

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

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<http://www.area54.org>

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A Word From Our Delegate

As 2019 ends and 2020 is on the horizon, I want to say how grateful I am that I can serve as area 54 delegate. This opportunity that you've given me has allowed me to learn so much about our service structure. When I think about our upside-down triangle, it is truly our groups of the fellowship that run AA. The way our guidelines are set up for the voices of groups across our country and fellowship is an awesome experience to see in action. I remember early on in my service journey hearing and seeing how Dave S. from the Heights area started an agenda item that ended up with changes being done in our literature. However, why is it that we have very little involvement from groups in our northeast Ohio service structure? How can we encourage groups and other AA members to get involved with general service work?



As I reflect on my journey into service work, it really started the year I got sober. In 1994, my first experience in service was at an event that was being held in downtown Cleveland. Unfortunately, I went to that conference not with service in mind, but to look good and to find a “fella.” Once sobriety became a priority, I became aware of the work my sponsor was doing regarding general service. Soon I followed in her footsteps and found myself going to district meetings and becoming involved. Along the way, the Area 54 chairperson at that time came to my Home group and encouraged our group to get connected with GSO. For so long, we thought being connected to our central office was the appropriate thing to do, but we were able to learn more about a different connection to our worldwide fellowship. I truly learn about service work by watching those around me and by example. I've heard the saying “each one, teach one,” and that action worked for my service career. Now as a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous I have encouraged my sponsees and others around me to learn more about general service. During this process I've had one or two that have gotten involved with service but then fade away. Bringing others along is an effective way, but in these days and times is it enough?

I'm so grateful that Area 54 truly tries to show the groups in our area the importance of general service. A GSO staffer who attended our mini conference noted how the areas in Ohio tend to teach others the different aspects of the upside-down triangle. We hold workshops and events that encourage interested AA members to join us. Being a part of general service work is not for the faint of heart, and action is key. Having connected groups in our area is vital, and I know our DCMs (district committee members) that are visiting groups in their district are being met with resistance. Maybe it's time for Area 54 to hold a concepts or traditions checklist meeting to review our practices and collectively find out what is keeping folks from joining. I'm extremely honored and humbled by those that came before me and showed me the importance of all three sides of the triangle. Recovery, Unity and Service all work together; maybe this is

the place we need to start as an area to make that connection stronger.

Your Servant

Shyrl B. - Delegate
Area 54 - Panel 69

Inside this Issue:

Articles.....	2
Area Officers' Reports.....	3
Bill W.'s Last Message.....	6
Upcoming Events.....	7
Contact Information.....	8

Self Support

In November of 1934 Bill W. received a visit from an old drinking buddy named Edwin T. nicknamed Ebby. He came by to share his experience, strength and hope with Bill. In August of 1934 Ebby, a hopeless alcoholic, accepted the fact that his only hope to stop drinking was in a conversion experience. He found this conversion experience in the Oxford Group. He was therefore honor bound to share this experience and he chose his friend Bill W. also a hopeless and destructive drinker. In this meeting the seeds for Alcoholics Anonymous were planted. Bill drank after this meeting but continued to think about what his friend Ebby had shared with him. Soon afterward, after landing in Towns hospital once again, Bill had a Spiritual Experience.

Ebby shared his spiritual experience with Bill. He gave freely of his time and talent. Ebby had to spend a nickel for the phone call and a nickel for the subway ride. Bill received freely but it cost Ebby money to share the experience with Bill. Spirituality and money began to mix. Bill states "Right then and there, Ebby established the principle that A.A. in action calls for the sacrifice of much time and little money."

In the early beginnings meetings were held in the homes of A.A. members and friends. These members and friends provided sandwiches and coffee free of charge. There was no charge to the early A.A. members. However as the size of the meetings increased, the need for outside meeting places became necessary. Rent had to be paid for these outside places and members began to grudgingly pass the hat. Many stated that it was a Spiritual Program and should be free. It is indeed a Spiritual Program, but it is not FREE.

