

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

January, February, March 2017

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXV, Issue 1

"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

Happy New Year to all in Area 54:

I am so very grateful to Area 54 for electing me to serve as your Panel 67 Delegate. It has been an incredibly amazing journey and I am so very appreciative to all of you for the love, tolerance, and support expressed over the years. I have been given the opportunity to give back to Alcoholic Anonymous what it has so freely given to me. However, I am quickly learning that the opportunity has already begun. There is much to be done. January we must begin planning for our 42nd Mini-Conference, February starts off with the Conference of Delegates Past and Present, and then our GSR Workshop. The 53rd Women's International Convention is also being held in Cleveland in February.



I look forward to my upcoming journey knowing that My Higher Power will lead me down the path that guides me to perform this assignment to the best of my ability. I am confident it will be a sensational experience.

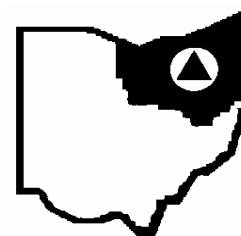
I believe I am actually growing up in Alcoholics Anonymous, learning how to accept my responsibilities. I have to focus on being a team player, which means I must accept the fact that people will have different ideas and beliefs. However, we are all on the same team. I must always remember the expression in AA that "We can agree to disagree".

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Editorial..... | 2 |
| Alt Delegate's Report..... | 3 |
| Area Committee Reports..... | 4 |
| Past Area member in NM..... | 5 |
| Green Initiative..... | 5 |
| Panel 67 Election Results..... | 6 |
| Upcoming Events..... | 7 |
| Contact Information..... | 8 |
| On-line issue only: | |
| Non-AA on Trad 5..... | 9 |
| Ensuring our Future | 10 |
| GSB Strategic Plan..... | 11 |
| Your Voice and Vote..... | 17 |
| NAAAW Comes of Age..... | 18 |

"We measure our progress in AA by two words, 'humility' and 'responsibility.' May I ever keep my eye on these yardsticks as I continue to seek only knowledge of His will for me."

Jamie B., Panel 67 Delegate
Area 54 – Northeast Ohio



GRATITUDE IN ACTION

In this issue of the *Northeast Ohio Recorder*, we focus on Gratitude for our recovery through unity and service. Our new delegate, Jamie B shares her gratitude for all the service opportunities and challenges to personal recovery the area service structure provides. Shyrl B., your alternate delegate, reflects on spiritual journey she has taken to this point.

Action is the key word in all of this. Page 14 of our Basic Text (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) reminds us,

...for if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead.

Gratitude in A.A. is a noun AND a verb. The oldtimers taught me “Don’t just tell me about your gratitude, show me...” and “Your actions speak so loudly, I can’t hear what you’re saying.”

All groups have a right to a say in how A.A. operates. You express that right with the election and participation of a General Service Representative (GSR). But without that voice and vote, the A.A. group is powerless to participate in A.A. as a whole; “Every A.A. member has a right to be involved with how A.A. is run through the well-informed group conscience.”

Speaking of which, our area conscience is best informed when YOU participate in the structure of Northeast Ohio A.A. Before we know it, spring will be slowly pushing winter’s icy blast back from our doors and it will soon be time for the Area Mini-Conference.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND THE NORTHEAST OHIO MINI-CONFERENCE?

Here are just a few good reasons why everyone, whether you are involved in General Service work or not, is encouraged to attend the Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference.

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

Learn about service beyond the church basement steps.

Every service job in A.A. is important. Ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our

Third Legacy of Service. An A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer, whether sponsorship of a new member or sponsorship of A.A. in a new country just getting started.

Why can’t we just ‘keep it simple’? These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Concerning any given service, we ask one question: “Is this service really needed?” If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A. The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and ... our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities.

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

Meet other A.A.’s who are interested in service beyond the group level. Having trouble at your home group? Other General Service Representatives (GSR) and District Committee Members (DCM) have already faced those same difficulty and have great ideas to share with you.

See how your generous contributions are being used to help carry the message. New literature has been released in recent months, new public service announcements and DVDs, too. These will be shown or will be available for sale.

Where else can you go for \$20 and get three days of sobriety, service and fellowship? Come find out what you’ve been missing.

~Your editor,
Jeff

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



AREA OFFICER REPORTS

ALTERNATE DELEGATE'S REPORT

As 2016 fades and 2017 begins, I want to say thank you to all for allowing me to serve Area 54. When my service journey began in 2008, my goal was to learn more about general service and our fellowship. When Carrie R. contacted me about starting a district meeting in our district, I was on board, hesitantly. We began small and slowly, but we started. Afterwards, it was on to the Area Assembly, where we learned about service relating to Northeast Ohio. There were opportunities to attend conferences, local and statewide, where we connected with others members involved in general service. During this time, Carrie and I journeyed together learning about the business side of our fellowship. After a while, Carrie, who became my service sponsor, left service work at the district and area levels, but I stayed. In my recovery, I was always encouraged to keep a sponsor, so I asked Mary B., and she became my next service sponsor.

Mary B. stated that the most important thing about service is to speak from our literature and “not out the side of our necks”. As an organization, we have a wealth of recovery and service materials that addresses most of our group issues and concerns. So, when you talk with your group, use the material that is already available. Also, while journeying together, Mary also taught me to enjoy life along the way. We would have many conversations while we traveled, stopping along the way at one of her favorite places, Cracker Barrel. I'm so grateful for the times we spent together before her passing. She had a wealth of information about service at the Area and State levels, and she more than willing to share it, to help our Area.

At the Area level, there were opportunities to serve. My beginning occasions were functioning as DCM, and on the Finance Committee. As a DCM, the main job is to communicate information on a “two-way street”. That means to carry information that is happening in district back to the Area and carried back to district and groups information shared from the Area level. On the Finance Committee, the central responsibility is to promote AA's 7th Tradition of self-support by educating GSRs and DCMs. Self-support is the life support for our groups, so it is extremely important to get the message out about taking care of our fellowship FINANCIALLY. The next step to serving at the Area level for me was to stand as an area officer.

