

THIS DAY

www.nnjaa.org

News & Notes from N N J General Service Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup

A message from your Area Chair



Greetings from your Area Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and Area 44. As always there's a lot going on in our Area. We recently held our first GSR Area Assembly of 2012 and wouldn't you know we also received the first winter snowfall. Although travel was messy, many brave hearts made the trip to Freehold. We may not have been the largest Assembly group, but the participation was outstanding.

Each January, the Area budget is presented to the Assembly for a vote (it's already been to the Area Committee, the Districts and the Groups). On this snowy morning our budget discussion was meaningful, detailed and powerful. It's a discussion that we've been welcoming for years. Maybe it's because in these times everyone is more sensitive to finances...I'm not sure. But in our Fellowship, money and spirituality mix in the basket, which means our debate was both

practical and spiritual; no matter how passionate it became. For about two hours it had everything you could ask for – motions, seconds, votes, minority opinion, reconsideration, motions failing to carry, calling the question... and finally an amended, accepted motion: to accept the budget as presented with a six-month review at the June Assembly...and then we ate lunch.

The passion and concern expressed at this Assembly is a testament to how deeply our members care about Area 44. The sense of the Assembly was clear – our trusted servants need to be extra-vigilant, prudent stewards of the Area's finances; while continuing to provide the services that our membership says it needs and wants. The Area expressed a strong desire to see a balanced Area budget, one that considers revenue in relation to expenses.

The good news is that we are all on the same page – GSRs, DCMs, Committee Chairs, Officers and interested AAs alike. We've all recognized that a 'business as usual; approach cannot sustain. Even prior to the Assembly we had asked the Finance Committee

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A message from your Area Delegate



"What's a Delegate?"

"What's a Delegate?" – I had the fortune of being asked that question this weekend at NERAASA (the Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly) up in Albany, NY. The brand new GSR, attending a function with around 900 attendees, was probably wondered what I was doing just standing there staring at him. It wasn't that his question caught me off-guard, nor was it for that long – maybe a couple of seconds, but in that time I was considering just what I was going to tell him. Sure, the Delegate represents an Area and is a voting member at the annual General Service Conference (that is the easy answer), but the position has proven to be so much more to me. I explained how the Conference operated and that the 93 Delegates acted as the group conscience of the Fellowship in making those decisions once handled by Bill W. and Dr. Bob. But

the position is more than just that. As a 2nd-year Delegate I now have the pleasure of helping 1st-year Delegates prepare for their first Conference. We "Panel 61s" spend time encouraging the "Panel 62s", assuring them that they are not there by mistake, that they can do the job, and that they are right where they should be in their Higher Power's plan. We also prepare them for common pitfalls, overwhelming emotions, over- and under-preparation and assuring them that we will be there alongside them for this exciting journey. It is truly wonderful to watch someone follow up behind you in the service path, eyes as big as saucers, and be able to help them as much as we were helped when we were in the same place. Isn't A.A. wonderful!?

Along with my recent NERAASA experience this year, I was also privileged to be asked to attend the Board Weekend in New York about a month ago. I was able to sit in on the Trustees committee meetings (several of them) and to witness the full General Service Board Meeting that prepared the agenda items for this year's Gen-

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A message from your Intergroup Chair



The New Year is here! This is a time when most people make resolutions about a better self, a better life and a better world. We will try to turn our hopes and dreams into actions. It is also a time for reflection. As we begin this year, we are able to take the time to look back and reflect upon what we've done. We are also able to think about and make plans for where we are headed.

At the end of the year, Intergroup also does a review, of sorts. It looks at its finances. Unfortunately, this was not a good year for Intergroup. The 2011 year-end loss was \$12,029.69. When you throw 2010's loss of \$15,690.40 on top of that, this is frightening.

Thus, Intergroup is down \$27,720.09 in the last two years. Given the loss and the fact that donations are down \$27,870.01 since 2010, major concerns exist. If the groups cannot support Intergroup, we will not survive.

When Intergroup hits a difficult spot like this, we thank God for our

prudent reserve. We have been talking about using some of our reserve money to meet our financial obligations. That idea is problematic because our reserve is only one third of what it should be. Further, by tapping our prudent reserve in our current financial state, we risk eliminating it. With this huge set back, we were forced to raise the price of our meeting books from \$6 a dozen to \$7 a dozen. This, however, may not be enough.

Like G.S.O. (General Service Office), if we were fully self-supporting, the meeting books would be free. As you now see, we are not. We are forced to offset gains and losses with our literature prices. In the past, we were even able to lower the price of meeting books because we were doing well but, sadly, that did not last long.

Intergroup's number one responsibility is to answer the telephones which are "the front line on alcoholism." They are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Intergroup's committee, Night-Watch, finds AA groups to answer the phones Monday through Friday, 6pm to 8am, and on Saturdays and Sundays, 24 hours a day. During office hours, we have volunteers who come to the office

to answer the phones. The people who answer the phones are A.A.'s doing 12-step work. The phones, however, cost money-a staggering \$19,335.32 last year! Our second responsibility is keeping track of the meetings. New meetings are always popping up while others disappear. This means that the website and the meeting books always need to be updated. Nothing stays the same and keeping track of this is a never-ending endeavor. Bottom line: When someone calls, we answer. Then we find them a meeting. We need to be 100% sure that meeting still exists. A small mix-up could mean death for the "unhappiest person in the world." This just CANNOT be the case.

Intergroup's other responsibilities include our committees; Archives, Corrections, Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Newsletter, Public Information (PI), Treatment and Website. We share these expenses 50/50 with Area 44. Service is very rewarding for any alcoholic, but money is what makes this possible, "where money and spirituality mix."

G.S.O. states that every A.A. group needs to determine for itself where its contributions go, but they suggest 50

percent of those contributions go to your Central Office or Intergroup. What could be more important than our phones, our meetings and our service committees? The continuation of AA is really a matter of life and death for us alcoholics. We at Intergroup are on the verge of making huge changes, we don't want to, but we may have to. These changes may be very upsetting to some and I hope they are. For these changes are NOT for the better. "Twelfth Step work is the lifeblood of Alcoholics Anonymous...this involves an investment of time and money."

*In Love and Service,
Your Intergroup Chair, Scott K.*

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**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE MAY 11th
NEWSLETTER@NNJAA.ORG**

From Your Delegate

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 eral Service Conference. I also met with the secretary of my committee at GSO and discussed preparations for my committee's work. However, I have to admit that I was overwhelmed! I went there expecting to see some top-notch people do the day-to-day business of Alcoholics Anonymous, to watch them consider the items submitted by members, groups, districts and areas in the U.S. and Canada. What I found instead were individuals of such high caliber and immense character that I wondered how such a plebeian individual as myself ended up in their midst. I remember sitting my room after the 2nd day's meetings thinking that I did not measure up to the task at hand, that someone else should have been there, that somebody made a big mistake inviting me! Luckily a General Service Trustee did have a talk with me saying that he too had the same thoughts and questions that I did at his first Board Weekend. He reminded me that if I truly trusted my Higher Power I was supposed to be there, that there was a reason, that after a few meetings you realize that the Trustees, Directors and Staff Members are just fellow lovers of A.A. – that they have just a little more experience and only make it look Herculean. With my emotions stilled and my mind at ease I was able to see the truth in his words and was able to grow just a little more in my recovery

and spirituality. Isn't A.A. wonderful!!!

At that Board Weekend, the Final Agenda of the 62nd General Service Conference was set. I have now received that agenda and the background information on each item. I met with our Past Delegates and your Alternate Delegate, Linda K.-K., to select the items for this year's Mini-Conference which will be held April 14th at the Church of the Holy Innocents in Neptune. To begin the process Linda K.-K., your Area Chair Jay E., your Treasurer Chuck F., and I will be presenting Pre-Conference Reports throughout Area 44 in the month of March [see listing on page ____]. At each report we will present each item, the background material and the pros and cons of each proposed action. Yes, in this issue of *This Day*, you will find a high-level overview of the information, but the Pre-Conference Reports will present more in-depth information and offer an opportunity to ask important questions. This will help enable you to answer similar questions from other members and will allow you to make a better informed decision in your home group's group conscience meeting. All AA members are encouraged to attend! Pre-Conference Reports are not just for GSRs – AA belongs to all of us, and each AA member is one of the bosses. When Bill W. decided to turn over AA to someone he could trust, he decided to turn it over to the person he loved the most – his fellow

alcoholics. The Mini-Conference and the General Service Conference are the vehicles that we use to assure our own future. Isn't A.A. wonderful!!!

At each A.A. Group's group conscience meeting the agenda items will be discussed and the GSR informed of that group's feelings, concerns and desires on each issue. At the Mini-Conference each item will then be discussed in "roundtables" where the pros and cons a group might not have thought about can be considered. Each of those roundtables will in turn present their findings on each agenda item at the microphone. The Mini-Conference will be recorded and I listen to that recording over-and-over again until I am sure that I have a very good idea of Area 44's conscience is

on each item. Armed with that information I will attend the General Service Conference the last week of April in Rye, New York for my second, and last, Conference as a Delegate. The results of the Conference will be presented at our June Assembly while the work on the 63rd General Service Conference gets underway – and the cycle repeats. However, I will go to this Conference with the knowledge that it will be my last as a Delegate, that next year another AA member will be given the utterly indescribable experience that I am so grateful to have received, and that their sobriety and character will have been enhanced by the challenges of being this particular "Trusted Servant". Isn't AA wonderful!!!

Wayne R., Area 44 Delegate

From the Area Chair

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
 to review the budgeting process for the purpose of recommending a more effective budgeting method. We also asked them to review our expenses to identify where we might tighten our belts without sacrificing our 12th step work. The Committee is hard at work on this and I hope to see their results soon. This is a fact-finding mission and any recommendation will go through our normal procedure... in fact you may very well see this at an Assembly in the near future. Remember, our main purpose in Area 44 is to do vital 12th-step work through our committees and conduct the business that

makes this 12th-step work possible.

In closing, I want to thank all members for your support of our Area with a special shout-out to those who participated in our January Assembly. Our GSR Assemblies are one way we continue to ensure that the groups will run AA and that our inverted triangle will stay firmly in place. Once more I am heartened to see that the process works. Please feel free to contact me anytime at area-chair@nnjaa.org, I'd love to hear from you.

With A.A. Love and Service,
 Jay E., Area 44 Chairperson

Do You Know About Your Joint Unity Committee?

I remember the time I first heard the term "Joint Unity Committee." It was probably about 2001 when I first became an Area Officer. I remember asking what it was and pretty much not understanding the reply since I was relatively new to Area service. However, over the years, I have been a member of that committee and have watched it grow into a team. I won't say there weren't issues in my early years on that committee, and I'm sure there will be more (don't all groups have issues?), but I've watched some very sober and caring people come together for the common good of our program. The committee has become a good example of Unity.

On a high level it is a committee that consists of your Area 44 General Service Officers and the Intergroup Trustees – all elected by you. They meet four times a year to discuss joint program concerns and/or business matters – and on certain occasions, the outcome is a separate joint effort such as a joint day of sharing or a skit at the Area 44 convention.

