

The Northeast Ohio Recorder

Oct / Nov / Dec 2020

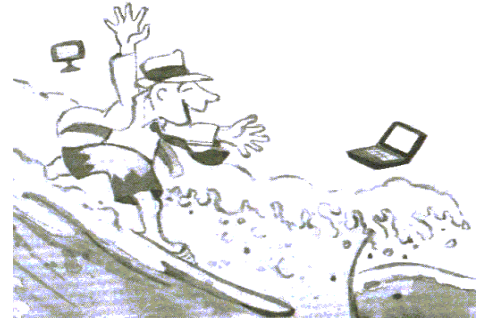
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Volume XXVI, Issue 8

A Word From Our Delegate

Recovery: Who is Missing in Our Rooms? A Presentation made to the G.S.C.

Greetings to everyone from Northeast Ohio, "the cradle of A.A.", that is according to Jeff Y. past delegate, Panel 57/Area 54, my name is Shyrl Blair, and I am an alcoholic. It is an honor to be serving Area 54 Northeast Ohio as the Panel 69 delegate. I was genuinely thrilled to receive the loving invitation from Patrick and Nay to present on the topic of Recovery-Who is Missing in Our Rooms? When I began to research this topic on the A.A. website, a plethora of subjects came up, but I want to focus on just two, alcoholics with cultural differences and young people that come to the rooms.



My sobriety date is October 17, 1994. While in treatment, a suggestion that counselors gave me, was to find an A.A. group to attend to learn how to stay sober. In my neighborhood, there was a meeting place where meetings were held daily. When I walked into the room, I notice something very quickly; I was the only person of color in the house. To be honest, I was hesitant, but I knew I needed a meeting, so I stayed. I continued going to meetings held there and made the Friday night meeting, Road to Recovery, my home group. As I continued to go to meetings, I realized that there were a lot of people of color that lived extremely close to the club but did not belong to groups at the club. There was no diversity in my recovery rooms in the mid-nineties. It appeared that the recovery rooms had not yet integrated.

In the Winter 2018 Holiday Edition of Box 4-5-9, an article titled, The Only Requirement discussed the third tradition in today's world. The article shares an experience that there is more integration in the rooms, but people or groups that are "different" still meet with indifference or resistance from the status quos.

The most recent A.A. Membership Survey (2014), shows that our fellowship is 89% white and 11% of everybody else. The following direct quote from the holiday edition of Box 4-5-9 sum up what practices our society should adhere to:

Although most members acknowledge that marginalization due to race, gender, and other factors occurs less in A.A. than it does elsewhere, it does occur, and, in the spirit of the Third Tradition, it is essential to continue practicing love and tolerance with people whose skin color, language, sex, orientation, beliefs, and social status differ from our own. (Pg. 1 Winter 2018)

This quote from the article resonated with my recovery. Having the willingness to be present in my walk meant I stepped out of my comfort zone and practice "love and tolerance." This willingness was my solution in the mid-nineties. It can be the solution for many that are in the rooms today and ones yet to come. Our literature encourages connecting with all who walk through the door, but it starts with each member too, if possible, to get past personal bias and make sure all feel welcome. Especially young people that come to our doors, suffering from the disease of alcoholism.

In the same above-mentioned survey, young folks under 21 make up 1% of our membership and 21 to 30, 11%. Over the years, many more young people have shown up at our doors. In the Fall edition of Box 4-5-9 titled: To Be Young...and Sober, this small group plays a vital role in attracting other young people to know that help is available. One of the three young people interviewed shared the young folks "suffers from the same things as everyone else: loneliness, emptiness, fear, insecurity, anger, and desperation." (pg.1) These feelings intensified in young ones, and alcohol relieves the agony experienced. However, a solution is present for all who need and want it.