In Area 54, officers are considered to be “delegates in training”. In our Area guidelines, which can be found at <http://www.area54.org>, detailed descriptions of each position's duties and responsibilities are available. Time

and commitment are necessary to fulfill the duties, because traveling through the state and local areas will be a must. Over the last four years, I've held positions as Area Recording Secretary and Treasurer. To carry out my required duties, I relied on those who held the positions before me. “Each one, Teach One” was another motto that I found vital. My current service sponsor, Ola P., who also held several panel positions before serving as our Panel 63 Delegate, showed by example how we learn by working together. As panel members, we stand and work together for the good of Area 54. So once again, I express my thanks to you all for allowing me to serve as your Panel 67 Alternate Delegate. My journey is continuing and I ask each and every one of you to please come along with me, with the goal in mind to learn more general service and to grow in deep appreciation for our fellowship.

Shyrl B., Panel 67 Alternate Delegate

AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The AA program saved my life and for that I am forever grateful. I show that gratitude now by giving back and by being of service to AA members and I do all that by sharing my service/recovery experience with others that they may gain something just as I have. I was introduced to service work early in my recovery and I believe that was an important aspect of my recovery and why I continue to grow. I've continued to grow because of the service work I'm involved in and by being a trusted servant. It has also helped my personal life. I have learned so much in the fellowship, the service structure of AA and how it works, our role in the fellowship, and how everything works together to keep our fellowship as it was meant to be. The opportunities I have because of service are just amazing, and I owe it all to my higher power for putting me in the right places to be chosen and for those individuals that saw something in me that I didn't. With the amount of personal growth that I have gained as area recording secretary, it can only be increased as the Area Chair. I am looking forward to learning so much with this position and about the use of Robert's Rules of Order. Gaining better insight of this can help me in all aspects of my life and to continue my growth and understanding of the Service Manual and within myself and my own recovery. I am so grateful for this opportunity that I have been given and I look forward to being your Area Chairperson and for being of service to you.

Love and Service, *Tina C., Area Chairperson*

(Continued on page 4)

AREA OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Continued from page 3)

As 2017 begins, we are preparing for the GSR School Workshop, February 19th, 2017 at 2 pm at the 12 Step Recovery Club in Brunswick. It is a potluck day, so bring a dish to share. I have been part of several GSR Schools and I get more information and understanding every time. I encourage you to take the time to attend and strengthen your understanding of our General Service structure. Hope to see you there.

As Gratitude Sunday arrives, I am looking back at the past two years. I have learned a great deal from my mentors and past delegates and members of AA. I see GSR's becoming DCM's and Area Committee Chairs. I feel that general service work has strengthened my sobriety. I have also gained new friendships. Thank you for making me a better person. Thanks for allowing me to serve.

I will be serving you the next two years as the Area 54 Grapevine Chair. I hope each of you will think about how we can encourage groups to giveaway a Grapevine or to think about a special gift for speakers, etc. such as a subscription to the Grapevine. My home group gives a Grapevine away at two meetings a month. See you next year.

Susan R., outgoing Area Chairperson

What an awesome experience, not just to be a part of the third legacy procedure and vote but to actually be a candidate. Every position had well qualified and willing servants. When the treasurer position came up for vote, anxiety and self doubt crept in, but as I listened to the qualifications of the other candidates I felt humbled and honored to stand for treasurer with these special candidates. I felt this way because I have had the privilege to watch them step up to the plate at every Area Assembly and at every Conference.

I have heard it said many times since I've been sober that the A.A. Twelve Steps is a God-given program. I feel especially fortunate to be a part of general service, for many members of A.A. do not get to experience general service and the extension of the gift that God has bestowed to those who do recover. The third legacy can be a long tedious process when votes are cast and recast until there is a final selection. I would hope that all who stood for positions during elections felt the hand of God and know that His will was done by way of third legacy procedure. The third legacy procedure allows for all voices to be heard, ensures that those selected reflect the majority opinion and leaves us with a feeling of fairness.

I look forward to being your Area 54 Treasurer. In Love and Service,

Dawn J, Area 54 Treasurer

I would like to thank Area 54 for electing me Recording Secretary for Panel 67. I have been given the opportunity to represent my two home groups as the GSR and to represent my district as DCM.

During my ten years of sobriety, I have tried to stay active in service work because I enjoy it. I am grateful to have been chosen. I will do my best to complete any duties that are required. Yours in Love, Service and Gratitude,

Rea J. R., Recording Secretary Panel 67

It is hard to believe that two years is up. I would like to thank everyone for all the help. At the beginning, I didn't realize what challenges were facing me in dealing with the United States Post Office, the mail presort people, the printer, and all the processes that must come together to produce a mailing. I will be working with the new Mailing Secretary to make his transition as smooth as possible.

In January, I will be moving on to new challenges as Area 54 C.P.C. Chair. Love and service,

Ron O., Cooperation with the Professional Community Chair

I have contacted most of the TV stations in NE Ohio about airing our Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Any of you can view these at: http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/videos-and-audios website pages. GSO informed me that the English translation of the Spanish PSA *Tengo Esperanza* in December and will join these.

If any of you have a close relationship with representatives at any of these target TV stations, please contact me at PI@area54.org as soon as possible.

Bob McK., Area Public Information Chair

“Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” This means that I can't go to Kmart or Walmart and ask for a donation; we are fully self-supporting. Spirituality = practicing spiritual principles and

(Continued on page 5)

AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS

beliefs. The Twelve Steps should be practical at the store, bank, at work, at home, everywhere, especially my home group.