Many of you will say – but each organization has different purposes. To a point they do. Intergroup is responsible for answering the phones

and printing the meeting books for our membership which are so vital for the newcomer. Area 44 is a part of the General Service Structure and is responsible for connecting the groups with the General Service Conference at GSO each year. But these are only a part of what they do. Each organization is there to insure that our program is there for the newcomer, middle timer, and old timer as well. We both have the same ultimate purpose to insure AA is there for all who want it.

Back in the early days of AA in Northern New Jersey, we did not have a fully designed (by district, etc.) Area 44 General Service structure. Accordingly, Intergroup represented AA in many cases to the treatment centers, jails/prisons, and other interested organizations and professionals. When Area 44 did put the district structure in place as we know it today, they also put the service committees in place to align with the work being done at GSO and the annual conference. What this meant was there were then two sets of each of the service committees. This became very confusing to those dealing with AA both inside and outside our walls. I heard a Treatment representative could show up at a facility one day from Intergroup saying they were AA, and then another from Area 44 the next saying they were AA. Imagine the confusion.

Both Area 44 and Intergroup agreed

this was a concern which led to the forming of the Joint Committee efforts. The way this problem was solved was that both agreed there would be only one committee in Northern New Jersey for each service need. In the beginning the joint service committees were those that facilitated the 12th step work in our area that mirrored our conference. Those would be Corrections, Treatment, Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Archives, and Public Information (PI). It also grew to include two other Northern New Jersey specific service committees that made sense to do together. Those committees are our Newsletter Committee and the Website Committee. Today if you read the newsletter and/or visit our website you will find information for both Area 44 and Intergroup. It all made sense. So today each of those service committees does their work and is funded by you the members and groups in Northern New Jersey by direct funding from both Area 44 and Intergroup.

In those quarterly meetings, the agenda usually contains not only issues relating to those joint committees, but could also include anything that either Intergroup or Area 44 have an interest in or concern about. I can truly say I have seen a Higher Power at work in those meetings over the years.

During my service time, I have been privileged to have the opportunity to see how Intergroup/Central Office

work is done within or outside of the General Service Structure in other Areas and I can truly say we have a great partnership in Northern New Jersey.

And this all works because we are both AA...two different service entities, but entities that live by the 36 spiritual principles given to us by our founders.

With Gratitude, Linda KK., Area 44 Panel 61 Alternate Delegate

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Try it on your
 Smartphone



Your Northern New Jersey A.A. Website

DISTRICT 3

**30th Annual Day of Sharing
 to be held on June 16th
 at the
 Hillcrest Community Center
 Macopin Rd, West Milford
 see www.nnjaa.org
 for details**

A Message from your Area Treasurer



“Self-Supporting?”

Wow, it's been a year since I sat down write my first article for *This Day!* That is hard to believe, until I start to think about all that has happened. We were just getting ready for the 2011 Pre-Conference Reports, and I was overwhelmed by the Excel spreadsheets the area's treasurer report is made on. Getting honest (and humble) by asking people with more experience than me for help, and praying to God to help me be teachable, made all the difference. I have found myself talking a lot lately about being okay with not knowing something and letting others off the hook for not knowing either. Amazing!

At the October Area Assembly, con-

cerns over the \$7,500 transfer from the money market account made in June to cover expenses was raised and heard. As contribution patterns vary every year, we were hopeful the final quarter would see larger contributions and the money could be replaced. That did not happen. Contributions dropped \$7,500 from 2010. At the same time, the area convention had a surplus of \$6,200. All said and done – the area's expenses exceeded revenue by \$2,200 in 2011.

At the January Area Assembly, those concerns turned into directives. The 2012 budget did not pass, and the budget process has been put on notice. The area wants both reviewed and re-presented (in an easy to understand format) at the June Assembly. The Area Finance Committee is well under way on this work, and plans to start presenting options to the area committee in March. A budgeting process to show a balanced budget and trimming

some expenses are a good start, but are not the answer to the problem.

Last Fall, your Finance Committee held our first Seventh Tradition Workshop. The focus is to direct you, your group and district treasurers to our literature on the Seventh Tradition. We all know that in the spirit of the third tradition, the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. But that is just the very beginning. Once we become members of AA, we also become responsible for AA. AA member contributions in the AA basket, individual contributions and supporting Area 44's Literature Committee are the only funding for our groups, districts and area to do twelfth step work, as

well as Intergroup and the General Service Office to make that twelfth step work possible. So many people confuse, or ignore, the difference between “self-supporting” and “no dues or fees.” We have a big, big job moving forward, but we are up to the challenge!

Please invite us to your groups or districts. We will be there to help you direct anyone with questions to the literature that explains these things so well. And before I forget, I want to thank you for continued support and this tremendous opportunity to serve Area 44. What an honor!

*In AA Love and Service,
Chuck F. Area Treasurer*

— Self Supporting —

When it was first suggested about 40 years ago that we donate \$1 when attending an AA meeting, it was because at that time \$1 was the cost of one drink. What does one drink cost today and what is the value of AA's saving your life? I now donate \$3 at all meetings I go to and usually give \$5 at my home group. There is one exception though, if I find out that a meeting I'm attending has been around for a while and still does not support our local service entities with monthly donations, then I donate nothing at that meeting. We must be self-supporting and we must be supporting of those who support us.

We are self-supporting through our own contributions



	Bread	\$0.21	\$2.19
	Pound of Coffee	\$0.91	\$12.19
	Postage Stamp	\$0.06	\$.44
	Gallon of Gas	\$0.50	\$3.59
	Carton of Cigarettes	\$1.99	\$42.00
	AA Meeting Contribution	\$1.00	\$1.00

The suggested AA donation in 1970 was \$1.00

“Our groups, our areas, and AA as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid. ... when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer.” (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 221)

AA Meeting Contributions Comparison: http://www.justloveaudio.com/resources/Assorted/AA_Meeting_Contributions_Comparison.pdf

**RUS SERVICE CORPORATION T/A NNJGS AREA 44
YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON REPORT: 2010 AND 2011
FOR PERIOD ENDED November 30, 2011**

	<u>2010 - Nov</u>	<u>2011 - Nov</u>
Checking Account ^(A)		
Balance as of January 1st	\$25,810	\$18,796
Group and Individual Contributions	75,045	71,826
Total Other Receipts (Intergroup, Literature & Grapevine Sales, etc.)	85,874	94,847
Total Expenses (Standing & Other Committees, Lit. & GV Purchases, etc.)	(167,329)	(166,559) ^(B)
Transfer (To) / From the Money Market Account, Net	0	1,772
Balance Nov 30th	19,400	20,682 ^(C,D)
Prior 12 Months Avg Monthly Total Expenses Times Two. Finance Guidelines state the checking account balance should not exceed this amount.	30,012	31,517
Account Balance Over / (Under) Guideline	(\$10,612)	(\$10,835)
Money Market Account ^(A)		
Balance as of January 1st	\$42,950	\$42,993
Interest Received	39	36
Transfer (To) / From the Checking Account, Net	0	(1,772)
Balance Nov 30th	\$42,989	\$41,257 ^(C)
Prudent Reserve (50% of the prior 12 months Operating Expenses)	\$45,811	\$45,343

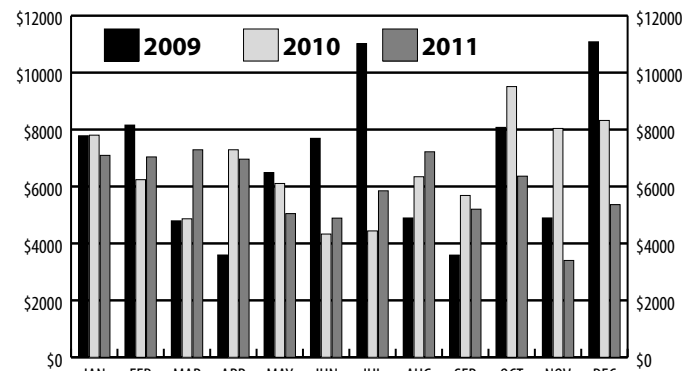
FOOTNOTES

- (A) Details of all income and expense items, as well as a comparison of Operating Expenses to the Annual Expense Budget are available from the Treasurer.
- (B) Included are budgeted expenses of \$83,008 for the eleven months ended November 30, 2011, compared to a full year expense budget of \$113,045. Other includes non-budgeted payments of \$83,550 for Literature & Grapevine inventory purchases, Mid-Winter Luncheon and other items.
- (C) November 30, 2011 Checking and Money Market Balances have been reconciled to the Bank Statements by the Finance Committee.
- (D) November 30, 2011 amount includes Designated Funds of \$2,474 of Jailbox Contributions.

Summary of Official Approvals / Reviews

<u>Individual / Group</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Completed Through</u>
Treasurer	Approved	Nov., 2011
Alternate Treasurer	Approved	Nov., 2011
Finance Committee	Approved	Nov., 2011
Officers	Reviewed	Nov., 2011
Area Committee Members	Approved	Nov., 2011
Area Assembly	Approved	Nov., 2011

Monthly Group Contributions 2009 – October 2011



Area Committee on Corrections



I would like to tell you all a most beautiful and tragic success story about a man that I met while bringing a meeting into the Bergen County Jail. He was a real tough, angry, scared man who was incarcerated for a capitol crime, not knowing his future. He attended our weekly meetings and let us know that he'd once been a part of AA not too long ago.

The meeting attendance was usually anywhere from one to ten men, until God intervened and it was just he and I for about eight weeks. In that time he asked me to be his sponsor and take him through the steps. Just after he completed his fifth step, he was sentenced to 27 years. As his time drew to an end at the County Jail, he now had to, with the help of God and AA, prepare for this new journey.

To make a long story short, this man has made prison his home. He regu-

larly attends meetings and works with other alcoholics. He is a friend to all and doesn't get involved in prison games. He knows that God protects him and uses Him everyday "Behind the Bars," which by the way, is the name of the new meeting that he helped to start. *Behind the Bars* is recognized by General Services and is supported by the Area 44 Correctional Facilities Committee.

Seven years later I am still his sponsor, and more than that, to me he has become like a family member. Due to the nature of his crime, he has lost the support of his family of origin yet still, in this process, he finds all he needs to live a healthy, happy life in prison. I guess you can say that he is blooming where he's been planted.

I am ever so grateful to carry that same message behind the bars, and even more grateful to be able to see the heart of stone become a heart of flesh. Sometimes I don't know who is more free; he working the program in prison or me, doing the same out here.