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A few years ago, as alternate delegate, an opportunity arose to attend the local YPAA conference in our area. One of my support sisters had a young sponsee still in treatment, and we went together. What an adventure! The energy was infectious and dedication to the Traditions and Service was unmistakable. After that involvement, I felt compelled to encourage young people that come to my home group, to seek meeting information where YPMs are held and other resources available from G.S.O. This gives them the choice to stay in the more

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Still Figuring It All Out

During these past several months many, if not most, of us have been trying to figure out how to maintain our “normal” during a pandemic. Cancellation, after cancellation, after cancellation. In fact, our own July-August-September edition of this Newsletter was “cancelled.” What is most disturbing is that in our urgency to maintain some semblance of normalcy, we have ended up becoming divided on many fronts. There are those who insist on continuing to meet in some form of live face-to-face encounter, and those who insist that we must go virtual. And we of Alcoholics Anonymous are not alone. Schools, sports, businesses, and churches are all impacted. It truly reminds us that, as a group, recovering alcoholics are nothing more or nothing less than a microcosm of the society from which we virtually withdrew during our “drinking careers.”

The bottom line is that these times let us know of how much “fluff” we have become accustomed to. Those of us who live in urban centers throughout northeast Ohio are particularly vulnerable. I don’t mean vulnerable for catching “the virus;” I mean vulnerable for having our social weaknesses exposed. How solid is my foundation? Have I become overly dependent on “meetings,” knowing that in many communities (especially the Cleveland metropolis) we had over 900 meetings per week available to us?

During my drinking days, I was involved in some sort of drinking activity for all of my leisure time, and much of my non-leisure time. In fact, at the breaking point (a.k.a. my “bottom”) all of my time, period, was in one way or another drinking time. I recall the point in time when it was no longer about going to a bar. I became “sheltered-in-place” - just me and my bottle. Could it be that current health guidelines suggesting that we become less-social remind us of the isolation that we once knew? Could that be a significant contributor for those of us who just can’t seem to get with this “Zoom thing”? Have we become gripped in a fear that we disguise as macho reverence for the need to have live meetings - everyday? Have the meetings replaced the bar?

There was a period in my life when social-distancing was the norm. I taught school in a rural community. There was only one traffic light in town (down by the courthouse), and you had to drive about 20 miles to the closest liquor store or closest McDonalds. There were no corner bars; most folks made their own “corn,” as it was called. The biggest social activities were high school basketball and football.

Recently, out of curiosity, I checked on the availability of AA in the area where I taught in southern Virginia.

There are 3 meeting per week, all of which are about 20 miles from where I lived. For anything more one would have to drive about 50 miles up to the Richmond/Petersburg area. And we complain in Northeast Ohio about a couple of meetings being unable to meet during a pandemic. Really?

Perhaps we need to return to AA of 1940, or AA of Lawrenceville, Virginia. Just because our daily (even weekly) meetings might be shut down or gone virtual, does not mean that AA has shut down. Afterall, the very foundation of our fellowship is not the meetings; its one alcoholic helping another. Its not a room full of alcoholics socializing without liquor; its delivering a box of literature to the local hospital, or taking a box of sandwiches and socks to a local homeless shelter. In short, its all about service.

Our challenge should not be about figuring out how to hold a live meeting. Our challenge is figuring out how to bring in the new guy *despite* there being no live meeting. That is what general service ought to be about during these trying times. In fact, I don’t recall seeing anything about meetings in Chapter 7 of the “Big Book.” And when we need to “get together” for planning or for fun let us embrace Zoom or whatever electronic platform works for you.

Demanding that the only way to meet is in person is no different than demanding that the only scotch I would drink had to be single-malt. But when I could no longer afford single-malt scotch, the blended scotch worked just fine. So now will I find a way to enjoy a fine Glenlivet 18, or will I simply surrender to Zoom?

Love and Service,

James T.
Editor, Northeast Ohio Recorder

Submit your service-related contributions, comments and questions, or ideas and complaints to:

newsletter@area54.org



OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

DELEGATE'S REPORT (continued from page 1)

traditional meetings or explore other settings. The goal is always the same, to come grow with us and rediscover that your life can be transformed.