As Bill W. put it in 1957, "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world." Sobriety is Priceless. It is God's grace and mercy that allows me and countless others to be sober. How can I possibly say that there is something I wouldn't do for AA? What an honor to be a trusted servant. Where else can you have two lives in one? So, keep those contributions flowing, continue to work the Twelve Steps, Four Absolutes, and continue to listen to a God of your understanding. With Gratitude,

Beverly F., Finance Chair

Being part of the treatment committee has been a wonderful experience. But it can be a lot of work, setting up appointments with coordinators of treatment facilities, remembering that we are guests of that facility and to abide by their rules. Simultaneously, we can't bend or water down our Traditions. I made my way to Stella Maris, 2100, and Harbor Light to explain the part that Bridging the Gap plays between a treatment program and the AA program. This is designed to help the alcoholic in an alcoholism program into a smooth transition to AA. Some of us know the most dangerous time for that person is the period from the doors of the facility to the doors of a home group in AA. Setting up a temporary contact person in his/her home area is most important. Remember the Twelfth Step and how it felt to be a newcomer. Contact me and help carry that message. We need contacts for women. Thank you. In love and service,

Mike S., Treatment Chair

These last two years I have been given a lot of ideas and suggestions. I have reached out to different people for their help. I have started a program and have made big changes in people's lives and I will be following up on this program. Would like to thank the different people in letting me have this chance to do the Corrections. God Bless and Yours in service,

Marilyn H, Correctional Facilities Chair

Greetings to my friends in Area 54.

I thought I would let everyone know what is what in New Mexico Area 46. I have been here 3 years and after a year of just getting our office here in order I got back active in General Service. I found that they needed a newsletter editor and were having great issues finding someone and this stranger from a strange land dropped from the sky. Area 46 is the entire state, one of the smallest in population but the 5th largest in area. We have many members in remote areas and the newsletter is critical. I have had a great time doing the job, we have our own budget and fundraising. I expanded to 20 pages from 16 so as to be able fit all of the reports in. One thing I did import from Area 54 was mailing parties! I have been to 14 of the 17 physical districts and put over 3,000 miles on my car. It has given me a chance to explore my new home and meet hundreds of members.

Area 46 has an amazing dedication to service work. Not only does every District have a DCM, they almost all have Alt DCMs and committee chairs. We have three Assemblies a year that last from Friday night to Sunday at noon and the State Convention. The Assemblies move around the state and are hosted by Districts. Upwards of 200 – 250 are in attendance. And yes, we argue forever about money like all AA.

I will continue to serve here until I intend to retire in June 2018 and move to Phoenix to be near my sister. My health issues are stable, I am responding well to treatment and that is in my Higher Power's hands. When I retire I will invade Area 03 and see what they are up to. I love it out west, the weather is spectacular, but the only downside is I miss my friends in Ohio and Area 54. I hope to be able to keep coming back to Founders' Day each year to say hello! In Service,

Jay M., newsletter editor, Area 46

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 Dustin S., 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 (17 pages!) and a Color-Enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/NEOHRecorder.html>

Northeast Ohio-Area 54 Elects New Delegate and Area Officers

Area Election Results

The Panel 67 Delegate and Committee of officers for Area 54 was elected on October 16th, 2016 in Brunswick, OH. These officers will serve for a two-year term, beginning January 1, 2017. Congratulations to all! A heartfelt thanks to all who were willing to stand for office.

NAME and POSITION

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Jamie B. , Panel 67 Delegate | Tina C. , Area Chairperson | Rea J.R. , Recording Secretary |
| Shyrl B. , Alternate Delegate | Dawn J. , Area Treasurer | Dustin S. , Mailing Secretary |

Vote Tally from the Third Legacy Procedure

Standing for Delegate

| Ballot | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|
| Jamie B. | 28 | 33 | 33 | 33 | HAT* |
| Ron O. | 7 | 4 | - | | |
| Susan R. | 28 | 26 | 30 | 30 | |

*if no candidate has 2/3 majority after 4 ballots, a motion for a fifth ballot vote is taken. If motion defeated, choice is by lot.

Alternate Delegate

| Ballot | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| Shyrl B. | 28 | 28 | 35 | 35 | HAT |
| Greg J. | 21 | 23 | 27 | 27 | |
| Ron O. | 13 | 10 | - | | |

Area Chairperson

| Ballot | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| Tina C. | 24 | 27 | 27 | 26 | HAT |
| Tim H. | 26 | 29 | 31 | 30 | |
| Ron O. | 10 | 3 | - | | |

Treasurer

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|
| Dawn J. | 31 | | | | |
| Rea R. | 19 | withdrawn | | | |

Recording Secretary

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|--|--|
| Marilyn H. | 12 | | |
| Rea R. | 38 | | |

Mailing Secretary

Dustin S. unopposed



UPCOMING DATES FOR THE AREA AND BEYOND

NOTE THE DATE

January 15, 2017 **GV Lit sales**
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**

January 22 and February 26
Mini Conference planning meetings
Holiday Inn Strongsville **2:00 pm**

February 10-12 — Toledo, OH
Conference of Delegates Past and Present

February 19
GSR School Workshop **2:00 pm**

March 3-5 — Perrysburg, OH
Area 55 NWOH Mini-Conference

March 10-12 — Mt. Sterling, OH
Area 53 CSEOH Mini-Conference

March 19
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**
(and MC planning snow date)

March 17-19 — Dayton, OH
Area 56 SWOH Mini-Conference

March 31-April 2 **GV Lit sales**
42nd NEOH Mini-Conference
Holiday Inn Strongsville

April 2—Holiday Inn Strongsville
Area Assembly **1:00 pm**

April 23-29 — New York, NY
67th General Service Conference

May 6—Columbus, OH **11:00 am**
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

May 21 **Lit sales**
Unity Day—Delegate’s Conf Report **2:00 pm**

June 9-11 **GV sales Saturday only**
Founders’ Day at Univ of Akron

June 25
Area Open House Picnic **TBA**

July 16 **GV Lit sales**
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**

July 21-23 – Merrillville, IN
East Central Regional Conference

July 28-30—Columbus, OH
61st Ohio State Convention

August 20
GSR/DCM Workshop **2:00 pm**



September 17
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**

October 15 **GV Lit sales**
Area Assembly **2:00 pm**

November 4 — Columbus, OH **11:00 am**
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

November 12 **GV Lit sales**
Gratitude Sunday **TBA**

November 17-19 —
East Central Regional Forum, hosted by GSO and
Area 21 (Springfield, IL)

Unless otherwise noted, Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at The 12 Step Recovery Club, 1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH (on  about 1/4 mile south of route  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.