In 1940 when times were hard - or should I say money was scarce in A.A. - the Rockefellers held a dinner for Alcoholics Anonymous and many of their wealthy friends were invited. A. A. folks, Bill included, got excited at the thought of all this money that would come pouring into A. A. They sat down to dinner with one A.A. member or supporter seated at each table. Then after dinner Bill, the other A.A. folk and their supporters spoke. Finally, Rockefeller said "It's [A.A.'s] power lies in the fact that one member carries the message to the next without any thought of financial income or reward. Therefore, it is our belief that Alcoholic Anonymous should be self-supporting as far as money is concerned." Though this was not what Bill and the others wanted to hear, it was clearly God doing for them what they could not do for themselves. A. A. would be self-supporting through our own

voluntary contributions. There is a certain feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction when you pay your own way, financially supporting the program of Alcoholics Anonymous that you believe in because you know it works because you have been the recipient of the Miracle of Recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thus, A.A. is run by Alcoholics for Alcoholics and supported through the contributions of Alcoholics only. Whenever, an Alcoholic puts his money into the A.A. basket, that Alcoholic is guaranteeing our Spiritual way of life not only for himself but for future Alcoholics who stumble through the door. We keep the doors of AA open by making sure the bills are paid at the Inter-Group office, District, Area and General Service Office. We keep the doors of AA open by giving our time, talent and treasures for the benefit of others.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a Spiritual program. We are guided by our Spiritual principles known as the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Practicing these Principles causes a Conversion Experience, Personality Change, Psychic Change, a change of attitude and action, and a Spiritual Experience. We learn about this at meetings. We have to go to a meeting place.

The Group had to rent the meeting place. The Group had to buy the coffee, cream, sugar, cups, stirrers and doughnuts. The Group had to buy books, pamphlets and the Literature Stand. A Group member had to come and set-up the meeting. There is a financial cost associated with all of these items. It cost money to deliver our Spiritual message of recovery.

Money and Spirituality have always mixed in our A.A. basket. Freedom is not free. In the book *Language of the Heart* it states "When we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer." Let us continue to keep the doors open for the next Alcoholic in need of recovery. Freedom from the bondage of alcoholism is Spiritual but it is not free!

Love and Service,
Calvin L.

Submit your service-related contributions, comments and questions, or ideas and complaints to:
newsletter@area54.org



OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

ALTERNATE DELEGATE'S REPORT

As I traveled back from Milwaukee in mid-October, I was delighted to have weather in the 50's and not a snow storm. Northeast Ohio is part of a 5 state region. As your Alternate Delegate, it gave me a chance to meet Delegates and Alternate Delegates and Past Delegates from 14 other areas. Because the Regional Conference is combined with a State Convention, I was privileged to be present for the Area 75, South Wisconsin Assembly. I listened to the concerns similar to our concerns about the lack of participation in service by AA members.

The East Central Regional Conference was combined with the Wisconsin State Convention and it included the Area 75 Assembly. The Area 75 Assembly meets 4 times a year from 10am to 4pm. There were only a few districts not represented by DCM's. In addition, there are workshops/events throughout the year. Area 75 covers Southern Wisconsin. The assembly meeting included an abbreviated business meeting with reports from DCM's and Officers and written reports from the Committee Chairs. Then they divided into groups to discuss questions that were part of an area inventory.

Historically, the Regional Conference (ECRC) (including 14 Areas) only shows up in Ohio, whose State Convention is in August, every 4 or 5 years. It will be in 2021 in Area 55, NW Ohio. When Wisconsin (2 areas), the state convention will be in the month of October. When it is Illinois (2 areas) or in Michigan with 3 Areas, it should be in August. When it is in Indiana (2 Areas), it should be in April. NOTE: This is based on the past event calendars only.

I recently reread the Area Guidelines about officer responsibilities. This included my rereading the Chair responsibilities. I served in this position; I was continually told by the Past Delegates that as the Chair I was in charge of the Assembly – not the Delegate. With a lot of help from all of you, I hope my performance was respectful but firm. All of us, GSR, DCMs, Committee Chairs, Panel members, are delegates in training. In accordance with the Service Structure, the delegate is to represent Northeast Ohio and to speak for the all the members of AA in the US and Canada - NOT just Northeast Ohio. The Chair is the officer who is delegated to speak for the Northeast

Ohio. This position has the nickname of “the stay at home Delegate.” The guidelines are just that. The guidelines are not rules.