In closing, I would like end with a quote from the "The God Word" pamphlet, originating with the discussion of atheist an agnostic, but fits perfectly with a solution that will shows that ALL are welcome in our fellowship:

As A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote in 1965:

"We have atheists and agnostics. We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion. In A.A. we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering. Consequently, the full individual liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy whatever should be a first consideration for us all. Let us not, therefore, pressure anyone with our individual or even our collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way toward the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of A.A., so long as he or she declares." (pg.5)

Your servant,

Shyrl B. - Delegate
Area 54 - Panel 69

ALTERNATE DELEGATE'S REPORT

Greetings everyone, I miss seeing you in person. The COVID-19 has been an adjustment that is not easy for me. I am so used to seeing everyone at meetings and at assemblies and picnics, etc. I hope everyone is well. The Virtual Ohio State Convention just completed this weekend. I am grateful for all who participated and helped make it possible. Upon completion, I felt that we truly had a state meeting. The panel discussion on "Carrying the Message in COVID-19" was terrific. I heard that all the state is struggling without our regular meetings. One panelist talked about the success of virtual meetings and that we can go to a meeting virtually each day. He also said that he has help a newcomer who has yet to get to a physical meeting

It was shared that a few groups are not following the Ohio mandates for masks and social distancing. I was struck by the concern Sharon F, Past Delegate from Area 53, had that individuals choosing to do it their way as autonomy still violates Tradition 4. This tradition states

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole." When a group is not following state guidelines this impacts AA as a whole.

Mark E, our East Central Regional Trustee, gave his report which was very informative and inclusive. He let us know that General Service Office is functioning virtually. The staff is working from their homes since New York City locked the doors of the General Service Office. Mark reported that without literature sales and fewer contributions that income plummeted in March and April. Proudly the fellowship stepped up and began sending in contributions. Each month the contributions have been higher. Although this will not solve all the problems, they certainly are making a difference. The General Service Board does not see the need for another draw-down from the Prudent Reserve in the near future.

Further on the financial side there have been cuts on spending, including no travel for staff, and cancellations of all events for 2020 and the 2021 the General Service Forums will be virtual. For Area 54 this means the November 2021 Forum that we were scheduled to host here in Northeast Ohio will now be a virtual.

I personally ask that the Fellowship continue to making sure the group contributions and individual contributions are made, not only by GSO but to the Intergroup/Central offices, and Area 54. The Virtual AA Groups must step up with financial support for all the entities.

I did hear at the panel discussion, that each of us needs to be sure our group information, whether a meeting in person or a meeting virtually, is communicated to our Intergroup/Central offices. The new person is still looking for a meeting. Our trustee also reported that the General Service Conference was held virtually and this was a real learning curve. He is part of an Ad Hoc Committee looking at how to better operate a virtual General Service Conference. The decision has not been made as to whether the 2021 Conference will be physical or virtual or both.

Mark shared that the General Service Board and Trustees have been listening to experts in this pandemic and it is expected that we will have to deal with this through June of 2021.

Grapevine did better in 2019 but with this pandemic it is suffering too. I love the Grapevine and my home group used the Grapevine for our first month back as a physical meeting. We still receive 4 Grapevines a month and give away a free Grapevine issue every meeting. Maybe a gift subscription of the Grapevine is something you can consider.

Mark E rotates out this year and I will miss him. He has worked tirelessly on our behalf. Our Area will nominate a trustee. Four years ago, all the Ohio areas supported Mark E. Maybe we can work together for the future nominee.

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OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

ALTERNATE DELEGATE'S REPORT (Continued from page 3)

I want to say the Mark M., our Mailing Secretary, has shared his technology skills and has been terrific with all our virtual meetings. Thank You Mark! Thanks too to Bob M. and Jeff Y for their presentation of the Concepts Workshop at the Friday night OSC Convention. It was great as usual.

I am challenged to work harder on communicating with our Area chairs. I hope you will contact me if I can be of service.