Confidential Contact List

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Visit us at <http://www.area54.org>

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Singleness of Purpose Still Important to non-AAs

George E. Vaillant, M. D.
Class A (non-alcoholic) trustee
A.A. General Service Board

“Singleness of purpose” is essential to the effective treatment of alcoholism. The reason for such exaggerated focus is to overcome denial. The denial associated with alcoholism is cunning, baffling, and powerful and affects the patient, helper, and the community. Unless alcoholism is kept relentlessly in the foreground, other issues will usurp everybody’s attention.

Mental health workers, however, have great difficulty with A.A.’s Fifth Tradition: “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” Since mental health workers often admire the success and geographic availability of Alcoholics Anonymous, they understandably wish to broaden its membership to include other substance abusers. They also note that pure alcohol abuse is becoming less frequent, and polydrug abuse more common. In addition, mental health workers sometimes view singleness of purpose as outmoded and exclusionary. They worry that the Tradition is a holdover from the early days of A.A. and that the young, the poor and the minority with a criminal record will be barred. Besides, when there is no professional drug treatment center or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group easily available, mental health workers find it hard to understand why A.A., with its tradition of Twelfth Step work, won’t step in and fill the breach.

As both a mental health worker and a researcher, it seems to me that there are two arguments that trump these concerns. First, the Third Tradition of A.A., “The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking,” renders A.A. non-exclusionary. Each year A.A. welcomes many thousands of minorities, many thousands of poor, many thousands of alcoholics with coexistent drug problems and tens of thousands of convicts into its membership. Nobody with a desire to stop drinking is excluded.

The second argument, that “Singleness of Purpose” is necessary to overcome denial, is even more compelling. Given a choice, nobody wants to talk about alcoholism. In contrast, drug addiction commands newspaper headlines, research funding and the attention of clinical audiences. After two years of work at the Lexington, Kentucky Federal Narcotics Treatment Center, I, a mere as-

sistant professor, was invited around the world to lecture on heroin addiction. In the late 1990s, as a full professor and after 25 years of research on alcoholism and its enormous morbidity, I was finally asked to give a medical grand rounds on alcohol in my home city. My assigned topic, “Why alcohol is good for your health.” In short, the greatest single obstacle to the proper treatment of alcoholism is denial.

I first began my psychiatric career at a deeply dedicated community health center. The community had voted alcohol abuse as their biggest problem. After its first ten years of operation the center was still confining itself to addressing the community’s most pressing second, third, and fourth problems. No resources at all were devoted to alcohol treatment.

I moved to another community mental health center that had listened to its citizens and had opened an alcohol treatment center. In being asked to fill the position of co-director of the clinic I was the last staff psychiatrist hired by the mental health center. Significantly, I had had no experience with alcoholism, but no one else wanted the job.



With the exception of cigarettes, alcoholism is a bigger health problem and family problem than all other drugs of abuse. Alcohol abuse costs the nation more than all lung diseases and cancers combined. After smoking and obesity, alcohol abuse is perhaps the nation’s third largest killer. But it is terribly difficult to hold this danger in mind. Alcohol abuse

claims 100,000 lives a year, and on medical and surgical wards it costs two to six times, as much to treat the 25% of patients with coexistent alcoholism as to treat the other patients. Yet cost conscious 21st century medical and surgical residencies steadfastly exclude alcoholism from their curricula. There is not enough time, they argue, to pay attention to alcoholism. To combat such denial the principle of singleness of purpose becomes a necessity.

Put differently, the experimentally documented success of A.A. in the treatment of alcoholism is in part because A.A. groups are the only place in the world where the focus is on alcoholism and nothing but alcoholism. There is simply no other way to overcome the denial.

As reprinted from “About AA – A Newsletter for Professionals” Fall/Winter 2002

See more at: <https://www.aacleve.org/singleness-of-purpose/#sthash.QGjsbz8d.dpuf>

ENSURING OUR FUTURE THROUGH SERVICE

The fact that we are at an AA service assembly validates that I am preaching to the choir on the topic of service. We are all here because we know the importance of service to AA to safeguard our own sobriety and ensure that AA will be here for future generations of alcoholics. I've also observed that one of the most discussed topics at workshops is how to encourage more participation in general service. Service includes practicing love, tolerance, patience and willingness, especially listening and keeping an open mind in all our affairs. We are required to give of ourselves in service to others without expecting any 'payback' or recovering anything in return for A.A. service. Dr. Bob himself once said, more or less in these words, that if we fail to acquire a spirit of service, we will have missed out on the greatest gift A.A. has to offer – the ability to give our sobriety away and so keep it.

Our Declaration of Unity states “This we owe to AA’s future.” But what is “this?” It’s one thing to benefit from the sense of unity that keeps the group strong, but it’s another to declare that we will play our own part to keep the fellowship strong. Now “This” has become a commitment to service in AA. Our commitment in early sobriety may only be to work the steps to our best ability and to stay sober. As we gain confidence in our own sobriety, we see the importance of our Home Group, not only to personal growth and recovery, but how the Group is the corner stone of sobriety to many. Our Home Group is where we may do the greatest good in carrying our message to the newcomer. Bill said “Our Twelfth Step – carrying the message – is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principle aim and the main reason for our existence.” We also see that simple acts such as coming early and staying late in service to the Group ensures the continued strength of the Group. Our first participation in monthly Group business meetings may give us a glimpse of AA outside our snug little Home Group. We may decide that service to the Group is the plan for us or we may wish to be of greater service to AA as a whole and naturally progress to the District and the Area but no one in A.A. will try to push such an agenda on you if you’re not interested or ready.

As we become aware of the personal benefits and wish to be of maximum service to AA, what might be impediments to general service? Outside our Home Group the spirit of rotation is universally observed but can’t you see some connection here also with the often-cited problems associated with the Bleeding Deacon element especially in the individual A.A. groups?