Jayson M., Hackensack

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY INTERGROUP & AREA 44 2012 CORRECTIONS CONFERENCE SATURDAY, MAY 19th 9am to 12:30pm

GUEST SPEAKER:

John C., Area 49 Corrections Chair
from the Nu-Garden Group Manhattan

**Committee Members &
Corrections' Professionals Share**

Local commitments available for all AA's

Continental Breakfast & Hot Lunch will be served

at the Area Office, 2325 Plainfield Ave, Suite 2J
for more information email us at: cfc@nnjaa.org



The Corrections Committee

Baptistown Speak Your Peace Grp
Belleville Recovery Hall
Belleville Thursday Night
Belvidere Group
Bloomfield Mens Thursday Nite
Cedar Knolls Woman's Group
Clifton 3 Legacies

Clinton Became Willing AA

Cranford Tuesday Night

Denville Alumni Thursday Night 8pm

Denville Alumni Sunday Morning 10:30am

Denville Union Hill Drop In Center

Denville Union Hill Friday Nite - Grapevine

Denville Union Hill Grapevine Meeting

would like to thank the following groups and districts for their Pink Can and Jail Box contributions:

Districts 20 and 39

District 16

Downtown Serenity Group

East Brunswick Give & Take

527 Club

Florham Park Recovery Life Line Group

Haledon On a Different Footing

Holmdel Friday Night

I Am Responsible

Iselin Monday Night Discussion Group

Jersey City Group

Jersey City West Side Story

Lebanon Saturday AM Promises

Linden Library Wednesday

Maplewood Drip Dry Group

Metuchen Saturday Morning Serenity Group

Millburn 1pm Sunday Big Book

Morristown Friday Night Group

Neptune Saturday AA Group

Netcong Big Book

New Brunswick Wednesday Night

N. Brunswick Step Up to Sobriety Thursday Noon

New Providence Dawn Patrol

Old Tappan Day Group

Port Monmouth Clearview

Red Bank Friday Night

Red Bank Friday Night Sober & Fun Promises

Sahara Club Sunrise Group

Sahara Club 12 Noon Group

Sahara Club Sunset Group

Sea Bright The Last Call Group

Three Bridges Miracles Mtg

Upper Montclair Live & Let Live Group

Upper Montclair Thursday Night

Gay Literature Group

Vernon Monday Night

Verona Hill Street Blues Group

Verona Monday 12:15 CD

Verona Tuesday Night Group

Weehawken Freedom to Live

Woodbridge Big Book Group

Wyckoff Positive Thinkers Group

Area Treatment Facilities Committee



My name is Linda C., I am an alcoholic. Those were the first words I uttered when I realized that there was a problem that I wanted to have taken care of. I was always looking for an escape until the judge and everyone was tired of putting up with me.

Back in December of 2008, I was arrested while I was intoxicated and sent to County Jail. I waited in there for 3 months to get the help I so desperately needed. I was approved to get into a year program at Straight and Narrow in Secaucus. Upon my stipulation, I sat with myself and had every day in there to understand myself well enough to know better things that I wanted for myself. By listening more and becoming stronger for myself I completed the program and entered a halfway house. I met great people and started to go to meetings, taking commitments as secretary and then chairperson. I started working while I was in the halfway house

and saved enough money to get my own apartment. When I was asked to take a commitment to Straight and Narrow I was so honored to have been asked and accepted the commitment.

It's a blessing to have a chance to speak to other girls who have the same problem I do. It feels great to see those girls every week and make them smile. It feels good today to make a difference and help people when they need it by sharing my experience, strength and hope. Giving back for a gift that was so graciously given to me in sobriety. Every new day is a blessing and a chance to make things better.

Ladies, anyone interested in joining me on the most rewarding commitment on Tuesday evenings at 7:30pm to carry this message with me. I am also looking for ladies to cover the Friday night commitment at 7:30pm. Please contact me via e-mail: tfc@nnjaa.org.

*Yours in service, Linda C.,
Live and Let Live Group,
Thursdays in Montclair*

Area Literature Committee



Today, as in the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous, the AA message of recovery from alcoholism is carried by one alcoholic talking to another. However, since the publication of the first edition of the Big Book in 1939, literature has played an important role in spreading the AA message and imparting information about the AA Twelve Step Program of recovery.

AA co-founder Bill W., who often called the influence of AA literature "incalculable," wrote in the May 1964 issue of the *Grapevine*, "Suppose, for instance, that during the last twenty-five years AA had never published any standard literature... no books, no pamphlets. We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics generally we would today be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, AA would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity." (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 348) Bill's words ring just as true today.

The Literature Committee serves as a link between the still suffering Alcoholic and the solution of his drinking, we do this by supplying the needed resources. Big Books, pamphlets, and visual media which answer questions they may have about Alcoholics

Anonymous. The literature also outlines a course of action to help them recover from a hopeless state of mind and body.

In 2011 Area 44's Literature Committee sold a over \$60,000 in Conference approved Literature as well as supplied our other standing committees with over \$15,000 in Literature to carry out their vital twelve step work.

Our goal for 2012 is to get literature to the still-suffering alcoholic, by making it available at all area functions, district days of sharing, or any event to which we are invited. We also sell literature at the monthly intergroup meeting on the first Monday of each month, as well as at our monthly literature committee meetings at the area office on the third Monday of each month.

All of this twelve step work takes a considerable amount of time and people. The Literature Committee is very Blessed to have a great group of dedicated AA's to make this all possible. We are always looking for other AA's to join our Committee, so if you're looking for a rewarding service position in AA give Literature a whirl. It's a great way of giving back as well as expanding your AA experience.

The literature Committee is available for Days of sharing and speaking commitments by invitation. Any District or Group that would like the literature committee to attend please email the committee at literature@nnjaa.org

*Yours in service, Bob B.,
Area Literature Chair*

2012 Area 44 Mini-Conference Topics and Discussion Items

TOPIC I: GENERAL SERVICE BOARD

A. Should the General Service Board develop a plan to restructure the current A.A. Grapevine, Inc. corporate and governance structure, while retaining the Grapevine's independent editorial voice, and bring that plan back to next year's Conference for discussion and possible vote?

Background

Due to on-going financial issues, declining subscriptions and a move away from print media, last year's Conference approved an Advisory action to investigate combining and sharing the resources of our two corporate entities, AA World Services (AAWS) and AA Grapevine (AAGV), including a possible change to Concept XI if there is a recommendation to combine the two corporations into a single entity. A Shared Resources committee was established but they were limited in their scope and authority. As a result, the General Service Board took the somewhat unusual step of bypassing the Conference Committees and submitting a motion directly to the Conference. The motion proposes conducting a study of the Grapevine which addresses the concerns of the Fellowship, the Conference and the General Service Board including:

- Declining print subscriptions and the shift to digital
- There has been a significant strain on the Reserve fund with nearly \$500,000 drawn down since 1995
- The Grapevine projections for 2013 and 2014 estimate another \$500,000 in draw downs will be required
- The issues with the Grapevine are diverting us from our Primary purpose

While the GSB is empowered to proceed with the study on its own, the members felt that guidance from the Conference was warranted.

Pros

Combining the AAWS and AAGV corporate entities will have significant benefits. A single entity will promote greater unity between personnel. A single entity would also have impact on another agenda item, having the GSR adopt the duties of the GvR. The major benefit of a single corporation will probably be financial. There will be significant savings from the combining of these entities into a single corporation from an accounting, personnel and legal perspective. The extent of the actual cost savings would be part of the study to be conducted.

Keep in mind...this Agenda item only proposes undertaking a study and development of a plan but not the taking any other steps. Shouldn't we conduct the study and see what it uncovers? In the A.A. Conference structure nothing moves quickly and issues are discussed and examined thoroughly. Slow is good; it helps us avoid making mistakes. Fear of change, however, should not hold us back, especially if change is necessary or difficult to undertake. If fear had held Bill W. and

the early AAs back, then we would not have even had a GSO Conference or a ratio of 2-to-1 alcoholic to non-alcoholic members on the board.

Cons

This proposal looks to examine and potentially change the very structure of our Fellowship. Bill W. was firmly opposed to this change. In Concept XI in the book *The Twelve Concepts for World Services*, he writes that the question is often posed: "Why should AA World Services, Inc. not take over all the Grapevine accounting, finances, promotion and distribution. Would not such a consolidation of financing, employees and routine business be more efficient and economical?" He answers this question with: "This plan too looks reasonable at first glance. Nevertheless the chances are it would work poorly. It has serious structural defects. It would violate the basic good-management principle that whoever has the responsibility for a given task must also have the needed authority, funds, personnel and equipment to carry it out."

One of the rationales provided in Ward Ewing's letter is that the Grapevine is projected to lose almost \$500,000 in the year 2013 and 2014 combined. Projections are just that. In 2011, the Grapevine was projected to lose almost \$94,000. Instead, the Grapevine finished 2011 in the black for the first time in many years due to the changes made by the new Publisher and the AA Grapevine Board. The projected draw downs for 2013 and 2014 are followed in Ward's letter by the phrase "unless policies and operations can be changed." It is not unreasonable to speculate that the Publisher and the Grapevine Board may indeed find ways to bring these numbers down due to the continuous monitoring of the financial status of Grapevine put in place recently.

As far as better unity is concerned, the members of both Corporations should remember that AA is, at its core, a spiritual organization and that we need to work together and focus on our primary purpose of helping the alcoholic who still suffers.

TOPIC II: CORRECTIONS

A. Should the proposed revisions to the pamphlet "A Message to Correctional Professionals" be made?

Background

A GSO staff member who had previously been assigned to the Corrections desk received a letter from a "lifer" inmate in Illinois requesting outside correspondence and some AA literature, because according to the writer, "lifers" weren't allowed to attend AA at this facility. The staffer had also received a request from a local corrections committee asking for AA literature that explains the benefits of AA for lifers, to be used in some informational conversations with local corrections professionals.

There is nothing in AA literature related to corrections referring to lifers. A sentence in the pamphlet *A Message to Correctional Professionals* reads: "The ultimate purpose of an inside AA group is to foster a sobriety that will carry through after inmate members return to society."

A broader purpose other than just preparing alcoholic inmates for sober life after release is contained in a passage on page 6 in the pamphlet *AA in Correc-*

tional Facilities. "One point which usually needs to be explained is why inmates have any need of AA while they are in prison. The answer is that the AA program is far more than staying away from alcohol. AA has been called a way of life, and its success in prison groups shows that this program can help the alcoholic inmate live a sober and contented life, both in prison and after release."

The Trustees Committee on Corrections has suggested the following revisions #1) Revisions to AA literature be made mentioning 'lifers' participating in AA. #2) The committee recommended the use of the term "re-entry" instead of "prerelease" in corrections literature. #3) Considered a request from an AA group to change the "Singleness of Purpose" statement in the last paragraph of A Message to Corrections Professionals: with the wording "Anyone may attend open AA meeting, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings." An AA group suggested the following wording: "While anyone may attend open AA meetings, Non-alcoholics may attend as observers, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings." #4) An Arizona delegate requested a review the accuracy of the statistics in the pamphlet *A Message to Correctional Professionals* P-20 and to review the section "AA in Correctional Facilities" to determine if the section reflects accurate updated number and statistics and if necessary to consider an action plan to conduct an additional survey to obtain and reflect this information. The pamphlet was copyrighted in 1988.

Pros

It is obvious that we need to clarify a little further non-alcoholics understanding of AA's message and mission. I personally have been accompanying senior medical students to AA meeting for 15 years. I give them a short CPC presentation before the meeting and many times I have forgotten to tell them that they should not share at the meeting. They are there as observers only. I do have to admit that only once in my 15 years has a student asked me if he could share. I just told him, no.

Apparently AA took a survey of correctional institutions before publishing the pamphlet *A Message to Correctional Professionals*. The pamphlet is copyrighted 1988. Are the statistics mentioned from 1988? Is it time to take another survey after 24 years?

