AREA has helped me to learn more about myself and has

helped to grow more and it has encouraged me more than I have ever expected. My recovery has changed over the years because of all the friends I have made, all the things I have learned and from watching the examples others. It has been demonstrated to me from my sponsor, grand sponsor and service sponsor on down to the new comer. They have all taught me how to handle real life situations and to trust what I have been taught by them and many others both here and gone, that when real life happens, pull your tool box out, put your big girl panties on and get busy searching for your answers. Pray the simplest prayers and quit relying on self-will. We recover; I get in trouble.

Love and Service

Tina C., Area 54 Recording Secretary

Ohio Young People in AA (OYPAA) committee meeting minutes, as printed in the minutes of Area 55, NW Ohio General Service Assembly...

Matt G. spoke on Tradition 4 and Derek L. spoke on Tradition 5. Their last event, the Slip and Slide, grossed \$530.00. They are asking for donations of food, money and/or time to help with their Hospitality Room at their State Conference. Josh Davies, Program Chair, has a revised schedule—they will have many panels during the day and they need Chairpeople for them. Their room block is at full capacity. They are also looking for a local Area 55 speaker for their Sunday program, preferably someone who has a YPAA history. Adam G. will be their new Security Chair. For their Shut In List, they have a new one and plan on bringing a meeting to those that would want one and still continue to send out cards. Josh Davies said that they will start doing study halls to allow them to brainstorm and work as a team to more effectively carry the message. Their next meeting will be July 24th at 5:00pm at Central Office. They will also begin meeting every Sunday at Central Office in August until their State Conference in September to get prepared for the Conference. The committee is hosting the Finance Committee Intergroup dinner next month. And their next event will be August 6th at 2:00pm.

Respectfully submitted, Brian L., Chair

Connecting Scenes in an AA Montage

The night of Memorial Day: The local recovery club's doors are locked, and the evening meeting doesn't seem to be happening. There is no sign on the door; there had been no announcement in any other meetings or at district about a change in schedule. A busy holiday with lots of other events, after all. Nobody is showing up to AA. Well, not to open the club, at least. Around meeting time, two AAs (not part of that home group) show up. That's lucky for the two complete newcomers, the guy who moved back into town over the weekend, and the other guy coming back after a slip. So, a six-person meeting is held on the porch of a dark building.

The June district meeting: The problem of the dark meeting on Memorial Day is brought up; a number of GSRs take the news back to their groups. The following Monday, several long-timers visit the evening meeting, discovering disarray and confusion due to a lack of meeting materials (readings, books, information) and experienced AAs participating. They lend a hand – as the Responsibility Pledge says, “When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.” Over the next month, the evening meeting gets back on track, with new materials, good information, and an experienced GSR temporarily serving double-duty with the group to share with them what AA is as a whole.

The July Area Assembly: The district sends the largest delegation of coordinators and GSRs to the assembly. They share this story of the dark meeting with a few DCMs and GSRs from other districts – interestingly, there's a vote on the assembly floor regarding whole districts in Western PA that are dark, and what is to be done. The discussion is lively.

From the minutes of the Post-Conference Assembly: Jodie M (DCM-D22), spoke on the work her district is doing in institutions, and that groups who are within unrepresented D20 have asked to participate. She requests this merge, and Area 60 asks that the district be called D20/22, so that if D20 is relit in the future (thus providing more opportunities for service), they can be easily separated. Motion made (Jodie M) to allow these two districts to merge; seconded (Bonnie S); unanimous approval from the body.

We are already connected, holistically and holographically – any separation between us is an illusion. AA is a lens that allows alcoholics like us to see that fact more clearly than we would otherwise.

A district is like a meeting is like a drunk – without action, we become isolated; isolated, we become ignorant; ignorant, we get lost in the dark.

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Enough is Enough

There has been much talk about a bequest that has been made to the AA General Service Office and Area 60 on behalf of a deceased member by his estate. What a fantastic opportunity to take a look at our 12th Concept:

“The Conference shall observe the spirit of AA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.”