What about adequately financing our Trusted Servants? Service in AA shouldn’t be contingent upon ability to pay our own way. Remember that thin dime Bill dropped in the hat? Financial service to AA goes well beyond paying rent and buying coffee for the Group. Is your GSR adequately financed?

Another troubling aspect is the “watering down” of our Primary Purpose.” I recently heard a Trusted Servant introduce themselves as an Alcoholic-Addict. While I recognize the growing fact that many of today’s members are not “exclusively” alcoholic, I find it disconcerting that some still identify this way in an AA meeting. In an interview with Dr. Paul O., he said his story "makes clear the truth that an alcoholic can also be an addict, and indeed that an alcoholic has a constitutional right to have as many problems as he wants! But that doesn't mean that every A.A. meeting has to be open to a discussion of drugs if it doesn't want to. Every meeting has the right to say it doesn't want drugs discussed. People who want to discuss drugs have other places where they can go to talk about that." We must cling to our singleness of purpose to entice effective Trusted Servants. Service to Alcoholics Anonymous has become my way of life and I credit much of my continued sobriety with that service. Service is the fuel for my rocket to the 4th dimension. Trust our Trusted Servants, trust the process, and trust God. Everything else will take care of itself.

Call me – We’ll have coffee...

Jim H, delegate, Carlsbad NM gave this talk, “Ensuring our Future Through Service” at the Southwest Regional AA Service Assembly in Rogers, AR.

Reprinted from the Area 46 newsletter “El Farolito”, courtesy of Jay M, editor.

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous STRATEGIC PLAN

Approved February 1, 2016

Introduction

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (GSB) is concerned with all matters affecting the Fellowship's primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

In the process of strategic planning and assessment, the GSB has examined a number of challenges and opportunities facing the GSB and the Fellowship. These are factors affecting the outward reach of A.A. to still-suffering alcoholics, the relation of the GSB to the Fellowship and the overall fiscal health of the organization. To address these challenges and opportunities the GSB has developed goals and possible processes to achieve these goals.

One of the challenges is a lack of growth in the Fellowship in recent years that indicates we have an opportunity do to a better job of reaching out the hand of A.A. There are a number of processes that might be undertaken by the GSB, A.A. World Services, Inc. (AAWS) and AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV) staff, and the Fellowship to improve our efforts in this area. The first section below discusses goals and possible processes in this area.

The GSB strives to be responsive to the Fellowship and have good communication throughout our service structure. The second section discusses goals and possible processes to improve the relations and communications of the GSB.

Another challenge is a decline in literature sales and subscriptions which may result in financial challenges. This requires long-term fiscal plan-

ning. The third section addresses goals and possible processes in this area but it should be noted that there is a related and ongoing feasibility study underway that will also address many of these issues.

Finally, some of the goals described in this plan are aspirational for the Fellowship. We realize that the General Service Board has but one part to play. The goals can only be achieved by the combined efforts of the GSB, the operating corporations, the General Service Conference (GSC) and the Fellowship. The GSB strives to be responsive to the Fellowship through the GSC. The GSB will seek to engage the Conference in moving forward with elements of this Strategic Plan. Any of the items described below that require General Service Conference approval prior to implementation will be explored by the Trustees' committees and forwarded to the appropriate GSC committee in the usual manner.

Mission, Vision, Action

Mission

Our mission is to serve the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Vision

We provide clear and effective leadership to the Fellowship. We are directly responsible and responsive to the Fellowship through the General Service Conference. We are concerned with all matters affecting the Fellowship's primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Action

In all of our deliberations and decisions, we shall be guided by and uphold the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

- Acting as the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance.
- Serving as custodians of the two affiliate corporations (A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine,

(Continued on page 12)

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 11)

Inc.) making sure the best possible communication and unity exist among them, the General Service Office and the General Service Board.

- Overseeing and adjusting, when needed, a sound, wide-reaching public relations policy that is inclusive of all who may be of help in raising awareness of the Fellowship's existence to all who may benefit from it.
- Communicating with and maintaining relationships with general service structures throughout the world – providing support to help ensure the growth and welfare of the Fellowship worldwide.
- Acting as guardians of A.A.'s Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

Key Strategic Priorities

Section 1: Reaching Out the Hand of A.A.

Overarching Goal:

The General Service Board reaches out to all who suffer from alcoholism by connecting with others; engaging diverse populations; utilizing current, relevant media; and supporting unity within the worldwide A.A. movement.

Description of Purpose

Our focus is on helping to widen the doors of A.A. so that all alcoholics who want to stop drinking can have a chance to find sobriety in A.A. We recognize that inclusivity goes beyond ethnicity and age. It includes gender, relation, linguistics, and any factor that may place a person in the majority or minority.

One effective way to attract more people to A.A. is to enhance our cooperation with professionals. Enhancing our efforts in this area can help us to be more inclusive and it is an area where all A.A. members can help.

We will need to extend our thinking beyond the telephone and traditional mail, and also consider how access may vary across diverse populations.

Examining the platforms that we use to carry the message and exploring new ones are critical to addressing issues of reaching the suffering alcoholic and to reaching out to communities in our Areas that are underrepresented in A.A.

List of Goals and Processes

Goal 1: The A.A. Fellowship will become more inclusive and accepting, and thereby A.A. will experience an increase in membership as more people are introduced to recovery.

- **P1.1:** The GSB will bring an inclusivity focus to all aspects of our services. The GSB will suggest each service committee and the two affiliate boards will first undertake an inventory of its materials and services with an eye towards inclusion and acceptance.
- **P1.2:** The GSB will contact Area delegates to identify underrepresented sectors of the A.A. population in their Areas.
- **P1.3:** The GSB will suggest to AAWS that it make electronic versions of select foreign language pamphlets available on aa.org and allow them to be made available on Area websites (or linked from).
- **P1.4:** The GSB will pursue relationships with professionals who work with ethnic/cultural groups that are underrepresented in A.A. as a proportion of population and will encourage the Fellowship to do likewise.
- **P1.5:** The GSB will suggest to the General Service Conference that they utilize Conference time to focus on how the fellowship can engage in sustained outreach with diverse populations as part of doing service.