Cons

The only con that I can think of is: "If it works, don't fix it."

TOPIC III: FINANCE

A. Should we increase the current \$3,000 dollar limit on annual individual contributions and one-time bequests?

Background

When AA was in its infancy, Bill W. and other early members of the Fellowship attempted to obtain a large sum of money from John D. Rockefeller. While he was sympathetic to our cause and provided a small amount of money to help AA get established. He told us that he was afraid that "money would ruin this thing."

The concern has always been that money can buy influence. In recent years, laws have allowed super-pacs to be established, skirting previously established campaign contribution limits. These entities allow a person of wealth to influence a candidate and their campaign with the promise of favors down the line.

Of course, we need to be prudent. In 2007, the annual and bequest limits, which are currently the same amount, was raised from \$2,000 to \$3,000. The \$2,000 limit had been in effect for 8 years. Prior to

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Delegate Pre-Conference Report Schedule – 2012

- SECTION 1: Tuesday, March 13th @ 7:30pm. Abundant Life Reformed Church 475 Lafayette Avenue, Wyckoff. Hosted by Districts 4/6
- SECTION 2: was Friday, March 9th @ 7:00pm. Trinity Episcopal Church 141 Broadway (at 5th Street) Bayonne. Hosted by District 32
- SECTION 3: Tuesday, March 20th @ 7:00pm. United Methodist Church 3 Route 183 (Ledgewood Avenue) Netcong. Hosted by District 9
- SECTION 4: was Saturday, March 10th @ 10:00am. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 300 Union Avenue (at N. Richards Ave.) Somerville. Hosted by District 35
- SECTION 5: Saturday, March 24th @ 11:00am. Cook College Extension Center. College Farm Road, New Brunswick. Hosted by District 22
- SECTION 6: Wednesday, March 21th @ 6:30pm. St. George's By The River 11 Lincoln Avenue, Rumson. Hosted by District 26
- DISTRICT 30 & 42 (Spanish-speaking) Pending (Last updated: Feb. 15, 2011)

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this limit increase, the contribution and bequest limit was raised from \$1,000 to \$2,000 in 1999. Starting in 1967, limit increases took place approximately every 7 to 8 years to raise the limit from \$100 to \$1,000. Is now the right time to raise the limit? It is no secret that contributions are down, literature sales are off and that AA could use additional funds. The proposal brought forth by one Home Group in southern California (Area 5) is to raise the annual individual contribution to \$15,000 and the one-time bequest limit to \$75,000. The stated goal for these increases is to foster "the total and lasting success of A.A. and GSO" by ensuring that GSO is "as fully funded as necessary for all its current and...future obligations."

Will these increases accomplish these goals? Are these the correct limit increases or are they somewhat excessive? Should the one-time bequest amount be different and significantly larger than the yearly individual contribution amount?

Pros

Increasing these limits could provide additional funds for AA, supporting our 7th Tradition goal of being self-supporting through our own contributions. Raising the limits to these levels will set these limits at an appropriate level for the foreseeable future. There is little or no concern that the contributions at these levels will buy any influence from the General Service Board members, Trustees or staff members at GSO. This is especially true of bequests when the individual is deceased which is one argument for having a higher limit for bequests over individual contributions. Another argument for having a higher bequest limit is that there are potentially more bequests at the maximum amount than yearly individual contributions.

Cons

Raising the limits will have no effect on the money being contributed to GSO as there are only a very small number of individual contributions and bequests made at the maximum level. Also, the limit increases seem somewhat excessive, going from \$3,000 to \$15,000. In the past, the maximum increase percentage has been 100%; this increase would be 500% for individual contributions and a whopping of 2,500% for bequests. These limits seem to violate the spiritual nature of making contributions. The current limit has been in place for only 5 years and, while one of the recent increases did take place in 5 years, there has typically been 7 to 8 years between increases.

B. Should we continue the financial support of La Viña per the 2001 General Service Conference Advisory Action that "La Viña continue to be published by the AA Grapevine and supported by the General Services Board as a service to the Fellowship?"

Background

A 1995 Conference Advisory Action stated in part: "Based on an expressed need, a Spanish edition of the Grapevine be produced, contingent on the following: that a Grapevine Corporate Board proceed to gather information and develop a business plan for a bimonthly Spanish edition of the Grapevine, to the trustees' Finance Committee, and that funding for up to five (5) years be obtained from the General Service Board Reserve Fund, with start-up costs estimated at \$84,000 for the first year. ...and that if, after five (5) years, the Spanish edition of the magazine is determined to be no longer feasible, publication be discontinued."

In a Grapevine Letter in March 1999, to the conference from the Grapevine Treasurer stated "When

the five-year test period expires next year, we recommend that the Conference and the General Service Board continue to support the publication of La Viña on the same basis as it has since 1995." The Conference Committee on the Grapevine agreed stating, "Being mindful of the demonstrated effectiveness of La Viña and the need for it expressed by the Hispanic community, and considering its spiritual benefits and benefits as a Twelfth Step tool, the committee wishes to express strong support for its continued publication."

A 2001 Conference Advisory Action stated, "La Viña continue to be published by the AA Grapevine and supported by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship." And, "La Viña continue to be published utilizing AA Grapevine resources in order to achieve efficiencies in production and distribution."

A 2010 Advisory Actions recommended that:

"La Viña achieve spiritual parity with the AA Grapevine, beginning in the following manner:

- Publishing La Viña as a bimonthly, perfect-bound, black-and-white, 68 page issue at an additional estimated cost of \$21,400 per year for one year beginning in 2011, followed by a year of review and assessment in 2012. The results of this review and assessment will be brought to the 2013 Conference Committee on the AA Grapevine."

A letter from the AA Grapevine Inc. Report to the General Service Board on January 30, 2012 stated, "The Grapevine Board recognizes that, based on General Service Conference actions, La Viña is a service funded by the General Service Board, and that parity is sought between La Viña and Grapevine. The Grapevine Board also recognizes that La Viña's budget reflects a deficit equal to about 50% of the costs to prepare and produce La Viña. As the Grapevine Board is charged with oversight of the management and finances of La Viña, we ask the General Service Board to reassess the cost incurred in continuing to provide this service."

Pros

Yes, it is time that the Grapevine consider stopping the publishing of La Viña. In this hard economy it is the duty of the General Service Conference to look into ways to save money. The print magazine business in general is hurting and the Grapevine and La Viña are no exceptions. La Viña has been published since 1997 and has shown an annual average loss of \$82,958 a year over the 17 years for a total loss of \$1,410,279.

It has been pointed out that subscribers to *Plentitudes*, (Mexico's equivalent of the Grapevine), make up 25% of the Mexican alcoholic population. Thirty percent of Canada's French-speaking alcoholics subscribe to *La Vigne*. The percentage of English-speaking alcoholics who subscribe to *The AA Grapevine* is below 5%.

Why not return to the policy of publishing one or two stories in Spanish in each monthly Grapevine as was done prior to 1995?

Cons

This is where money and spirituality mix. Is the Grapevine a 12-step tool? Why does it have to make a profit? What part of spiritual commitment does the 2012 General Service Board not understand?

How does your group feel? Do we commit to the publication of La Viña or go back to the old way of including token Spanish articles in *The AA Grapevine*?

TOPIC IV: GRAPEVINE

A. Is the proposed A.A. Grapevine Audio Strategy a reasonable way to include new technologies and consumer delivery preferences but still allow us to share our experience, strength and hope?

Background

Let's be clear. The print version of the Grapevine is not obsolete and there is no talk of discontinuing printed Grapevines. We need to be mindful, however, of the trend from paper to digital media, especially among younger, tech-savvy AA members. The Internet, smart phones, tablets, lap tops and eReaders are everywhere.

The AA Grapevine (AAGV) has been very active in making its print products available in digital form through online subscriptions, a digital archive and its first eBook offering. An advisory action from the 2011 GSO Conference recommended that the AAGV utilize digital channels and distribution technologies for the sale of magazines, books and products while protecting our Traditions and ensuring that contracts can be discontinued at any time.

While print products have been addressed, the audio products have not...until now. This Conference agenda item provides an in-depth proposal for an audio strategy for the Grapevine which involves:

- Allowing members to record their stories using a voice messaging system
- Transcribing and editing the stories captured as WAV files for printed articles or for audio book publication

Pros

Many AAs find it difficult to write their stories or do not write well. However, most have experience sharing their stories at meetings. Providing the ability to record one's story using low cost recording options would allow more members to participate and tell their stories in their own words.

The recordings could then be downloaded and easily edited by the Grapevine staff to the Grapevine's editorial standards. The recordings would either be included in the print Grapevine or compiled into audio books. The audio book business is growing steadily and downloads to a computer or MP3 player or smartphone would make these stories available in the newer digital media.

The setup and production costs for this approach are inexpensive and could be implemented at a reasonable cost.

Cons

An important question to ask is whether this is really necessary. Will there be enough demand to make the effort and cost of implementing this strategy worthwhile? According to the 2011 Final Conference report, only 8% (11,309 out 135,585 pieces) of Grapevine literature is audio based. There are still a number of decisions to be made so can we be certain that our Traditions will be protected and that the contracts put in place can be discontinued at any time should there be issues. The 2011 Conference advisory action requested a financial report be submitted but there was no detailed financial summary of all the projected costs to the Fellowship of implementing the proposed strategy.

B. Should the service responsibilities and duties of the "General Service Representative." (GSR) be expanded to add the duties and responsibilities of the "Grapevine Representative" (GvR)?

Background

In the AA group, there have traditionally been several individuals who have linked the Group to AA as a whole including the GSR (General Service Representative), the GvR (Grapevine Representative) and Intergroup representatives. In the past, groups may have not always filled these positions but there was awareness that they existed and should be filled. Today, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find groups with GSRs and many do not understand the

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role of the GSR or that one is necessary to connect the group to AA as a whole. Even fewer groups have a GvRs or Intergroup representatives. This is reflected in the numbers of these representatives registered with GSO: 10,635 GSRs are registered but only 964 GvRs and La Viña representatives.

When the role of the GSR was established in 1954, the responsibilities of the GSR were defined as: "the primary duty of the [G.S.R.] is to provide an harmonious connection between his or her group and the General Service Headquarters which serves AA nationally and internationally." While this role has not changed since that time, the way that GSRs discharge this duty has evolved over time.

The role of the Grapevine and La Viña representative is defined in the Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meeting in Print pamphlet as: "Their basic job is to make the magazines available to the group, to encourage AAs to read them, contribute to them, subscribe to them and use them in twelfth step work."

Do we need both roles or can we combine them into a single role?

Pros

In the background materials, Don M., our U.S. Trustee-at-Large, points out that in other countries like Canada and Mexico, where magazines similar to the Grapevine (La Vigne and Plentitudes) are published, the mechanism of distribution is largely group-based resulting in much higher adoption rates (25 and 30% as opposed to our 5% rate). Getting the word out through GvRs and RLVs (La Viña) has not provide optimal results. There are 10 times the number of GSRs who could assist with this process. As the job description of the GSR points out, their job is to connect the group with our General Service Headquarters which could easily cover both GSO and Grapevine.

This agenda item does not necessarily mean that the GvR position needs to be abolished. The responsibilities of the GvR or RLV could be assumed by the GSR if one is not available.