Susan R. - Alternate Delegate
Area 54 - Panel 69

AREA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

We have missed out on quite a few in person events this year, our mini-Conference, area assemblies, the open house picnic and our hosting of the Ohio State convention. The fellowship and enjoyment of being with others who have the same common goals and love for our program and the service structure of AA. But lucky for us we are a diversified group and have many people with different skills that have allowed us to conduct our assemblies and even the Ohio State Convention using the technology we have today. Sort of a shout out to our Mailing Secretary Mark P. who I have been honored to serve with along with our other great panel members.

We will be having a Zoom assembly on September 20th. So please try and join us. We will also be holding elections on October 18th. Please check the area 54 website for invitations.

My home group started meeting in June. We socially distance in the park pavilion at the church where our meeting is held and are only getting a hand full of Members. Our dual-district started meeting again in June and we only had 5 members show. We are planning on trying a zoom district meeting and see if it garners more support.

GSO has canceled events for 2021 and are not allowing staff to travel; so, we will be having a virtual Forum that was to be held in November at the Double Tree Hotel in Independence Ohio.

I have also heard of some meetings that are not socially distancing or have made a group conscience of not requiring masks, each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. Please adhere to state and local recommendations, as it truly affects us as a whole.

Yours in service,

Tim H. - Area Chairperson
Area 54 - Panel 69

AREA TREASURER'S REPORT

I hope this is finding you all well and adjusting. It's an interesting time in our world right now. Things are constantly changing, and we are hearing things we never thought we would. For example: meeting cancelled until further notice, no hugging, no hand shaking, don't leave your home, social distancing, no gatherings of more than 10 people. People are social creatures and we need and crave human interactions (beside that of those we live with). So, with the current times as they are how are we taking care of ourselves and how do we maintain that human contact we so need and crave?

We are using our phones more for sure. We are trying out new meeting formats like Video calls, teleconference calls, Skype meetings and calls, and zoom meetings which I did for the first time today with our panel members. Until this I had never heard of zoom. In situations of uncertainty like these we also rely on our foundation we built, and we continue to help another Alcoholic because that must never stop just a little different right now. Please stay safe, call your fellow members to check on them until we see each other again.

Love and Service,

Tina C. - Area Treasurer
Area 54 - Panel 69

AREA RECORDING SECRETARY REPORT

It was wonderful to be a part of the recent 64th Annual Ohio State Convention. Area's 53,54,55 and 56 were in attendance. We spoke on many different subjects, especially our vast changes regarding social distancing and safety. The financial outlook is good, and the importance of contributions through our 7th Tradition was emphasized. Members of each area shared their experiences during this current pandemic, and each had a message of hope. "Conceptualizations" was presented by Area 54 with a power point presentation, that assisted in making it easier to understand the 12 Concepts.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to serve.

Very Sincerely,

Beverly F. - Recording Secretary
Area 54 - Panel 69

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS, CONT.

AREA PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT

Understanding Anonymity

“Do something nice for someone and don’t tell anyone about it,” my sponsor, Paul, said to me in early sobriety. He was trying to teach me anonymity and the humility arising from it that is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions. I’ve since been active and involved enough in our organization that I should by now be able to “rest on my laurels.” Anonymity, though, ensures we never get laurels.

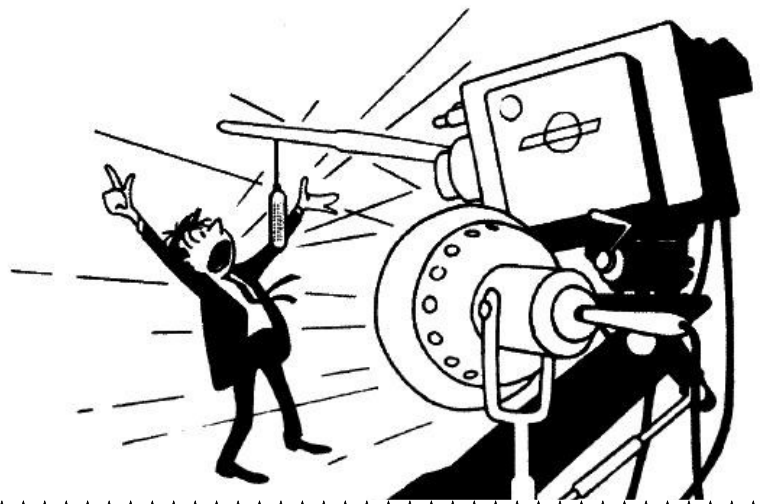
The forward to the Big Book explains our main reason for choosing anonymity: “It is important that we remain anonymous because we are too few at present to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals which may result from this publication. Being mostly business or professional folk, we could not well carry on our occupations in such an event. We would like it understood that our alcoholic work is an avocation.” It goes on to say “When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as ‘a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.’”