Goal 2: The General Service Board and the Fellowship have improved relations with professionals: We are friendly with our friends.

- **P2.1:** The GSB and the GSO will undertake a year of increased Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) efforts, including use of resources to send trustees to more professional events on behalf of the GSB, as well as utilizing *Grapevine* and *La Viña* (GV/LV) in this effort.

(Continued on page 13)

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 12)

- **P2.2:** The GSB will suggest to the General Service Conference that a year of focused effort on improving relations with professionals be undertaken with Areas developing new CPC efforts and sharing on what works in their Area with the CPC desk at GSO.
- **P2.3:** The GSB will begin a conversation with basic professional degree programs/accrediting bodies to incorporate info on A.A. into basic education and look at possible inclusion in continuing professional education.
- **P2.4:** The GSB will develop a speaker bureau of friends of A.A. for professionals – both Class A and Class B trustees, present and past.
- **P2.5:** The GSB will review A.A. literature for targeted audiences.

Goal 3: Alcoholics Anonymous: Relevant and connected in today's society.

- **P3.1:** The GSB will undertake a collaborative effort among the trustees' committees of Public Information (PI), CPC/Treatment-Accessibilities, Corrections and International as well as GV/LV to ensure the current PI Comprehensive Media Plan achieves as wide a reach as possible. Methods for regular joint meetings of these committees will be developed to ensure maximum effectiveness of the plan and that all segments of those who may benefit from A.A.'s existence are reached. This could include restructuring of the GSB weekends.
- **P3.2:** The GSB will develop policies to utilize new media technologies (social and others) by AAWS and AAGV that are in line with the Traditions and allow for the maximization of raising awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous. They should also provide us with methods of communication with all who may benefit from A.A.'s existence.
- **P3.3:** Conduct a media and communications organization-wide audit, including a thorough listing of dates, frequencies, audiences and descrip-

tive platforms utilized, including all outgoing and incoming correspondence.

- **P3.4:** The GSO and GV/LV, with the encouragement of the general manager and executive editor publisher, will take greater advantage of A.A.'s online and social media presence to insure that A.A. stays relevant in today's society as "one" of the available solutions to alcoholism. The GSB will request the Trustees' PI committee and corporate boards to make this a top priority.
- **P3.5:** The GSB will encourage the AAGV and AAWS boards to explore a common web platform.

Goal 4: Alcoholics Anonymous: A unified worldwide movement.

- **P4.1:** The GSB will develop a plan to embrace more direct sponsorship of other countries.
- **P4.2:** The GSB will explore ways to strengthen our relationships with other service structures and ways to make the World Service Meeting more efficient and effective.

Goal 5: Create new and revise current informational and educational material for professionals and professional associations.

- **P5.1:** The GSB will request committees to develop material that is consistent with the Traditions, including print and video, and how to deliver to targeted audiences.

Goal 6: Identify new places and audiences to bring the A.A. message of hope.

- **P6.1:** The GSB will request management and staff to analyze staffing and responsibilities, and suggest to GSB a list of potential events that a trustee or non-trustee director might attend. This should include identifying and contacting leadership of professional organizations.

Goal 7: Increase A.A. visibility on contemporary technologies.

(Continued on page 14)

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 13)

- **P7.1:** The GSB will request that AAWS reactivate the YouTube channel for PSAs and expand the use of PSAs on Hulu and other streaming services.
- **P7.2:** The GSB will request that AAWS and AAGV increase the production of in-house videos and use of videos for telling stories, as well as for informational topics.
- **P7.3:** The GSB will encourage the exploration of the use of new media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, SMS) to reach out more broadly.

Goal 8: Infuse the spirit of the Third Tradition throughout A.A.

- **P8.1:** The GSB will restructure forums to include sharing on the Third Tradition, emphasizing the inclusive nature of this Tradition.
- **P8.2:** The GSB will encourage more GSO/GV/LV sharing on the broad and inviting door created by the Third Tradition, including in *Box 0-5-9* and *About A.A.*
- **P8.3:** The GSB will send a message to all groups emphasizing the importance of inclusion in A.A. of all who suffer from alcoholism.

Section 2: Improving Relations and Communications

The General Service Board practices and encourages timely and transparent communication among all levels of the service structure and the Fellowship, within our Traditions.

Description of Purpose

For most individual A.A. members, their A.A. experience is limited to their local group. Some have either no knowledge, very little knowledge, or misconceptions about GSO, AAGV and GSB. Thus, improvements are needed in the communications within the organized service structure to engage individual members and groups so as to show them how AAWS and AAGV interact and impact the individual members' and groups' lives.

The makeup of each of the corporate boards is not inclusive of all trustees and directors therefore leaving many with a lack of knowledge of current projects and functions of each. Previous improvements to our process have resulted in more effective relations but more can be done to improve our internal communications.

There are voices both in and out of A.A. suggesting that anonymity is an outdated principle that promotes the stigma associated with alcoholism. As guardians of the Traditions, it is essential for the General Service Board to communicate effectively the importance of anonymity as discussed in both Traditions 11 and 12.

List of Goals and Processes

Goal 9: The GSB, AAWS and AAGV will be better connected to the Fellowship.

- **P9.1:** Trustees and non-trustee directors should be encouraged to participate in local service events and non-service related events such as conventions and roundups and be encouraged to accept invitations to those and other events given by or having benefit, directly or indirectly, to the Fellowship. Remind groups of the availability and contact information of trustees and non-trustee directors in their locality, Area or Region for speaker/informational or other defined purposes. That reminder should periodically be sent in responses to communications from groups, general service representatives, and others.

Goal 10: The GSB, AAWS and AAGV increase the reach and effectiveness of all our current communications.

- **P10.1:** The GSB, AAWS, and AAGV will utilize the results of a comprehensive communications audit (see P3.3) to analyze current communication methods and the relative effectiveness of each of those methods.