Cons

On the cover of the GSR pamphlet, P-19, it states that this position "May be the most important job in AA." The list of duties found on page S27 of the Service manual is extensive with 10 fairly significant activities to perform. Will the GSR also be able to take on the additional responsibilities of the GvR/RLV? Does it make more sense to have two positions where each representative can focus on their respective duties? It is better to do one thing right than two things badly.

Combining these positions would have a number of disadvantages. Initially, it would cause confusion which would hurt AA and the newcomer. It also eliminates a service position, one which those few who do serve in the role are enthusiastic, bordering on passionate, and enthusiasm is attractive. There is a great deal of material about these jobs and there would be extensive costs to rewrite them.

TOPIC V: LITERATURE

A. Should the selected text from the dust jacket of the Third Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous be added to the dust jacket of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book?

Background

The delegate from Kentucky wrote wanting "To add 'The AA Message' on the inside front dust jacket of the Fourth Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous, as it appeared on the dust cover of the Third Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous. The desired wording to be added is, "But the basic text (pages 1 through 164) remains unchanged. This is the AA message, just as it was introduced in the 1939 edition of Alcoholics Anonymous.

the book that gave the young fellowship its name."

In another letter to the conference in January 2002 said, "On the dust cover, a statement is made that – 'The basic text, pages 1-164, which has been the foundation of recovery –' is again the opinion of some people, and I do not wish to dispute this belief, but for thousands of good AA members, myself included, *The Doctor's Opinion* and then pages 1-164 are the foundation of recovery."

In July 2002 a second request was received to change the October 2001 dust jacket copy "False assertion #1: That pages 1-164 contain the message of recovery. Truth: The recovery message is actually found in the 'title page – 164.' The forewords and *The Doctor's Opinion* are vital pieces of the recovery message and should not be excluded."

The trustees Literature Committee recommended to the General Service Board that the sentence

'The basic text, pages 1-164, which had been the foundation of recovery for so many alcoholics remained, and still remains, unchanged.'

Be replaced by the sentence

'In 1995, the General Service Conference approved the recommendation: "The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, *The Doctor's Opinion*, *Doctor Bob's Nightmare* and the Appendices remain as is." in the second paragraph of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book dust jacket at the next printing of the dust jacket.'

What does your group think? The paragraph above is what is stated on the current dust jacket since 2002. The delegate from Kentucky seems to want to get "basic text" and "unchanged" back onto the dust jacket.

B. Should we add the A.A. Preamble to the front inside pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous?

Background

"Been there, done that," you say. Deja vue. The past delegates were divided on whether to include this in our topic discussions. Our delegate said I know how the area feels on this topic, they voted by a 2/3 majority to put the Preamble in the Big Book. Another delegate said you know how they felt then, what about now? And a third delegate suggested the Fellowship would be angry if they knew it was on the final agenda and was not chosen as a topic for discussion.

I believe it was a close vote at last years conference, was about a 50/50 split, 65 for and 66 against, but far short of the 2/3 necessary for any action. A vote this close warrants another discussion and consideration said the delegate from Maryland.

Pros

There would be not additional costs to add the Preamble to the Big Book. This book is the first literature a newcomer reads. Placing the Preamble on a page by itself in the front of the book says who we are, and what we are, right at the beginning. Since the Big Book contains the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions; adding the AA Preamble would provide everything needed in one place to conduct a meeting. Although the Preamble "is an integral part of the format of many AA meeting," it obviously is not "printed on all Conference-approved literature" (i.e. the Big Book). Perhaps it is time we rectified that.

Cons

I asked our delegate last year what was the reasoning behind not including the preamble in the Big Book? He said it was the old adage "Don't change anything in the Big Book." It has worked for 76 years without a preamble why change it now.

A second objection was that the Big Book is our basic text. It contains the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. The AA Preamble describes the "Fellowship" of Alcoholics Anonymous and doesn't belong in the Big Book.

What does your group think?

TOPIC VI: PUBLIC INFORMATION

A. Should AA establish a presence on Facebook for the purpose of providing information about AA to the public (the presence would serve as an informational resource only, with no interpersonal communication capabilities)?

Background

Facebook is the most popular of the social media sites. The numbers are staggering with more than 800 million active users and half of them logging on daily. In addition, the average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups or events. This represents a tremendous opportunity for A.A. to reach a large audience of still suffering alcoholics.

The key concern is whether this can be done in an anonymity protected way. There has been a great deal of debate and concern over maintaining anonymity and anonymity breaks on Facebook and other social websites as there are a number of ways that these breaks can occur.

Facebook has several types of accounts. Individual accounts are the type of account that you would establish. Organizations like AA can create pages which Facebook users can "Like" or post messages to. Both Liking a page or posting a message can be seen by others and could be potentially construed as breaking one's anonymity if AA is mentioned.

The trustee's Comprehensive Media plan subcommittee, which evaluates and examines the use of technology and the media to carry the A.A. message, is recommending that "AA establish a presence on Facebook for the purpose of providing information about AA to the public as soon as possible; this presence would serve as an informational resource only, with no interpersonal communication capabilities." As this recommendation relates to the public, the subcommittee requested that the trustee's PI (Public Information) Committee forward this recommendation to the Conference PI committee to send to the Conference for consideration.

In a letter to the PI Conference committee, the GSO staff secretary, advises that Facebook has been contacted but has not replied yet. This prevents the Committee, at this time, from providing projected costs or evaluating any Tradition issues.

Pros

Creating a Facebook page is an excellent idea, adding another online tool in addition to our website. Our page would help us with Tradition 5 by providing information to the public in a similar manner to our PSAs (Public Service Announcements). This step allows us to take advantage of the power of the available social media technology while not violating our Traditions, especially Tradition 11 which deals with anonymity when using the media.

Of course, we would have to be very careful. The goal is to create a page in a way that would avoid any anonymity breaks and would be cost effective. Pages created on Facebook have a number of Administrative options that would need to be disabled like the ability to post messages and photos. Pages can be developed in an Admin only mode, not available to the public, where the Traditions issues can be addressed.

While we have not heard back from Facebook yet, we should be able to work with them to establish a page with no interpersonal communications. The

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costs for this page should not be that great either as Facebook works based on volume. Even if there is some cost involved, the cost would probably be outweighed by the opportunity to reach out to members and potential AAs as our website does. Our Facebook page could also have a link to the aa.org website.

Cons

Do we really need a Facebook page? AA maintains an anonymity-protected mechanism for delivering our message, the aa.org website. There is a wealth of information to be found there online. Most people know how to click a link in a browser but not everyone is familiar with Facebook.

Also, regardless of the steps taken to ensure that there are no interpersonal communications, can we really be assured that there will not be any anonymity breaks as a result of this page? Someone could Like the page, which would show on their wall, and could potentially lead to questions from friends, in the form of posts, like "Why are you Liking the AA page?" Or even worse, an enthusiastic individual might post on your wall: "Hey, James, you should check out the new AA page that GSO just put up. Tell everyone about it at your meetings." Not everyone is familiar with how to protect other people's anonymity on social media websites like Facebook. Would the potential problems outweigh the benefits?

Currently, the costs for creating and maintaining a page are unknown. Regardless of the cost of the page, would we have enough bandwidth to properly maintain the page and keep the information from getting stale?

B. Should we change Tradition Eleven to add language referring to current media?

Background

I heard myself concluding, when sharing my opinion on anonymity with another enthusiastic alcoholic, "Good luck with that, AA is NEVER going to change the Traditions."

Wow! I can't believe we are actually being asked to consider changing an AA tradition. What a monumental task. Does the fellowship realize that in order to change an AA tradition we have to have a 75% vote of approval from all the AA groups AROUND THE WORLD?

The trustees' Committee on Public Information received two requests related to adding language referring to current media to Tradition Eleven.

We all know the Eleventh Tradition mention anonymity "at the level of press, radio, and films." But about T.V., Facebook, or Youtube? The requests continues, "Back in the 1940s little was known about Television while our Traditions were being worked out. However, when Alanon's Traditions were being developed during the 1950s Television was gaining in popularity and general usage. As a result they have included the initials "T.V." within the body of their Eleventh Tradition."

"On page 286 in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* published in 1957, Bill includes the initials "T.V." when quoting Tradition Eleven. Had our traditions been written in 1957 we can be sure that the word "Television" would have been included. And what about today? Would the "Cyberspace" or "Internet" be included? And what new communication invention will tomorrow bring?"

In our pamphlet AA Tradition, *How It Developed* Bill W. is quoted with the following:

"Nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. It grew. Trial-and-error has produced a rich experience, first as policy and then as tradition. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much, the let-

ter might crush that spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. May we never stifle progress like that!"

The requests continues with "Our strength is in our history, but change is what keeps us strong and growing."

"We, therefore suggest, making a motion to the 2011 General Service Conference that they, in turn, and in accordance with Appendix B entitled "A Resolution To The Original Conference Charter of 1955" and Appendix C entitled "A Resolution of the Current Conference Charter" found in our Service Manual, request that our Trustees survey all known AA groups from around the world to consider changing Tradition Eleven from the current wording... to read:

"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity in the public media."

Further: That the words "broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed" be replaced by the words "transmitted in the public media" in Tradition Eleven of our "long form."

The request concludes, "We recognize that it will take 75% of all registered groups to agree to this but it's worth a try and besides this is Alcoholics Anonymous where miracles do happen, don't they?"

Pros and Cons

"Nothing matters more to AA's future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination." As Bill Sees It, page 255 – Grapevine 1960

A communication from the GSO Archivist cites 3 references to changing our traditions:

At the 1964 Conference, one delegate asked the following in the "Ask-It Basket," "Is it healthy to suggest that the Traditions are elastic? Could this suggestion lead to 'elastic' violations? Indications are that rapidly changing conditions will lead to a need some time in the future for updating the Traditions. Can the study of this matter be started now, while we still have Bill, Bernard Smith and Dr. Jack available?" The response was: "There is considerable difference of opinion.

One delegate noted, in fact, that there are members in his Area who consider the Traditions old, perhaps obsolete. Another Delegate pointed out that AA can become stereotyped if we do not allow freedom of interpretation. We should not be too concerned with creed or dogma. As far as updating of the Traditions is concerned, this is a matter of continuing interest to the Board of Trustees. Their objective, however, is to be custodian of the Traditions, rather than to change them. One Delegate noted that they would no longer be the Traditions if they were updated."

Yet another "Ask-It Basket" session at the 1970 Conference, the question raised was, "Why don't we arrange the Tradition to read "...at the level of press, radio, TV and films?" The response was:

"Much of our literature, as well as AA Comes of Age does read this way. This Conference could initiate such action if it wishes to do so. It was the consensus that the 'film' covered TV, and further, that first the Conference and Board must approve, and then all groups must be polled, and 75% agree in writing to change any wording in the Traditions."

Finally in 1986, the Conference heard a Floor motion directed to the Board to initiate a process on amending the Tradition Eleven. There is refer-

ence to this in the 1986 Final Report, which reads:

"Another floor motion was that the Conference instruct the General Service Board to initiate the process of changing Tradition Eleven to include the words 'TV and other means of public communication' by contacting the general service board of other countries for their concurrence. It was noted that this would be a lengthy process and would probably take more than a year to complete. Other methods were also suggested. A sense of the meeting indicated that there was no need to pursue this matter at present."