Much of the public thinks of us as a secret society that avoids last names, possibly because we’re ashamed of our alcoholism. Alas, all too many of us seem to think that too. That’s why I’m writing this article. Anonymity is not universally understood within our Fellowship. Personally, I’m quite free with revealing, one-on-one, my membership in AA; however, I reserve the right to choose when and where to do this and respect this same right of others. I know there are those who because of fame, safety concerns, or many other reasons feel a need to guard their anonymity much more closely and that’s also their right. A.A. officially only asks that we maintain anonymity at the general public level. That includes social media!

As reported in Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, pg. 264, Dr. Bob commented, “Since our Tradition on anonymity designates the exact level where the line should be held, it must be obvious to everyone who can read and understand the English language that to maintain anonymity at any other level is definitely a violation of this tradition. He went on to say, “The A.A. who hides his identity from his fellow A.A. by using only a given name violates the Tradition just as much as the A.A. who permits his name to appear in the press in connection with matters pertaining to A.A.” On the next page in the book, oldtimer Ernie G lamented about an out-of-state gathering where “They get so doggone carried away with this anonymity that it gets to be a joke.” When I came in a few years after that book was published, few hereabouts reserved their full last name at any A.A. meeting and fewer still at closed meetings. This included captains of industry and media personalities. We recently seem to have drifted away from that pattern. As an active member in this area, Dr. Bob’s area, I subscribe to his teaching.

It should be noted that while we are alive we can choose to regulate our anonymity but after death this right is inherited by our family. This A.A. principle of posthumous anonymity means I may only break the anonymity of a deceased member if I know that is okay with their family. A.A. publishes a pamphlet titled “Understanding Anonymity” that explains this further and is available everywhere we sell literature.

**Bob M. - Area Public Information
Chair
Area 54, Panel 69**



GRATITUDE SUNDAY

Join us for our annual
celebration of Gratitude

November 15, 2020

Starting at 2 pm

Via Zoom

Meeting ID: 886 3655 5012

Password: 5454

Questions Please Contact Tim H email chair@area54.org

Featured speakers:

- Arnold R and Peggy R., of Baltimore MD
- Class A trustee, Sr. Judith Ann Karam, CSA, FACHE
- Class B trustee, Mark E., East-Central Region
- and our newly elected Panel 71 Area Delegate

speaking on

“Gratitude through Service”



UPCOMING DATES FOR AREA 54 AND BEYOND

NOTE THE DATE

September 20 - Virtual Area Assembly

October 18 - Virtual and In Person
Area Election Assembly, 2:00 -5:00PM
New Location: Southgate Fellowship Room
Located Between 20900 Libby Rd (Star
Beauty) and Payless off Libby Road
Maple Heights, OH 44137

November 15 - Virtual

[Virtual Gratitude Sunday](#) - 2:00 PM

Gv = Grapevine sale days Lit = Literature sale days

OUTSIDE OUR AREA

November 7th, 2020 - Columbus, OH
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting
Possibly Virtual

All Regional Forums for 2021 have
been **CANCELLED** in person
But Will be Presented Virtual

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

62nd ICYPAA, New Orleans, Louisiana

August
26th through 29th,
2021 at the [Hyatt
Regency New
Orleans](#)

Pre-Registration:
30.00



Visit <https://www.icypaa.org/> to pre-register

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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