In reading my responsibilities I have much more work to do.

As we prepare for 2020 with lots to do, let us realize that this is a “we” program. We do not have to agree with each other but we can come to consensus on what is best for our group, district, area and/or AA as a whole. Our tradition of autonomy came with a caution, not to harm AA as a whole. In addition, all committees need members because a one member committee is not representative and not all inclusive. We do our best work moving forward together.

In our GSR School and DCM College, we usually mention the message the Bill W. wrote that said “when a group/business meeting discussion becomes heated, the matter is to be tabled until cooler heads prevail.” As we get passionate, at our next business meeting and voices are raised and order seemingly is lost, we are directed to table our discussion.

2020 is coming:

- First is the GSR Workshop in February (and potluck) to learn more about the Alphabet Soup and more.
- Next will be the Mini-Conference in March.

Let us work hard to get the agenda items (we receive at the end of February) to our home group members and encourage all AA members to attend the Mini-Conference and experience being a delegate and discuss and vote on the agenda items.

Not forgetting we will have a GSR staffer come to share their work and their personal story.

Also our trustee will be there to bring us up to date on what is happening at AAWS.

Since Members are at the top of our corporate triangle, we need many members to come and to talk about the future of AA and how to keep it strong.

- In April, our delegate travels to the General Service Conference in Rye, NY
- May is our Unity Workshop. We need ideas for that. This workshop also includes the Conference report from the delegate.

(Continued on page 4)

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

AREA ALTERNATE DELEGATE'S REPORT (Continued from page 3)

- June is Founders Day and the Area 54 Annual Picnic. Where will it be? Can a few groups or districts get together to host this fun event. Please talk to your home group about this. (The Area Guidelines have more information.)
- July is the International Convention in Detroit.
- August --- are we READY? The Ohio State Convention Hosted by Area 54, NE Ohio, August 21-23, 2020.

Are you on a committee? You could be part of the Speaker, Program, Greeters, Hospitality, Entertainment, Alkathon, etc. Call today and sign up.

The 2020 Ohio State Convention (theme: Gift of Service), August 21-23, will be just 5 weeks after the 2020 International Convention in Detroit. Let us open this Gift of Service and share how it has given meaning to our lives and saved lives including our own -- from the coffee pot to the speakers to workshops to discussions and the laughter. Can we celebrate our heritage of those who walked before us, as we work together and share our experience strength and hope. I believe we can get it done and as always have a good time.

Yours in service

**Susan R., Alternate Delegate
Area 54 - Panel 67**

AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Gratitude

I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to serve as your Area 54 Chairperson it has been a really great year. I was able to attend the folding parties for the mailings and meet some great people. Our GSR Workshop that is held each year by the Group Services Committee is informative for both new and old GSRs. I also attended the area 53 Mini-Conference, and, my favorite, our Area 54 Mini-Conference, where we have so much fun and are able to see and vote on the agenda items that our delegate will be representing for us at the General Service Conference. At our Mini-Conference I got to meet our GSO staffer, enjoy our skit that we have after our banquet, hear the stories that are shared and

how we have so many committee chairs and past delegates show up, help moderate the sessions, and see such nice displays that our committees bring. Unity Day was wonderful, with the OYPAA safety card presentation that was so well received and all the feedback from members of Area 54. We didn't receive a bid for the Area 54 Picnic but with some help from Lorain we were able to join them in a fun day with our picnic in conjunction with theirs.

The panel also attended the East Central Regional Forum in Michigan where they broke out the Archives Checklist, a guide for local archivists that a member in our area helped create. We also had a great financial report by our nonalcoholic CFO Robert Slotterback and reassurances that literature won't increase to make up for shortfalls. We need to be self supporting thru our own contributions and member service cost of \$8.06 per member. Julio gave an update for the 2020 convention and they plan on having fewer people than in Atlanta. I also got to meet Greg T. our GSO Manager who my sponsor Jon E. knew in Washington state general service.