(Continued on page 15)

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 14)

- **P10.2:** Based on the findings of the communications audit, the GSB will implement improvements and efficiencies throughout the entire organization. The results will better define and enlarge our audiences, while improving the effectiveness of our print, digital, event and media resources, by incorporating improved communications into the ongoing operations of the corporate organizations, including each of its programs and services.
- **P10.3:** The GSB will establish a clear methodology for ongoing evaluations of the effectiveness of communications.

Goal 11: Internal communication among the GSB, AAWS Board and AAGV Board will be optimized.

- **P11.1:** The GSB will explore alternative meeting cycles and schedules for the GSB. The goals of the process are to ensure efficient use of resources; financial, staffing, vendors, and other resources, and to utilize the best means for projects and ideas to be carried out.
- **P11.2:** The GSB will develop a permanent process utilizing optimum communication methods allowing for all trustees, directors and staff to share full details of current projects and functions. A first step would be to share minutes of committee meetings (not just board minutes) between all three boards.
- **P11.3:** The GSB will study the current makeup of each of the boards of the operating corporations and their rotations to determine if the current makeup and rotations are the most effective for our mission.
- **P11.4:** The GSB will examine the current size and composition of the GSB and its committees to determine if they are the most effective for our mission.

Goal 12: The GSB acts as a role model in promoting the critical importance of our Tradi-

tions; including anonymity as discussed in the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.

- **P12.1:** The trustees will continue to discuss and inventory their own actions regarding anonymity with respect to both the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions.
- **P12.2:** The GSB will share with the Fellowship the importance of anonymity as discussed in both the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions through Regional Forums, the General Service Conference and all other available methods.

Section 3: Fiscal Planning

The General Service Board sustains the financial integrity of its services.

Description of Purpose

One of the core functions of the General Service Board is to act as principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance in order to ensure that services can be provided to the Fellowship, now and in the future. Sound financial planning should always be one of our goals.

List of Goals

Goal 13: Sustain the financial viability of the GSB and the operating corporations.

- **P13.1:** Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee will create a policy regarding self-supporting budgets that encourages the corporate boards to keep expenses below the total amount of expected revenue.
- **P13.2:** The GSB will more effectively communicate the Seventh Tradition through relating facts and sharing stories.
- **P13.3:** The GSB will more effectively communicate the availability of online contributions – one-time and recurring.
- **P13.4:** The GSB will re-emphasize Gratitude Month (November) and AAGV's Carry The Message Project

(Continued on page 16)

SERVING THE FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 15)

(NOTE: for purchase of Gift Subscription Certificates for those in need). This could include sending out an annual letter to all groups as listed in FNV.

Goal 14: Increase the percentage of groups that participate in General Service

- **P14.1:** The GSB will suggest that AAWS consider the possibility of changing the current GSO practice of listing only groups and add an option for listing meetings as well.
- **P14.2:** The GSB will explore ways to communicate the Seventh Tradition to A.A. members who are not active participants in General Service.

Goal 15: Sound financial planning for the future of the GSB and the operating corporations.

- **P15.1:** The GSB will continue and complete the Feasibility Study.
- **P15.2:** The GSB will recommend actions that are indicated by the outcomes of the Feasibility Study.

Next Steps

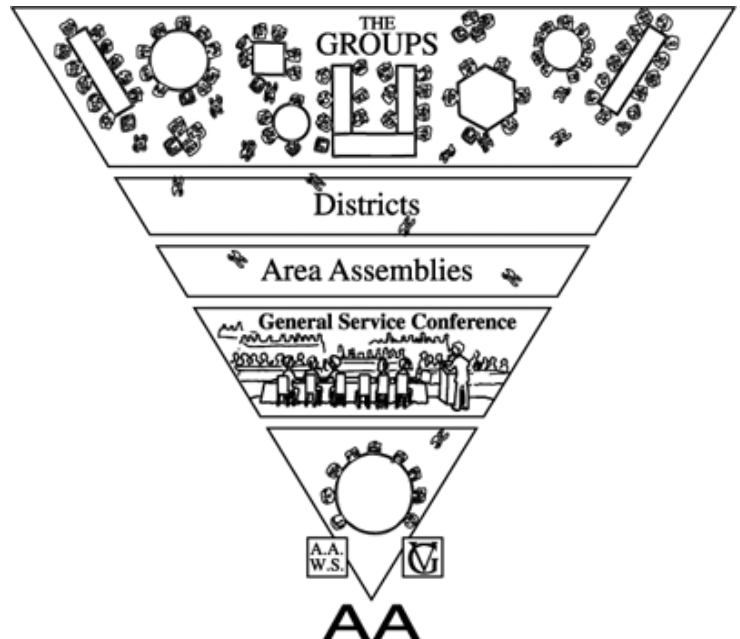
Many of these processes will need to be further explored, refined and reviewed prior to implementation. The table on the following page represents an initial overview of the boards and trustees' committees that will undertake this effort for each process. These boards and committees will be asked to develop metrics for the implementation of each process.

Any of these items that require General Service Conference approval prior to implementation will be explored by the Trustees' committees and forwarded to the appropriate GSC committee in the usual manner.

The General Service Board will review and update the progress on the plan on a regular basis.

In order to have an impact this strategic plan must be followed up with action and assessment.

Finally, strategic planning is an ongoing effort. This Strategic Plan represents the current goals and processes that the General Service Board has developed to help further its mission. The GSB welcomes input from the GSC and the Fellowship on what additional goals and processes should be considered, now and in the future.



*When anyone, anywhere
reaches out for help
I want the hand of A.A.
always to be there
And for that ...
I am Responsible*

YOUR VOICE AND YOUR VOTE

I am a General Service Representative for my home group, I Am Responsible, that meets on Monday evenings in the Akron Intergroup Area. I am so grateful for the opportunity to represent my group at the Area 54 General Assemblies. It has been two years since I accepted this position and my group has elected me to continue to serve. I want to share my experience with the hope that others will want to step up and represent their groups.

