

THIS DAY

www.nnjaa.org
News & Notes from NNJ General Service Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup

*A message
from your
Area Delegate*



Writing my first article as Delegate!? I sit here pondering my thoughts, and wonder how I arrived at this humbling place in my life as a recovered alcoholic. First, I want to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for having the confidence to see in me what is sometimes clouded by self.

Now I feel a need to share with you all a little story that started one day a long time ago. I was reading a chapter called "Four o'Clock Sunday Afternoon" in A.A. Comes of Age. To sum it up quickly, Bill turned A.A. World Services over to the fellowship, to all of us, and a thought crossed my mind that I had to give something back to this wonderful thing that saved my life. I had no idea what that looked like.....but a thought became real clear that it was up to me to participate in A.A.'s future. What was happening was that I was becoming responsible! Looking back today, I can see my journey coming full circle. There were (and still are) a lot of loving faces along the road that kept pushing me in such a caring way. Fear kept telling me I couldn't do it, but my love for A.A., the gratitude in my heart, and a service sponsor who had been through it all, allowed me to walk through the fear and grow in ways I could never imagine. There is still quite a ways to go, as I hope to always remain a student; to listen, to learn, to gain experience and to put it into action by carrying the message of hope on every level to the still sick and suffering alcoholic. I really can't describe in words how grateful I am to have this opportunity to serve you as your Panel 67 Delegate to the General Service Conference. I will fulfill this task to the best of my ability.

By the time this article is published, I will have met with your Alt. Delegate, Jeff B., and our Past Delegates to choose the topics we will discuss at this year's Mini-Conference. These topics are selected from the Final Conference Agenda and represent what we feel are the more compelling issues affecting A.A. today, and those that may be the most interesting to Area 44 members. Then I, along with Jeff, your Area Chair, Jimmy A., and

your Treasurer, Anita C., will travel around the area in March delivering seven Pre-Conference Reports. In these Pre-Conference meetings, we will present the background material to our GSR's so they can have meaningful discussions with their groups, and then carry their group conscience to our Mini-Conference on April 8. It is crucial that all GSR's attend a Pre-Conference Report and participate in our Mini-Conference. And of course, all interested A.A.'s are welcome and encouraged to attend both! We want to hear from every A.A. member! Then, on February 24th, I will be off to NERAASA where I will be meeting with the delegates from the other 17 areas in our Northeast Region. I hope to see a lot of you there!

If any of what I've written sounds unfamiliar or confusing, please feel free to reach out to me. I welcome the opportunity to discuss any and all of this with you!

Again, from the bottom of my heart, I give thanks for this opportunity to serve you. It truly is a privilege.

With AA Love and Service,
Lester G.

Area 44 Delegate
Panel 67

*A message
from your
Area Chair*



Greetings, My name is Jimmy A.. My home group is A Design For Living Group in Neptune N.J. I have a sponsor and service sponsor. I sponsor other men. My sobriety date is March 28, 1987. Its truly an honor and privilege to serve Area 44 as the incoming Area Chair. I thank you for trusting me with this position. I am committed to serving all of you over the next two years.

As the past chairs have confided in me, if you get through the month of January you'll be ok. Well we are past January and I'm here to report I'm ok. We started off with the first ACM of the year. It was great to be with the new Officers, to meet our new DCM's and to present the new Standing and Special Committee Chairs to the Area. I also would like to thank all those who attended our first Assembly in Hawthorne. Thank you District 4/6 for hosting a wonderful event. Many first time GSR's and their

alternates were able to attend their first Assembly and it was a great turnout. Many were able to attend the six committee workshops, vote to pass the 2017 Area budget and to listen to four presentations that concerned the theme of the 2017 General Service Conference "Supporting Our Future".

By the time you read this article we will have already been through the month of February. The Tradition Workshop hosted by the Area, The DCM Orientation, GSR Mid-Winter luncheon and NERAASA will all be past us as we go full steam ahead into our Pre-Conference Reports prior to our Mini Conference Assembly held in April. The 2016 Work Weekend, in December, produced several strategies intended to improve communication with the membership, improve attendance at assemblies and events and to improve member commitment to service beyond the group. An Ad Hoc Committee on Improving Area Communication has also been formed. Their task is to generate recommendations from these strategies to bring before the ACM and hopefully open up dialogue with the fellowship on these important matters.