Which opinion does your group agree with? Your group should know that as January 1, 2011 there are an estimated 107,976 AA groups with 2,057,672 members world-wide to be polled before any change can be made.

TOPIC VII: TREATMENT / SPECIAL NEEDS - ACCESSIBILITIES

A. Should we develop a pamphlet for the alcoholic with mental illness?

Background

A 1986 Conference Committee on Report and Charter considered a suggestion of the trustees' Conference Committee to decide when and how to list double-trouble groups in AA directories. (Double-Trouble: alcoholic and mental illness such as schizophrenia). The suggestion was forwarded to the 1986 General Service Conference. The 1986 Conference issued an Advisory Action that "Double-Trouble groups not be listed in the AA directories."

A 1987 Advisory Action reads "The 1986 Conference Action regarding the directories not listing Double-Trouble groups be reaffirmed, i.e., Double-Trouble groups not be listed in the AA Directories; and the existing Double-Trouble groups in the AA Directories be deleted. (Double-Trouble groups are defined as groups with outside affiliation)."

In July 2007 the trustees' Committee on Literature discussed and took no action on the request to create a pamphlet specifically for the alcoholic who suffers from grave emotional and mental disorders such as serious depressive disorder, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. The committee suggested that the Publications Department take into consideration the thoughtful concerns expressed in the correspondence when revising the pamphlet *The AA Member—Medications & Other Drugs*.

On January 29, 2012 the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/ Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities discussed and agreed to forward to the 2012 Conference Committee a suggestion to create a pamphlet for the alcoholic who suffers from mental illness.

The thought in our area was that a pamphlet such as is suggested would not only help an alcoholic who suffers from mental illness to identify, but would also assist the Fellowship in understanding the unique difficulties of the mentally ill alcoholic. And it was thought that this may be useful tool for medical professionals who have contact with mentally ill patients who also have a problem with drinking.

Pros

The first AA literature that a newcomer reads is a pamphlet. The mentally ill newcomer would be assured that they too belong and can recover from alcoholism. Doctors would have an excellent tool to pass on to their mentally ill patients who have a problem with drinking. It would help the Fellowship to understand the unique difficulties of the mentally ill. Finally, an informed and sensitive sponsor and home group can go a long way, in a spirit of love and tolerance, to help the mentally ill alcoholic.

continued on page 12



Greeting from the This Day Committee. With the publishing of the results of our "Co-Founders Survey" it is time for us to announce our upcoming theme for the Summer Issue.

For many years Area 44's June Assembly's theme was "Service." So we, on the committee decided to rerun a theme that we proposed a couple of years ago, "Payday."

Payday — to service workers — is that day when someone comes up to you and says "I remember you. I heard you speak at the county jail or the local rehab," or wherever. It is that day when you realize that all of the thankless service commitments that you took, weren't in vain. Someone heard you and you planted a seed. It is that moment when you realize all of your efforts paid off.

Tell us your payday story? Where did you meet the person? What commitment were you doing when he/she heard you? What did you say that stuck with them? How long were they sober now that they met you again? How is their new life treating them now that they are sober? Did what you had to say "spoil their drinking?"

I love to tell my "payday" stories everywhere I go. And I collect other service workers stories to retell when I can at AA meetings. There is no better feeling than when someone thanks you for service work that you have done in the past that has changed a life. I know the "payday" stories are out there, please share them with the Fellowship in Northern New Jersey. It is the way to get other AAs involved in service.

I will end with an old Chinese Proverb that someone told me. "Tell me, (about the service that you do), and I will forget. Show me (the service that you do) and I'll remember. Get me involved (with service) and I will understand.

John E., This Day Newsletter Chair

that their dear ones could surely get well in AA if only they were willing. I think that's why we chose that word. I remember thinking about it a lot.

"Maybe some of these same reasons would apply to present conditions. Anyhow, I do know this: The text of the AA book is so frozen in the minds of tens of thousands of AA's that even the slightest change creates an uproar."

In 1967, Bill made the following reply to a Florida member asking the same question: "Respecting my use of the word 'rarely,' I think it was chosen because it did not express an absolute state of affairs, such as 'never' does.

continued on page 12

From your Area Mid Winter Luncheon Chair

The Annual GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon was a wonderful event for me. As a committee member I was so proud to see all of our hard work come together so well. We were complimented by many on how timely and organized everything was and people loved the personal touch of being greeted and ushered to their seats. There was an amazing amount of GSRs in attendance, and each one stood, made a circle around the room, and introduced themselves and their home group.

The speakers, Eva S., GSO Staff Member, 2012 General Service Conference Coordinator, and Ami B., Executive Editor/Publisher, A.A. Grapevine, Inc. were also amazing. They brought a powerful message and reminded us of how important service work is and how much it enhances our sobriety and helps to keep our message of hope alive in order to reach all in need.

It was an honor for me to serve on the GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee.

Nancy S., Program Chair, GSR, Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee, District 15/21

7:30pm", she asked? Not expecting anything that would take me outside of my comfort zone, I quickly replied "nothing". I was then asked to come down to the Area office in South Plainfield. I recognized an opportunity to do service, but even before that, I also recognized that if I showed up, I could always ease my way back to my comfort zone at the first sign of "real work". Well fortunately for me, that did not happen. I started to attend the monthly meetings and volunteered to be a Greeter at the luncheon. As I attended the monthly meetings, and was encouraged to actively participate in the planning, I was able to learn and watch a level of A.A. service work that had I only heard about.

Subsequently, it was the monthly meetings and my fellow committee members who set the stage for the highly successful event that unfolded at the Mid-Winter Luncheon at Forsgate Country Club on February 12. Early that Sunday, I car pooled with the Alt. Chairperson and the Alt. Treasurer, two ladies who strongly believe in and participates in service work on a variety of levels. We arrived on that cold blustery morning at the Country Club and was greeted by other committee members all looking, excited and refreshed, not to mention dressed quite impressively. As soon as we prayed in, we immediately moved on to an assigned task. As predicated by our astute Chairperson people started to arrive quiet early. The brisk weather did not break anyone's stride or produce any ill feelings. As a greeter I was extending warm welcomes and helping to usher people to their table, but I was also being greeted by old and new friends from all over Northern New Jersey.

Just imagine numerous interactions and greetings went on all around me and all of this happened even before the luncheon started. In closing I can easily say that the next time someone in the Fellowship inquires into my availability, I will reach out and volunteer with no reservations.

Happy in Service, Marcheta B., Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee, District 19

In late October the Chairperson of the Annual GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon asked me one of those questions that I usually would have a quick response to - "what are you doing on Tuesday night around



My name is Merle and I am an alcoholic. What is Nightwatch? This is my experience, strength and hope. I first got involved with my group answering phones. I did for one shift, which was 6pm to 8am. That was when there were no computers, people used pay phones, and the meeting book was your only resource. That is what I remember of it. It was to help the next sick and suffering alcoholic who needed a meeting or needed a contact. I remember putting my name on a sheet going around the room for group members to put their

name on the list for Nightwatch, so you can be that contact when you're called to help talk to someone who has called the Intergroup number.

My next experience was being the Nightwatch Leader of the group. The group takes the commitment for one week. That is when I got 12 to 13 people in the group who are interested in answering the phones for a shift at night or weekend shift. That is when I was responsible to hand out books to the volunteers for when your slot comes up. That is the greatest way to get to know your group members in a neat way also. The group takes the commitment for one week. I was able to explain how rewarding it was by answering the phone. It seems anyone who has

volunteered to answer the phone has always told me they would love to do it again. I was just the messenger.

Now I have become a Nightwatch coordinator for Essex and Hudson Counties and that has been an interesting time. I am always looking for groups to take on the commitment for a week. I have had such an awarding experience because I have been able to let the groups know that they are not doing this by themselves because there is a committee behind them also.

This has been great for my sobriety because it is keeping in service. I am grateful for the opportunity to be of service to you.

Merle E., Essex/Hudson County Nightwatch Coordinator

Area History and Archives Committee



Rarely or Never?

I have heard so many people in A.A. say that Bill W. wanted to change the word "Rarely..." to the word "Never..." in the opening of "How It Works", that I just wanted to bring this rumor to the light of truth. In the book *Pass It On*, (the AA history book which came out 13 years after Bill died), it says on page 200:

"According to an apocryphal story (which means "a story of doubtful authenticity"), Bill was asked in later years whether there was any change he wished he could make in the Big Book, and he replied that he would change 'rarely' to 'never'. Bill himself said he never considered that change."

"Rarely - or Never?" How co-founder Bill W. answered a frequently asked question. *The AA Grapevine*, December 1978

"From time to time over the years, some AA members will question the wording of the first sentence of Chapter 5 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." Why, the enthusiastic member asks, doesn't the Big Book say, "Never have we seen a person fail...?"

This question was answered - several times - by an AA well qualified to speak on the subject, since he wrote the book, with the assistance of other early members."

Bill W., AA's co-founder, answered a 1961 letter from Minnesota with these words (preserved, like those of the following letter, in the archives at the AA General Service Office): "Concern-

ing your comment about the use of the word 'rarely' in Chapter 5 of the Big Book: My recollection is that we did give this considerable thought at the time of writing. I think the main reason for the use of the word 'rarely' was to avoid anything that would look like a claim of a 100% result. Assuming, of course, that an alcoholic is willing enough and sane enough, there can be a perfect score on a person of this sort. But since willingness and sanity are such elusive and fluctuating values, we simply didn't want to be too positive. The medical profession could jump right down our throats.

"Then, too, we have seen people who have apparently tried their very best, and then failed, not because of unwillingness, but perhaps by reason of physical tension or some undisclosed quirk, not known to them or anyone else. Neither did we want to over encourage relatives and friends in the supposition

Survey Results: The Co-Founders of AA

What follows are your responses to our survey on AA's Co-Founders.

1) What do our co-founders, Bill W. and Dr. Bob S., mean to your sobriety?

Dan U., from the Sunday BB Group in Millburn wrote: "They were someone to look to as role models." PW from STNR commented: "From what I have read, Dr. Bob always kept it simple and I try to do the same with my sobriety." Angela M., from the Flakey Group wrote: "As with the Ying & Yang, the light will never know its light until it has seen the dark. Bill and Bob balanced each other. They were divinely fated to pair." Jackie R., from Journey Into Reality, Bloomfield wrote: "I could identify (inside) with two people completely different than me on the outside. Without them I would have joined the endless procession of sots that came before me. No hope, no life, no serenity." Jeff B., Friday Night Bound Brook writes: "I'm definitely more of a fan of Bill W. than Dr. Bob. I identify with Bill's vision, organizational and writing skills. When I think of Dr. Bob, I think 'Keep It Simple.'" Rich D., Plainfield Sunday Morning said: "They mean everything to my sobriety. As the first direct agents of the Higher Power, they established AA. None of us would be here sober today without them. God/HP needed people to carry the AA message to people and he did through Bill and Bob first." An Anonymous AA wrote: The authors of Alcoholics Anonymous and their devout Oxford Group friends mean very much to my sobriety. They did blaze the trail." Erik R., There Is A Solution BB Meeting, Montclair wrote: "I realize that these men started AA but I also believe that this is a God-given program and He would have worked through others to get this started if not through Bill and Bob." Billy S., Ho-Ho-Kus commented: "The two have different personalities. Their two different personalities brought to this program a balance. It shows me I have to have the same balance."