Whether at GSO, Area 60, our Districts, or our Home Groups, the spiritual significance of self-support is far more valuable than the amount of money in our checking account. The word sufficient is key. While avoiding large gifts, “We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and AA as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.” [pamphlet *F-3, Self-Support*]

“When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat, we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share.” [*Language of the Heart*, p. 221]

“No great excess of group contributions over legitimate operating expenses is ever likely to be seen.” [*AA Service Manual*, p. 62] so I need to remember that “I Am Responsible” for ensuring that there is enough... enough to effectively carry the message of hope and recovery to the suffering alcoholic among us.

Contributed by Yvette N, Area 60 Panel 63 Delegate. Reprinted with permission of Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor, “Seeds of Service”, Vol XXX, issue 3, Summer 2016.

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 9 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

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

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.

Confidential Contact List

Your Trusted Servants Committee 65

Calvin L., Panel 65 Delegate
3571 Riedham Rd.
Shaker Hts, OH 44120
(216) 334-4594
delegate@area54.org

Jamie B., Alternate Delegate
5484 East 141 St.
Maple Hts., OH 44137
(216) 548-5410
e-mail: altdelegate@area54.org

Susan R., Area Chairperson
PO Box 8, 50 N. Maple St.
Orwell, OH 44076
(216) 407-6049
e-mail: chair@area54.org

Shyrl B., Treasurer
PO Box 10344 (M)
Cleveland, OH 44110
(216) 702-0572
e-mail: treasurer@area54.org

Tina C., Recording Secretary
29 South Maryland Ave.
Youngstown, OH 44509
(330) 531-2083
e-mail: recordingsecretary@area54.org

Ron O., Mailing Secretary
1232 Iona Ave.
Akron, OH 44314
(330) 388-8316
e-mail: mailingsecretary@area54.org

Committee Chairpersons 2015-2016

Archives	Michael R. 26670 Loganberry Dr., #108 Richmond Hts, OH 44143	(216) 761-5602 archives@area54.org
Archivist	James T. 19104 Maple Heights Blvd. Maple Hts., OH 44137	(216) 773-0207 archivist@area54.org
Corrections	Marilyn H. 703 Lincoln Street Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 749-0110 cf@area54.org
Cooperation with the Professional Community	Mary Ann K. 1779 Madison Avenue Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 347-7070 cpc@area54.org
Finance	Dawn J. 421 Wilmington Rd S.Euclid, OH 44121	(216) 339-9301 finance@area54.org
Floor Management	Dustin S. 1223 N. Howard Street Akron, OH 44310	(330) 524-5833 floorgmt@area54.org
Grapevine	Tim H. 1944 Jefferson-Eagleville Rd. Jefferson, Ohio 44047	(440) 415-2960 gvchair@area54.org
Group Services	Ola P. 4480 Granada Blvd. #22 Warrensville Hts., OH 44128	(216) 408-0289 groupservices@area54.org
Hispanic Community	Wellington R. 209 East 216th Street Euclid, OH 44113	(216) 287-6009 hispanicliaison@area54.org
Literature	David W. 452 North Buckeye Street Wooster, OH 44691	(330) 234-6973 literature@area54.org
NE OH Recorder Newsletter	Jeffrey Y. 1076 Woodview Rd Cleveland Hts., OH 44121	(216) 496-7594 newsletter@area54.org
Public Information	Robert M. 1367 Grantleigh Rd. South Euclid, OH 44121	(216)970-2333 pi@area54.org
Registrar	Jim S. 104 Sexton Street Struthers, OH 44471	(330) 261-6256 registrar@area54.org
Special Needs	Gary C. 1530 Victor Ave. Youngstown, OH 44505	(234) 228-8394 specialneedschair@area54.org
Treatment Facilities	Michael S. 1670 Kingsley Ave Akron, OH 44313	(330) 957-1942 tf@area54.org
Website	Dan M. P O Box 173 Chardon, OH 44024	(440)853-6768 info@area54.org

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AA AS A WHOLE

Through much of my first year of sobriety, I stuck close to my sponsor and home group. By the time I was a few months in, my head had cleared enough to remember the names and background of most of the folks I sat with. Sometime after that first year, I was handed a pamphlet on "The Home Group" and instructed to go to the District Meeting and tell them I was the GSR (General Service Representative) for the River Rats, and I said okay. Sounded like some kind of AA promotion to me.