On a personal note, as I have moved down the inverted triangle, I have experienced a deep transformation within. When I was a brand new GSR, I couldn't see the big picture. I thought it was just about me and my homegroup. I was still selfish in many ways. The steps helped me see that I was selfish and self centered in my personal life but I was blind to it in my service life. Then I became a DCM and my mind started to open up about more service beyond the homegroup. I started to shed the fear of asking questions. I started to listen to others and their service experience. I attended NERAASA's and workshops and heard many others talk of other members fears of rotating into positions and what they did to facilitate the vital 12 step work. When I got elected to the Area Coordinators/Alt Chair position I witnessed all the good men and women who volunteer their time to be on committees that carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers and the passion that came with that service. When I was elected Area Chair in October, a good friend, who's involved in service in another Area,

sent me a prayer that read. "God... Please set aside all I think I know about Alcoholics Anonymous, its service structure, General Services, Intergroups, myself and you God... So I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Help me to always place spiritual principles before my personality and my opinions...Show

Continued on page 2

*A message from
your Intergroup
Chair*



On behalf of Northern NJ Intergroup and myself, thank you for the opportunity to serve. This will be my last submission as your Intergroup chair. The last two years have been filled with countless wonderful experiences.

Just to mention a few, our joint day of sharing, gratitude brunch, and our joint unity play at the Area Convention. Even the early mornings to help with bookers were eventful. I view service commitments the same as my recovery. I don't have to I get to. I'll share a typical first Thursday of the month with you. Our trustees meeting starts at 7:00 pm, then we roll into out delegates meeting that begins at 8:30. I have had the opportunity to facilitate the delegates meeting that wraps up around 9:30 or so. That's a well spent 2 1/2 hours. I get to (there it is again) participate, educate, and encourage. That's time well spent.

I'm also pleased to report a new group of Intergroup delegates have been welcomed to our monthly meeting. That means more AA members will be informed about service committees and carrying the message. In closing I would like to thank the Delegates, Committees, Office Staff, and our Trustees for allowing me to serve.

Thank you,
Aaron K
your NNJ Intergroup chair.

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NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE MAY 26
NEWSLETTER@NNJAA.ORG

Area Chair Continued from page 1
 me how to be but a trusted servant and do your will always". As I stood at the podium at the last Assembly I truly realized I'm nothing but a trusted servant who's main function is to make sure that we carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers and to give them the same chance we've all been given. In the book Alcoholics Anonymous Dr. Bob talks about passing on what he learned to others who want and need it badly and there were four reasons for doing so:

1. Sense of Duty
2. Its a pleasure
3. In doing so I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip. Another good friend use to say let me remain reachable and teachable. Thank You for my life and the opportunity to serve.

Grateful to Serve,
 Jimmy A.
 Area 44 Chair



Thank you Area 44 for allowing me to serve!

This is my second time serving as the Area Treasurer. Back in 2007, it was just after a stressful time for the Area and the Treasurer's Report took on a life of its own. The extensive report you see today is the result of those stressful times. I'm looking forward to the Finance Committee implementing QuickBooks for the Area's accounting needs. I think this will be a great improvement to the readability of the financial report.

To all the new Area Officers, Standing & Special Committee Chairs, Congratulations! I think we have an outstanding team working for Area 44's 12 step work. If anyone has any questions about the finances of the Area, feel free to contact me at treasurer@nnjaa.org.

Again, thank you for allowing me to be of service,
 Anita C.
 Area Treasurer

**RUS SERVICE CORPORATION T/A NNJAA AREA 44
 YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON REPORT: 2015 AND 2016
 FOR PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 2016**

	2015 - Nov.	2016 - Nov.
MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT (A)		
Balance as of January 1st	\$79,266	\$89,335
Interest Received	\$63	\$66
Transfer (To) / From the Checking Account	\$10,000	\$0
Balance as of November 30th	\$89,329	\$89,401
CHECKING ACCOUNT (A)		
Balance as of January 1st	\$49,104	\$34,985
Group, Individual and 7th Tradition Basket Contributions	\$77,813	\$87,565
Other Receipts (Intergroup, Literature & Grapevine Sales, etc.)	\$123,519	\$110,575
Budgeted Expenses (Standing & Special Committees, Officers, Office, etc.)	(\$88,326)	(\$86,040)
Non Budgeted Expenses (Literature, Grapevine, Luncheon, etc.)	(\$122,520)	(\$113,463)
Transfer (To) / From the Money Market Account	(\$10,000)	\$0
Balance as of November 30th	\$29,590	\$33,622
Prior 12 Month Avg. Monthly Expenses Times Two. Finance Guidelines state the checking account balance should not exceed this amount.		
	\$36,436	\$35,272
Account Balance Over / (Under) Guideline		
	(\$6,846)	(\$1,650)
PRUDENT RESERVE FUNDS		
Total Cash in Bank (Excluding Convention Account) as of November 30th	\$118,919	\$123,022
Designated Funds (Jailbox Funds, Int'l Hospitality, Excess Funds, etc.)	(\$7,754)	(\$13,868)
Checking Account Guideline (2 Months Average Expenses)	(\$36,436)	(\$35,272)
Prudent Reserve as of November 30th	\$74,729	\$73,882
Prudent Reserve (50% of the prior 12 months Operating Expenses)		
	\$48,580	\$46,394
Account Balance Over / (Under) Guideline		
	\$26,149	\$27,488