2) Where does your knowledge of the co-founders come from?

Almost everyone agreed that their knowledge came from the AA conference-approved literature: *The Big Book*, *AA Comes of*

Age, *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, *Pass It On*, *As Bill Sees It*, and *Language of the Heart*. Angela M., added *Not God* by Ernest K.

to her list. An Anonymous AA added the movie *My Name is Bill W.* to their list. Jackie R. mentioned her sponsor and Area Archives presentations added to her knowledge of the co-founders. Bill S. suggested joining the Archives Committee where he learned a lot about our co-founders.

3) How can Area 44 and AA as a whole better serve you in providing more knowledge about our co-founders and AA history?

Erik R. recommends that: "The area continue to fund the work of our History & Archives Committee and their efforts to do presentations at district days of sharing, area assemblies, and our annual convention." Angela M. commented: "I put my life in the care of HP. The trusted servants He has called know better than I. I will keep coming." Jeff B., suggested: "More history articles in the newsletter." Thanks for the plug Jeff, will do!

4) Our co-founders had different styles and personalities. Do you identify more with Bill W. or Dr. Bob?

The final tally between the co-founders was almost 50/50 with Bill W. slightly edging out Dr. Bob. Dan U. chose: "Dr. Bob: because he was more soft spoken." Billy S. answered: "Like Bill W., I tend to get gung-ho and push my ideas and shoot the moon. Today, when people see me at group consciences, district meetings, or other AA events not pushing my ideas, I've heard some refer to me as Dr. Bob." An Anonymous AA wrote: Dr. Bob is the one I would most like to be more like. He sounded so grounded and serene. Then again, he didn't do any writing other than his story, so I know a lot more of the struggles Bill had since he wrote about them." Rich D. chose, "Bill W. because he was a promoter, organizer, salesman, and front man. He was gregarious. Dr. Bob was a lively counterpoint as the more thoughtful, reflective, and steady force in AA's early days." Angela M. chose, "Bill W., who heeded Bob's warning of 'Let's keep this thing simple. Don't louse it up.'" Jackie R. equivocated answering "Both men. As a recovered egomaniac with an inferiority complex, I like them, have been able to see my character defects/liabilities turned into assets in many different forms that have been useful to those I serve."

5) Have you ever visited a: Dr. Bob's Home or grave site in Akron, Ohio? b: Bill and Lois' house, Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills, NY or c: Bill's birthplace or gravesite in Vermont? What were your experiences?

All of the responders answered "Not yet." Jackie R. answered: "As for Ohio and NY, not yet. God willing I will. I will be attending three seminars at the Wilson House in Vermont in March and April and I have invited several fellows (including sponsees) to join me. My district is planning a spring field trip to some historical sites." Jeff B. said "I recently visited Stepping Stones with several alcoholic friends. What an awesome experience. I particularly liked the picture gallery on the second floor of the main house. Sitting in the annex at the desk where Bill wrote the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions was an experience." Angela M. answered "a) next year, b) yes, c) one day. I attended the Annual Picnic at Stepping Stones in June. There were too many people and too little time but it was a great experience. I had a private tour of Stepping Stones which was fantastic and I am planning to go back this October." Rich D. wrote "I have never been to Akron or Stepping Stones yet, but, I have been to Bill's Birthplace in Vermont. The house was interesting but paled in comparison to visiting Bill and Lois's nearby humble graves. They were well marked with a lot of left behind AA keepsakes no doubt from grateful recovering alcoholics." Billy S. said "Sitting in Bill W.'s office at "Wits End," where Bill wrote, gave me a feeling of relaxation and a calm came over me." Erik R. plans "...to do many of them this year. My district may organize a trip to Stepping Stones this year."

Thank you to all who took the time to respond to our survey. See page 4 for details of our next survey.

Your This Day Committee

District Service Meetings

- District 1&2** - 2nd Tuesday, 7:30pm, Lafayette at the Sunrise House Cafeteria.
- District 3** - 3rd Friday 7:00 pm; Hillcrest Community Church, 1810 Macopin Road, West Milford
- District 4&6** - 3rd Thur. 7:30 pm, Upper Ridgewood Community Ch, Hillcrest & Fairmount, Ridgewood
- District 5&7** - 2nd Thursday, 7pm, St. Mary's Church corner of High and Legion, Closter
- District 8** - 2nd Tues. 7:30pm, Panther Valley Ecumenical Ch, Rt 517, Allamuchy
- District 9** - 3rd Tues. 7:30 pm, Stanhope United Methodist Ch, Rte 183, Netcong
- District 10** - 2nd Tues. 7:30 pm, 1st Presbyterian Church, 513 Birch St, (corner of Church & Birch) Boonton
- District 11/33** - 4th Wed. 7:00 pm, Clifton Library, 292 Plaget Ave Rm A
- District 12** - 3rd Fri. 7pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 113 Engle St Englewood 2nd floor Choir Room
- District 13** - 2nd Tue. 7:30 pm, Wesley Meth. Ch., 225 Washington Ave, Belleville
- District 14** - Last Tue, 7pm, St. Nicholas School Hall, 122 Ferry Street, Jersey City
- District 15/21** - 3rd Mon. 7:30 pm, Hunterdon Medical Center, Employee Cafeteria, Rt. 31 South, Flemington
- District 16** - 3rd Mon. 7:30pm Hillsdale Pres. Ch. Ridgedale Ave, Cedar Knolls
- District 17** - 3rd Fri. 8 pm, Alanon Assoc, 7th Avenue and 7th Street, Newark
- District 18** - 2nd Mon. 7:30 pm, Union Village United Methodist Ch, Mountain Ave. & Hillcrest Rd., Berkeley Heights
- District 19** - Last Mon. 7:30 pm, Friendship Hall, New Market Road, Piscataway
- District 20** - 2nd Tues 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal, North & Forest Aves., Cranford
- District 22** - 3rd Wed. 7:30 pm, Cook College Extension Center, College Farm Road, New Brunswick
- District 23** - 2nd Thur. 7:30 pm, Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, 9 Jefferie Ave, South River
- District 24** - 3rd Mon. 8 pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, Ryers Lane, Matawan
- District 25** - Last Wed. 7:30 pm, Hope Lutheran Church, 21 Elton-Adelphia Road., Freehold
- District 26** - 3rd Thur. 7:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church (Tower Hill), 255 Harding Road, Red Bank
- District 27/29** - 3rd Mon. 7:30 pm, Holy Cross Luth. Ch, Hooper Ave, Toms River
- District 28** - 1st Tue. 7:30pm, St Margaret's Church, 3rd & Ludlow Avenue, Spring Lake
- District 30** - 4th Sunday 12 Noon, 69 Green Street, Newark
- District 31** - 2nd Thur. 6:30 pm, Immaculate Heart Of Mary Chapel, 77th Street & Broadway, North Bergen
- District 32** - 3rd Thur. 7:00 pm, Bayonne Library, 31st St. & Ave. C., Bayonne
- District 34** - 3rd Sat. 9:30am, Our Lady of Sorrows, 217 Prospect St, (Lower Church) South Orange
- District 35** - 2nd Tue. 7:30 pm, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, North Richard Street and Union Avenue, in Somerville.
- District 36** - 3rd Fri. 7:30 pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, Trinity Lane, Woodbridge
- District 37** - 3rd Wed. 7:00 pm, First Lutheran Church 153 Park St (basement), Montclair
- District 38** - 3rd Thursday 7:30 pm, Presbyterian Church, 31 Fairfield Avenue, West Caldwell
- District 39** - 2nd Tues 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal, North & Forest Aves., Cranford
- District 40** - 4th Sunday 10:45am, St. Joseph's Center, 120 Division St., Elizabeth
- District 41** - First Thurs 7:00 pm, St. Matthew's Trinity Church, 8th & Washington Sts, Hoboken
- District 42** - 2nd & 4th Sunday 9:30am, 52 Throckmorton Street, Freehold

Garden State Young People Present....

EACH DAY IS A NEW BEGINNING

FAIRVIEW LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER STILLWATER NJ **APRIL 20-22, 2012**

Registration Price- \$50.00 We accept installment payments/ deposits/full payments- Minimum of \$50 must be received by before 2/14/12 to reserve a spot. **No refunds or checks accepted** -After 4/5/12. Scholarships are available.

Registration includes

- All meals and lodging
- 3 Days 2 Nights of continuous meetings
- 2 Bonfire meetings
- Friday night ice cream social
- Saturday night dance
- Around the night coffee and soft drinks
- Recreational activities
- Great fellowship!!!

Mail registration and checks to:
GSYP PO Box 219
South Plainfield,
NJ 07080-0219

To learn more about GSYP and pre-conference events visit
www.gsyp.com

Questions, comments, scholarship ?

Full Name: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____ Age: _____ Under 18 Parental Consent Required

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Special Diet Needs: _____

Anniversary Date: _____ Willing to Chair a Meeting: Y / N

Topic Suggestions: _____ Who You Want to Room With: _____

NNJGS Area 44 Office Calendar

MARCH

11	AREA COM. MEETING	12 NOON
12	Luncheon Committee	7:30 PM
12	Convention Subcommittee	8:00 PM
13	Public Information Com	7:30 PM
14	Treatment Committee	8:00 PM
15	Newsletter Committee	7:30 PM
16-18	North East Regional Delegates	
17	Corrections Committee	10:00 AM
18	GS Young People	2:00 PM
19	Literature Sales	6:30 PM
19	Literature Committee	7:30 PM
20	History & Archives*	7:30 PM
21	Convention Committee	8:00 PM
26	Finance Committee	7:30 PM
29	Policy & Admissions	7:30 PM

APRIL

2	Mailing Committee	6:30 PM
2	Translation Committee	6:30 PM
3	Officers & Standing Com	7:30 PM
5	Website Committee*	7:30 PM
7	Grapevine Committee	10:00 AM
9	Luncheon Committee	7:30 PM
9	Convention Subcommittee	8:00 PM
10	Public Information Com	7:30 PM
11	Treatment Committee	8:00 PM
14	MINI-CONFERENCE, Dist 28	9:00 AM
15	GS Young People	2:00 PM
16	Literature Sales	6:30 PM
16	Literature Committee	7:30 PM
17	History & Archives*	7:30 PM
17	CPC Committee	8:00 PM
18	Convention Committee	8:00 PM
19	Newsletter Committee	7:30 PM
23	Finance Committee	7:30 PM
24	Joint Unity Meeting	7:30 PM
26	Policy & Admissions	7:30 PM