Our panel also was able to attend the Ohio State Convention held in Cincinnati where we participated on panels and heard reports from GSO and from our East Central Regional Trustee Mark E. There were also break-out committees for Archives, Finance, GSRs and DCMs. There may be changes forthcoming to Mini-Conferences and State Conventions as many Areas struggle to find accommodations for their functions with the rising costs of hotels. Our DCM College and Delegates report was held at the end of August on the 4th week as we had to change a few dates this year due to holidays and conflicting events. In January at the assembly we will be going over the budget, voting on changing the Area Guidelines when events interfere with our usual assembly date and accepting bids for Unity Day and the Area 54 Picnic. Hope to see everyone there. Until then, Happy Holidays and best wishes in the coming new year.

Grateful to serve.

**Tim H. - Area Chairperson
Area 54 - Panel 69**

AREA TREASURER'S REPORT

As we come to the close of 2019 I like to look back at my year and reflect on it. It's been a struggle in a lot of areas but some good things as well. This position has stressed me a lot, more times than I would have liked. It sucks though when

(Continued on page 5)

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

AREA TREASURER'S REPORT

(Continued from page 4)

you're already doubting yourself and you're afraid to ask for help. I learned through talking with my sponsor and my support system including my own sponsees that its ok to not have all the answers and to ask for help. It may not be the most comfortable thing to do, but most of us had to ask for help when in new situations. One thing that is a definite is being in this position has helped me to persevere and not give up.

There have been some new opportunities for me this year which I love because those are my chances to grow as a member of this fellowship and as an individual. There are many but one specifically sticks out for me: the Midwest Woman to Woman Conference that was in Cleveland. I went with Jamie B. It was my first one and I was invited to be on a panel with Jamie B. and Cheryl S. from Area 55. The conference was a wonderful experience. I had never experienced anything like it at any other conference I attended. It was Such an intimate experience and it was more of healing on the inside in regard to issues that can affect our recovery and personal life one in the same. I left that conference with a heart overflowing with love and gratitude for this program and the people who help me to keep coming back and to not give on self or others. I'm so thankful for being in such a God given program and for all the opportunities that I have had. Looking forward to 2020.

I will end with Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone. Please be safe and I'll see everyone on January 19th at our assembly.

Love and Service,

Tina C. - Area Treasurer
Area 54 - Panel 69

AREA RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT

Today, November 17th, was an enjoyable day. Multi-Districts 7,8 & 48 hosted Area 54's Gratitude Sunday, and it was very fulfilling. I arrived at 12:45pm with fellow panel member Mark P. to the Banquet Hall in Youngstown, Ohio. The hall was full of fellow members and visitors.

The food was excellent, with a good deal of desserts as back up. The Panel was diverse, with many different viewpoints from each member. Each opportunity to meet new service participants is a blessing. We departed with not only full stomachs, but also full spirits.

I look forward to upcoming events.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Beverly F. - Area Recording Secretary
Area 54 - Panel 69

A LETTER FROM THE CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE

Hello,

I Am Brian C., your Area 54 Corrections Chairperson. I am reaching out to all AAs supporting or active in carrying the message of Experience, Strength & Hope to the incarcerated alcoholic or the one who does not know he or she is an alcoholic.

As your trusted servants in Area 54, we realize your group's and individual's immense dedication and experience helping AAs on the inside. Therefore we would be honored to host an Area 54 Corrections Workshop involving our diverse members throughout N.E. Ohio.

The workshop would involve, without limitation:

- Conference Approved Corrections Videos
- Speakers (tentative: corrections officials, AAs carrying the message inside, etc.)
- Area 54 Corrections Chairperson's report from our National Corrections Conference
- Open Sharing Session

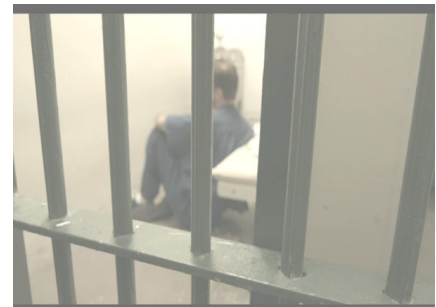
In order for this workshop to exist and in the Sprit of AA, a collaborative effort is imperative and necessary. An advisory committee would be established and members needed from each district within Area 54.