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) 2016 Expense Budget is \$109,370
- (C) November 30, 2016 Checking and Money Market Balances have been reconciled to the Bank Statements by the Finance Committee.
- (D) November 30, 2016 Designated Funds include: Jailbox--\$4,137.90 Int'l Hospitality Suite--\$2,886.49 and Excess Funds Approved Projects--\$6,844.00.

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL APPROVALS / REVIEWS

Individual / Group	Action	Completed Through
Treasurer	Approved	Nov. 2015
Alternate Treasurer	Approved	Nov. 2015
Finance Committee	Approved	Nov. 2015
Officers	Reviewed	Nov. 2015
Area Committee Members	Approved	Sep. 2016
Area Assembly	Approved	Mar. 2016

**The topic for this issue:
 What does the word "We" mean in your recovery.**

The word 'We' takes on new meaning when I remember: "I am You, You are Me, We are God." The moment I walked into a meeting I felt part of something greater than me. You understood! At the end of my drinking, no one wanted me around. I had become anti-social in such a way that I separated myself from life. Family and friends were forced to cut off all communications. Just when things were at their worst, when I "stood at the turning point", you reached your hand out and said, "Welcome home, brother." I thought, "Who are You people?" Others walk to the other side of the street when I approach, and You offer me warmth and a smile. You knew "I am You, You are me, We are God" before I did.

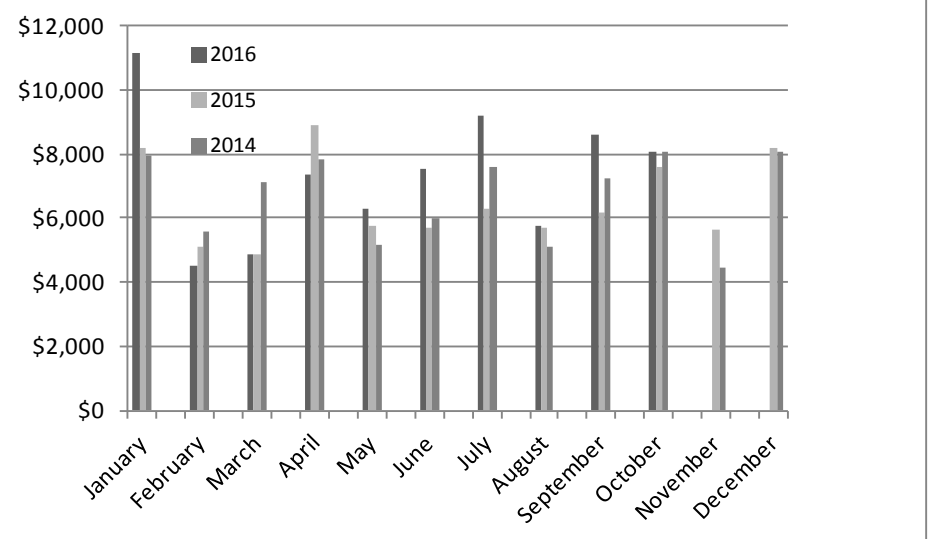
The Unity side of our triangle represents the Fellowship (We). I'm not taking sides (pun intended), but Unity holds a special place in my heart. The fellowship of AA is where I met You. You led me to Service and Recovery. For me, it could not have happened any other way. I needed the connection of a

simple touch or smile to get Me to come back to the second meeting. I didn't know why those 'simple' things meant so much. It just felt so good to hold your hand at the end of the meeting. It had been a while since anyone had touched me. Unity is what I felt at that first meeting. Thirteen years later, I still feel it.