MAY

1	Officers Meeting	7:30 PM
3	Website Committee	7:30 PM
3	Computer Committee	7:30 PM
5	Grapevine Committee	10:00 AM
7	Mailing Committee	6:30 PM
7	Translation Committee	6:30 PM
7	Remote Communities	7:30 PM
8	Public Information Com	7:30 PM
9	Treatment Committee	8:00 PM
11	THIS DAY DEADLINE	5:00 PM
14	Luncheon Committee	7:30 PM
14	Convention Subcommittee	8:00 PM
15	History & Archives*	7:30 PM
15	CPC Committee	8:00 PM
16	Convention Committee	8:00 PM
17	Newsletter Committee	7:30 PM
19	Corrections Committee	10:00 AM
20	Films Committee	11:00 AM
20	AREA COMMITTEE	12 NOON
?27?	GS Young People	2:00 PM
21	Literature Sales	6:30 PM
21	Literature Committee	7:30 PM
28	Finance Committee	7:30 PM
31	Policy & Admissions	7:30 PM

JUNE

2	Grapevine Committee	10:00 AM
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4	Mailing Committee	6:30 PM
4	Translation Committee	6:30 PM
4	Remote Communities	7:30 PM
5	Officers & Standing Com	7:30 PM
7	Website Committee*	7:30 PM
9	AREA ASSEMBLY, Dist 27/29	9:00 AM
11	Luncheon Committee	7:30 PM
11	Convention Subcommittee	8:00 PM
12	Public Information Com	7:30 PM
13	Treatment Committee	8:00 PM
17	GS Young People	2:00 PM
18	Literature Sales	6:30 PM
18	Literature Committee	7:30 PM
19	History & Archives*	7:30 PM
19	CPC Committee	8:00 PM
20	Convention Committee	8:00 PM
21	Newsletter Committee	7:30 PM
25	Finance Committee	7:30 PM
24	Joint Unity Meeting	7:30 PM
28	Policy & Admissions	7:30 PM

*Intergroup Office, 2400 Morris Ave, Union

Intergroup Calendar

MARCH

20	History and Archives	7:30 PM
21	Nightwatch Committee	7:30 PM

APRIL

2	Delegates Meeting, Clark	8:30 PM
5	Joint Website Committee	7:30 PM
6	OFFICE CLOSED – Good Friday	
17	History and Archives	7:30 PM

MAY

3	Joint Website Committee*	7:30 PM
7	Delegates Election Mtg, Clark	8:30 PM
15	History and Archives	7:30 PM
16	CPC Committee	7:30 PM
22	Joint Unity Meeting*	8:00 PM
28	(OFFICE CLOSED) Memorial Day	

JUNE

4	Delegates Meeting, Clark	8:30 PM
7	Joint Website Committee	7:30 PM
10	Bookers Exchange, Cranford	7AM
19	History and Archives	7:30 PM

*Area Office, 2325 Plainfield Ave, South Plainfield



www.nnjaa.org/members
password: onedayatime

Contributions are much needed, and always welcome! Make checks payable as indicated and always include your Area, District and Group ID number. Please send group and individual contributions to the addresses below:

NNJGS AREA 44
2325 Plainfield Avenue, Suite 2J
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
Payable to "NNJGS Area 44"

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY INTERGROUP
2400 MORRIS AVENUE, Suite 106
Union, NJ 07083-5705
Payable to "Northern NJ Intergroup"

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE
PO Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
Payable to "General Service Board"

DISTRICT DOINGS

DISTRICT 18 is connected to 7 other districts (we are a very oddly shaped district), so there's a good chance that we are neighbors. Come on out and join us for our "Movie Night during the Day" on April 21st, and get to know your neighbors just a little better. We will have films from the Archives Committee and lots of popcorn. A Day of Sharing with movies, AA History, fun, food and fellowship - you can't get much better than that! Watch for details on our flyers and on our Area 44 website.

Our groups have been active and are looking forward to a great year. The Bernardsville Spiritual Awakenings Tuesday night meeting began a Big Book Study on January 3rd, and they are excited that so many new people joined them for the BB Study. The BYOC group in Summit has changed their Friday 7:15 am meeting to a Big Book meeting. Also, a number of groups in the District have joined together to run a Big Book Study at Summit Oakes Treatment Center, with Big Book meetings every day of the week at the facility. (Mike "the Greek" T. helped to implement this -- and he loves to see his name in print.)

Several groups in District 18 have also taken Nightwatch Commitments. This has proven to be a great way to not only help people find recovery in AA, but also build fellowship within the home group, as the week long commitment requires participation by at least 11 group members. (Although, if you were fortunate enough to call Nightwatch over Thanksgiving week, you probably got to talk to Casey of Dawn Patrol. The telephone system had a "glitch" and Casey manned the Nightwatch calls for 4 straight days.) Craig T. schedules U Nightwatch groups for Intergroup. He can be contacted [redacted]

com if you'd like to take part in this rewarding service opportunity. District 18 was well represented by our DCM Tom V., Secretary, Terri D., Intergroup Treatment Facilities Co Chair, Michael T., and CPC Committee Member Rose, at the Area 44 GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon on February 12, 2012. The luncheon was held to recognize all of the Area 44 GSR volunteers and their service to their home groups. Great job by Area 44 Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee Chair Barbara B-R and her committee. – Tom V, DCM and Terri D, Secretary

Hello from **DISTRICT 23**. On January 28, 2012 District 23 celebrated its anniversary with its annual spaghetti dinner. It was a wonderful way to bring in the new year, and to relax and enjoy the fellowship with a hot lunch, plenty of beverages, and a large assorted array of delicious desserts, including many home baked cakes and cookies. It was the land of plenti-

ful for those who attended this wonderful affair so generously put on by our district. There was literature to be bought, endless coffee to be drunk, the loud joyful noise of sober alcoholics enjoying each other and of course a great speaker. There were almost 200 in attendance and it was a great show of what can be done when a job in AA needs to get done. Thank you to all the dedicated workers who got there early to cook and set up and stayed late to clean up-and especially thank you Bob P. for your lead and your hard work in this event for the past few years. You have done a great job in leading our members to put on this spectacular affair that so many look forward to after the hustle and bustle and demands of the holiday season. As I sat with my fellow AAs, I looked around the room and thought with awe how is it possible that a drunk like me gets to know every person in that room and share in their sobriety? God is good. This year my non-alcoholic daughter attended this event with me and I will be forever grateful to have had an opportunity to show her what it is I do with my life besides work and go to meetings. I felt so honored to share with her this side of my sobriety — the fun side of the fellowship — that I so enjoy. Yes, God is good. As I put these words on this paper I am reminded that each day I have sober is another day I have to honor life and the goodness of it. To carry the message of recovery to the still sick and suffering alcoholic surely is the sustenance that carries me through my journey in this sometimes difficult life that we live. A bit of heaven on earth as Bill calls it is the reward that keeps me coming back and remain grateful to serve in this fellowship. – Yours in service, Denise G.

DISTRICT 39 held elections on December 13, 2011 at our district meeting. All officer positions were filled with alternates. We still need some representatives on our standing committees though. Rich S. represented our district at the January Assembly and spoke on topic of "Spirit of Rotation." District 39 along with neighboring districts 19, 20, and 40 hosted its 17th Annual Day of Sharing on February 11th. Planning meetings were scheduled and fliers were distributed and posted on the area website to generate involvement from AAs. District 39 sold our allotment of tickets to the Midwinter Luncheon and will be represented. In 2011 contributions from our monthly District meetings (Districts 20 & 39) have been donated to the "Pink Can" to the tune of \$231.30. – Trish L., DCM

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE MAY 11th NEWSLETTER@NNJAA.ORG

This newsletter is produced four times annually by the Newsletter Committee, a joint committee of Northern New Jersey General Service Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup.

NOTE: This Newsletter will be published on our web site. The name and last initial of the author will be published unless otherwise requested.

Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does the publication of any article imply an endorsement by either AA General Services or Intergroup. Comments, questions and articles may be directed to the Newsletter Committee at NNJGS Area 44, Suite 2J, 2325 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield 07080 or emailed to: newsletter@nnjaa.org.

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and Northern New Jersey Inter-group
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South Plainfield, NJ 07080

Spring 2012



**NERAASA
2012
March 2-4
Albany,
New York**



District Doings CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

DISTRICT 40 – Our 17th annual Day of Sharing on February 11th was a great success. This year's theme was *Anonymity in the Digital Age*. In addition, we had some excellent speakers: Aaron K. spoke on our "7th Tradition "Follow the Money," Bill L. spoke on "The Most Important Job In AA – the GSR," and the district archives Representative interviewed Warner O. from Westfield with 39+ years of sobriety. I thought it was one of our best Day of Sharings, and I just wanted to thank all who made the day possible, our guests, speakers, and all the committees who showed up.

Currently, we are putting a commitment sheet together for all the treatment centers in our district with contacts to be available to anyone interested in taking a commitment. This will be available at our next district meeting. We are still helping out several groups with pamphlets, flyers, and information on how to set up non-profit bank checking accounts. Thanks to our district flyers, we have some new GSRs in our district and some people have expressed an interest in getting involved at the district level.

Our next thing is to get ready for the Section 5 Pre-Conference Meeting planned for March 24th at 11am at the Cook College Extension Center, so we can get the information out to our groups. – *Susanne M., DCM*

Rarely or Never?

CONTINUED PAGE 9
Anyhow, we are certainly stuck with the word 'rarely.' My few efforts to change the wording of the AA book have always come to naught - the protests are always too many."

And at the 1970 General Service Conference, this Ask-It-Basket question was addressed directly to Bill: "If there was any change you would make in the Big Book, would it be to change the word 'rarely' to 'never' at the start of Chapter 5?"
Bill answered, "No."

*Yours in service, The Area 44
History and Archives Committee*

Mini-Conference CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Cons

We are pointing out an alcoholic's uniqueness. We are stressing the fact that they are different from us instead of what we have in common – alcoholism. We already have information in our pamphlet *The AA Member—Medications & Other Drugs*. And we have an Appendix on pages 87 and 88 of the Living Sober book which contains "A report from a group of physicians in AA. Having such a pamphlet could defeat our singleness of purpose giving opening to discussions of "drugs" and "mental illnesses."

What does your group think? Do we need a pamphlet of stories by people with mental illnesses who are recovering from alcoholism?

In Conclusion

We hope that we have presented the topics to be discussed at our Mini-Conference along with some background on why these questions are being asked.

Available space has limited the amount of information that we can impart. The best way to be fully informed on all of these issues would be to attend a DELEGATE'S PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT (see box on page 5 for a schedule). There your delegate will provide you with 110 pages of background material on each of the topics and he will answer any questions you may have about each of the topics.

Yours in service, the This Day Committee

24TH ANNUAL NORTHEAST WOMAN TO WOMAN CONFERENCE
 A WORKSHOP WEEKEND BY AND FOR SOBER WOMEN IN RECOVERY
 SAVE THE DATE: **October 26-28, 2012**
RENAISSANCE NEWARK AIRPORT HOTEL, 1000 Spring Street, Elizabeth
 SPEAKERS • MEDITATION • WORKSHOPS • SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET & • MORE

To be placed on our mailing list E-mail: [REDACTED]
 Registration Materials will be mailed May/June-2012

Committee meets the following Saturdays at 3pm at: New Life Christian Church, 12 Prospect St, Bloomfield, NJ
 (Feb. 4 & 25, March 10 & 31, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 7, Aug. 18, Sept. 15 & 29, Oct. 13)