Please send your "interest level" (Yea or Ney) with any questions, comments and suggestions to cf@area54.org. Please include in the Subject line: Area 54 Tentative Corrections Workshop.

I am confident and optimistic this workshop will be beneficial and up-lifting for all attendees. Remember the point of all we do: To help those AAs (or the one who does not yet know) Behind the Walls hear our message of Experience, Strength & Hope.

Yours truly,

Brian C. - Corrections Chair
Area 54 - Panel 69



Bill W's Last Message

Presented at The New York Intergroup Association annual dinner, Oct 10, 1970 in honor of Bill's upcoming 36th anniversary, Dec. 11, 1970.

Bill was under hospital care for acute emphysema and was unable for the first time to attend the A.A. banquet at which his "last drink anniversary" had been celebrated annually. His greetings were delivered by his wife Lois to the 2,200 A.A. members and guests at the New York Hilton.

My dear friends,

Recently an A.A. member sent me an unusual greeting which I would like to extend to you. He told me it was an ancient Arabian salutation. Perhaps we have no Arabian groups, but it still seems a fitting expression of how I feel for each of you. It says, "I salute you and thank you for your life."

My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God's Grace.

If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside,

and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace.

And so—once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you for your lives. May God bless us all now, and forever.

*Ever yours
Bill*

(Reprinted from aa.org with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.; https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/bills-last-message, accessed November 19, 2019)

Bill W. passed on January 24, 1971 at 11:30 p.m., the day of Lois and Bill's 53rd wedding anniversary. On January 26th his obituary appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*. A private memorial service was held at Stepping Stones on January 27th, with the St. Francis Prayer heard throughout the property. A simple headstone in the East Dorset, Vermont cemetery makes clear Bill's deep belief in the spirit of anonymity. It reads simply, "William G. Wilson, 1895 - 1971." There is a military footstone attesting to his service in World War I, but there is no mention of A.A.



UPCOMING DATES FOR AREA 54 AND BEYOND

NOTE THE DATE

January 19- Area Assembly **Gv Lit**

January 26 - Mini-Conf. planning meeting
DoubleTree by Hilton - Westlake - 2pm
If inclement weather, then March 17th

February 16 - GSR School Workshop

February 23 - Mini-Conf. planning meeting
DoubleTree by Hilton - Westlake - 2pm

March 15 - Area Assembly
and MC planning snow date

March 27-March 29- 45th NEOH Mini-Conference **Gv Lit**
DoubleTree by Hilton - Westlake

Gv = Grapevine sale days Lit = Literature sale days

OUTSIDE OUR AREA

February 14-16 – Novi, MI
46th Conference of Delegates, Past and Present

March 6-7 – First United Church
Bowling Green, OH
Area 55 Mini-Conference

March 13-15 - Deer Creek Lodge-
Mt. Sterling, OH
Area 53 Mini-Conference

March 20-22 – Dayton Marriott
Dayton, OH
Area 56 Mini-Conference

EXCEPT AS NOTED, Area 54 Assemblies & Workshops begin at 2:00 pm and are held at The 12 Step Recovery Club, 1480 Pearl Rd. (in Brunswick Plaza), Brunswick, OH 44212. The club is on US Route 42, about 1/4 mile south of State Route 303. Phone: (330) 273-7216



The 2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 2–5, 2020 in Detroit, Michigan with the theme “Love and Tolerance is our Code.”

A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.’s 85th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Ford Field Stadium. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the COBO Center in downtown Detroit.

Online registration is available on aa.org. Advanced registration for the convention until April 14, 2020 is \$115.00 (USD) per attendee. Registration after April 15, 2020 will be \$140.00 (USD) per attendee.

RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

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

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