Now, I have the opportunity to reach my hand out to You. The funny thing is, that feeling, when I touched your hand that first day, has not gone away. Instead, it has intensified as I have become part of We. I hope that You feel the same warmth from Me as I felt from You.

I'm not sure if the connection I feel to You comes more from the common despair that we once felt or our common desire to recover one day at a time. I do know this: without You, there is no Me.

Harry A.



Unity

"We" is the first word of the first step for a reason. It reminds me that I can't get and stay sober on my own, but together we can. When I first came to AA, I had an enormous ego problem (I'm still working on it), and I always thought that I could figure it out on my own. I felt unique and different, but, in reality, I was just another bozo on the bus. I struggled for 3 years until I finally surrendered. I was finally willing to listen, take suggestions, and get involved in the program. Today, I live a life that is truly happy, joyous, and free. I have a network of

people that I talk to every morning that remind me that I'm an alcoholic and that I can't do it alone. I have sponsors that guide me through the steps and service commitments. I have friends that give me good advice and wonderful counsel. Raising my hand at a meeting and asking for help was the beginning of a wonderful journey. It takes a village to keep me sober today. And that's just fine by me.
 Brad H.



Recovery, Unity, and Service
I thought I could not possibly be an alcoholic - one of “those” people, so it took me some time to understand that a little, straight-laced schoolteacher can be an alcoholic, and that we come from all backgrounds and occupations. The first time I walked into a meeting and met people I ordinarily would not have “mixed” with, as described in the Big Book, I belonged. That was my first glimpse of unity; I had something in common with these people. I knew I belonged because when people shared, it was as if they were reading my mind. Their struggles were so like mine, and it was not just about alcohol. I knew then that the AA program was my solution. Many years later, I have come to realize that unity permeates everything we do, including our personal recovery and our service commitments.

I did not comprehend this at the beginning, of course, but I did have a sense of community that I had not experienced before. People’s sharing with one another and reliance on a Higher Power were the “way out” for me, and I loved the excitement of having found some hope. A whole new world appeared, and I began to understand that self-knowledge was not enough. After all, I had read many self-help books and analyzed myself to death, but I could not stop drinking. Here, there was safety in numbers, and I stopped drinking. Alone, I drank. Together, we recover.

I had tried to be a moderate drinker, but to no avail. Though not yet chronic, I was well on my way, and drank just about every day during the last year of my active alcoholism. I had great intentions to do wonderful things with my life; in fact, I call alcoholism “the disease

of good intentions.” I would plan to do something constructive, but then add alcohol, and all bets were off. I would beat myself up and swear that the next time would be different, but it never was. In AA I found that Higher Power to help me stop drinking. I wasn’t quite relying on that Power in other matters; that has been a slower spiritual journey that I am still on. My journey to service beyond the home group has been relatively recent. My sobriety began in October, 1986, but I was not a GSR until the mid-90’s, and then again around ten years later. My involvement with my District then led me to become a GvR in the Area 44 Grapevine Committee.

At the District and Area levels we get involved with a lot of procedural and financial details, so it is essential for us to understand why we are doing this work. There needs to be unity in recovery and service. Our triangle has three sides, surrounded by a circle. Recently, at one of our Grapevine committee meetings we were concerned about many details, and as a new Chair I was feeling the stress of getting everything right. But then, during the recovery part of our meeting, we read a Grapevine story that reminded me of why we were there. Our mission is to spread the message and the hope of sobriety - together. That is our unity. We are involved in service to stay sober and to help the next alcoholic achieve physical sobriety, and then recover through the steps. This task is our Recovery, Unity, and Service in AA.