When I got there, I learned that a woman I had met a few times was the DCM (District Committee Member), and that must have been a few steps above my position because she had a three-inch-thick binder that looked awfully important, and all I had was a pamphlet. I raised my hand to join the Day of Sharing committee, because I heard you were never supposed to say no in AA. (I had to ask someone after the meeting to explain to me what a Day of Sharing was.) This guy, George, also volunteered, and we spent a lot of time after meetings planning that event and getting to know each other.

By the time George and I started traveling together, I had not only been to a lot more District Meetings, but a few Area Meetings as well. I even went to a Getaway Weekend, though it wasn't really what it sounded like. Some get-away! I worked when I was there! I took notes and prepared reports to give to my home group and district when I returned.

I started to get the feeling that this whole AA thing wasn't just something in my home town that would help me get and stay sober, but some sort of huge sober club that I could find almost anywhere I went. On Cape Hatteras and on George and my honeymoon in New England, though the accents and atmosphere might change, the same Big Book was read; the same 12 Steps, the same 12 Traditions, and the same Spiritual Principles were discussed and applied; and the same sort of sorry drunks were getting sober as a result.

The Unity of our Program makes it possible, and I thank my Higher Power that I've been able to communicate with others on the road, at NERAASA and NERF, with a pen-pal in Beirut, and – of course – in my own home group.

Without AA as a whole, I have nothing to share with another, and my sponsor would have had nothing to share with me. My connection to AA as a whole came from AA as a whole reaching out and connecting with me.

Contributed by Jody K, Area 60 Secretary. Reprinted with permission of Chad U, Area 60 Newsletter Editor, "Seeds of Service", Vol XXX, issue 3, Summer 2016.

WHAT IS AN A.A. GROUP?

The purpose of all AA groups, as stated in our Preamble, is for members to "share their experience, strength and hope with each other, that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism." Most AA meetings are considered voting groups when they follow the long form of our Third Tradition.

Why is a meeting not a Group?

Perhaps the most important distinction between groups and meetings is singleness of purpose: to stay sober and help others recover from alcoholism. If the members are all alcoholics, and if they open the door to all alcoholics who seek help, regardless of profession, gender, or other distinction, and meet all other aspects defining an A.A. group, they may call themselves an A.A. group. A group has a vote in the decision making process of AA as a whole. Groups continue to function outside meeting times by taking Twelfth Step calls and participating in district and area functions.

The Home Group - One Group, One Vote

Although AA members attend the meetings of many groups, and feel comfortable in these meetings, the Home Group remains the strongest bond between the individual AA member and the Fellowship. With membership comes the right to vote upon issues that might affect the Group and might also affect AA as a whole. A process that forms the very cornerstone of AA's service structure. As with all Group conscience matters, each AA member has one vote; and this, ideally, is voiced through the Home Group.

Rotation

Traditionally, rotation of service positions keeps AA members from becoming frozen in office. It also ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in AA, are passed around for all to share. Rotation insures that fresh ideas are brought to the task, and helps to bring us spiritual rewards more enduring than fame. And, in the spirit of Tradition Twelve, it ever reminds us "to place principles before personalities". Terms are usually two years for General Service, and one year for Intergroup, but can be any length the Group designates. Before you rotate out of any AA office, be sure to help train your replacement.

The 'Six Points of an AA Group':

- 1. All members of a group are alcoholics, and all alcoholics are eligible for membership.*
- 2. As a group, they are fully self-supporting.*
- 3. A group's primary purpose is to help alcoholics recover through the Twelve Steps.*
- 4. As a group, they have no outside affiliation.*
- 5. As a group, they have no opinion on outside issues.*
- 6. As a group, their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.*

Reprinted from the pamphlet "The AA Group", circa 1998