First I want to say that after 14 years of service in AA in other capacities, I find that serving as GSR has been very educational and rewarding. I am getting a better understanding of the AA Traditions and the AA Concepts of General Service. About halfway through this time I had to stand back and discover for myself the importance of this service. Attending the Ohio State Conference cemented it for me. Area 54 is our connection to AA World Services in New York City, and that is how we can be sure that AA will be around for future generations. There will continue to be a need, so we must maintain our structure to assure that happens. As a GSR I was awakened to the fact that there is a whole world of AA out there, and it does not just go on without participation all the way down to the group level.

Because I represent our group we had a vote this year in what actions would be sent to the General Service Conference from our Area. While there is a large number of groups represented, there are a lot of groups that do not send representatives to the meetings. One item in particular was whether the Big Book should be changed to update the language to a more up-to-date format. Our Area decided, collectively, that no changes should be made. The procedure for this decision was such an example of people working together to hear all opinions, that a group consensus was reached, and our Area Delegate took our recommendation to the General Service Conference in New York.

At our Area Assemblies we have a vote in topics to be considered at the International Conventions held every five years. We even submitted our selection for the theme of the next International Convention. Now that is AA participation on a whole new level.

At the October Assembly I had the pleasure of experiencing an election of officers that was one of the most awesome experiences I have had regarding elections. It's called the Third Legacy Procedure. Our meeting was a little longer than usual because of the number of ballots, but it was so moving. You can find explanations of this procedure in a number of places. One is in the Guidelines for Area 54 which can be found on their website at <http://www.area54.org>. This is a great website to see what is happening in your Area.

Space in this newsletter does not permit me to tell about all of my experiences, but I know that I started with one set of thoughts, and now I see how important and rewarding this type of service can be. I am truly grateful to my group for allowing me to do this service, and to God for the guidance to step-up to this service.

In closing I would like to say that, especially since many groups send 15% of their contributions for General Service to the Area, why not send a representative as well? You can bring it to your group's attention and get elected General Service Representative. It is, for me, the best way to serve AA beyond the group level, and individual sponsorship. Many a person has stayed sober with this service. Yours in Service,

Judy K., I Am Responsible

NAAAW COMES OF AGE

I attended the 20th annual National A.A. Archives Workshop in Concord, CA near San Francisco. This would have been the 21st such event had Hurricane Katrina not caused cancellation of the planned New Orleans event that year. I brought my partner, Kathy, along so we could vacation for a few days after the workshop.

We flew in Wednesday evening so I could visit the Area 06 (North Coastal California) archives nearby. Three years ago when Laura W, our host for this event, placed an intent to bid, their archives was very disorganized and this upcoming workshop gave them the incentive to get their ~~shi~~ stuff together. They have done so most nicely and have an active, vital team working on archives.

The Workshop opened Thursday evening with a talk by a nearby past delegate. Friday's events started at 9 am with Dave C teaching preservation of archival items throughout the morning. This coincided with a talk on the history of California AA and that area, followed by a longtimers panel, and finally a well-researched multimedia presentation on Women of the Big Book. Afternoon brought "Archives 101" by Vicki adjacent "History of Young People in AA" by Billy N et al. Then "Digital Archives" by Theron B (who first learned archives in our area) adjacent "Dubious Sources and Myths in AA History" by Art S for Texas. Art is a most talented researcher into AA history. The afternoon concluded with Billy N—yes the same Billy N who attended our last Mini-Conference—speaking on "Then and Now and Why It Matters." After dinner our very special archivist, Michelle Mirza gave a GSO Archives presentation.

Saturday dawned with presentations for future NAAAW sites. We picked Winnipeg, MB as the 2017 site last year and chose Chicago for the 2018 site. Several sites are vying for 2019 on including Detroit. Up until last year all the attendees voted on the future site which did not work well since the local area was overrepresented. Last year the NAAAW came of age borrowing largely from ICYPAA experience to give greater control to the board of NAAAW. The assembled registrants agreed to these changes last year, allowing NAAAW to "come of age" very much like AA itself did at its twentieth year.

Then followed "Story Told by General Service Con-

ference Reports" adjacent "Ergonomics and Archives" given by our host's father who is a recognized expert in ergonomics and studied our processes, offering several simple suggestions. "Writing an Area History" followed and passed out 650-page books of the Washington State History adjacent "Hospitals & Institutions" area history. Then "Ethics and Copyright" followed, adjacent "History of La Viña" by the area 06 delegate Raymundo L.

After lunch Joanne L, former Canada Trustee-at-Large, spoke on "Group Histories" adjacent Gail L on the "Early Akron Pamphlets." Richard W, co-host, interviewed Greg M, former General Manager of GSO, as a demonstration of "Taking an Oral History." Art S presented "A Timeline History of our 3 Legacies" adjacent "History of the AA Grapevine" by Nancy H, past Grapevine director. Greg T, current General Manager of GSO then spoke highlighting copyright concerns. Kevin M, copyright speaker from our local NAAAW last year, allowed Greg a a copy of his talk and permission to use any part of it. Then Jackie B presented "The Third Legacy Project" an informative two-act play written to premiere at this event. I've e-mailed and FaceBooked with Jackie and we finally got a chance to see and hug each other.

The weekend ended Sunday with a "what's on your mind" session, "An Interview with Bill W" by Gail and finally an inspiring "I am Responsible" talk by Joel C, The Pacific Regional Trustee. Prior NAAAW attendance peaked in the 300s but this event set a new record: 476 registrants. The gavel was then passed to Joanne for next year. Those of us who may wish to attend one of these inspiring events will want to know that the dates are 9/27-10/1/2017 in Winnipeg and flyers can be found through NAAAW.org which redirects to the site.

We planned to stay on another week. I have previously visited national parks in southern and middle California and this gave us a chance to see a couple northern ones as well as many other places of interest. One of the play actors asked me to speak at his group on Saturday morning and we leave California late that night on the "red eye" arriving back at 6 am Sunday. So if I make the area assembly then please forgive my disheveled, drowsy appearance.

Bob McK, Cleveland District Office Archivist.