In love and service,
Marybeth H.
Area 44 Grapevine Chair

GRAPEVINE ORDER AND PRICE LIST

QTY	ITEM	CODE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
BOOKS				
	A Rabbit Walks into a Bar	GV22	\$11.50	
	AA Around the World — Adventures in Recovery	GV10	\$9.99	
	Beginners Book: Getting and Staying Sober in AA	GV20	\$11.50	
	Emotional Sobriety I : The Next Frontier	GV17	\$11.50	
	Emotional Sobriety II	GV26	\$11.50	
	Forming True Partnerships	GV34	\$11.50	
	Happy Joyous & Free: The Lighter Side of Sobriety	GV29	\$11.50	
	I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA	GV16	\$11.50	
	In Our Own Words: Stories of Young AAs in Recovery	GV19	\$11.50	
	Into Action - Stories from AA Grapevine	GV28	\$11.50	
	No Matter What: Dealing With Adversity in Sobriety	GV31	\$11.50	
	One on One: AA Sponsorship in Action	GV30	\$11.50	
	Our Twelve Traditions	GV35	\$11.50	
	Sober & Out	GV33	\$11.50	
	Spiritual Awakenings I - Journeys of the Spirit	GV14	\$11.50	
	Spiritual Awakenings II	GV23	\$11.50	
	Step by Step	GV25	\$11.50	
	Thank You for Sharing — Sixty Years of Letters to the AA Grapevine	GV13	\$11.50	
	The Best of Bill (Large Print - Soft)	BB07	\$6.50	
	The Best of Bill (soft)	BB06	\$5.25	
	The Grapevine Daily Quote Book	GV32	\$11.50	
	The Language of the Heart (Hard)	GV06	\$15.50	
	The Language of the Heart (Large Print)	GV18	\$14.99	
	The Language of the Heart(Soft)	GV11	\$13.50	
	Voices of Long-Term Sobriety	GV21	\$11.50	
	Young & Sober: Stories from AA Grapevine	GV27	\$11.50	
COMPACT DISCS - CDS				
	Classic Grapevine Volume 2	CD03	\$10.50	
	Classic Grapevine Volume 3	CD04	\$10.50	
	Emotional Sobriety Volume 2	CD18	\$10.50	
	It Works If We Work It	CD12	\$10.50	
	Not for Newcomers Only	CD05	\$10.50	
	The Best of Bill	CD13	\$10.50	
	The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA Volume 1	CD21	\$10.50	
	The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA Volume 2	CD22	\$10.50	
	The Language of the Heart Audiobook MP3	CD23	\$20.49	
	The Twelve Traditions	CD11	\$10.50	
	What It Was Like	CD09	\$10.50	
OTHER ITEMS				
	AA Preamble	MS01	\$2.10	
	Back Issues Of Grapevine/La Vina	GV/LV	\$1.00	
	Co-Founders Memorial Issue	MS15	\$5.99	
	Current Issues Of Grapevine/La Vina	GV/LV	\$2.50	
	Facsimile of the First Issue of the Grapevine	BB01	\$3.00	
	Man on the Bed	MS03	\$3.25	
	Pocket Planner	MS09	\$5.00	
	Serenity Prayer	MS05	\$2.10	
	Slogans (Set of 5)	MS04	\$4.50	
	Traditions Checklist (50 pack)	MS20	\$5.50	
	Wall Calendar	MS08	\$9.50	
SPANISH				
	AA Preambulo	SP01	\$2.10	
	Despertares Espirituales CD (V.1)	SCD12	\$10.50	
	Despertares Espirituales CD (V.2)	SCD13	\$10.50	
	El Grupo Base	SGV15	\$9.50	
	El Grupo Base CD (V.1)	SCD16	\$10.50	
	El Grupo Base CD (V.2)	SCD17	\$10.50	
	El Lenguaje Del Corazón	GV08	\$13.50	
	Felices Alegres y Libres	SGV29	\$11.50	
	Historias De La Viña	CD07	\$10.50	
	Historias De La Viña II: Pasos 1 a 6	SCD08	\$10.50	
	Historias De La Viña III: Pasos 7 a 12	SCD09	\$10.50	
	La Historia De AA	SCD11	\$10.50	
	La Oración de la Serenidad	SP05	\$2.10	
	Las Doce Tradiciones CD (V.1)	SCD14	\$10.50	
	Las Doce Tradiciones CD (V.2)	SCD15	\$10.50	
	Lemas (Conjunto De 5)	SP04	\$4.75	
	Lo Mejor de Bill (Soft Cover)	SBB06	\$5.25	
	Lo Mejor De Bill En CD (Audiolibro)	SCD10	\$10.50	
	Lo Mejor De La Viña (Soft Cover)	SGV01	\$10.50	
	Un Día A La Vez	SGV03	\$11.50	

GRAND TOTAL _____

GROUP NAME _____

DATE _____



- Group Name**
 Recovery Hall Dist 13
 Thursday Night Dist 13
 Friday Night by Candlelight
 Kearny Sunday Night
 Join The Tribe Dist 13
 Old Bridge Sunday Night
 Friends of Bill
 Randolph
 New Brunswick Weed Night
 Liberty Group
 New Day South River
 Serene Sisters Hopatcong
 Alive Again Hopatcong
 Booze U Loose Plainfield
 Design 4 living
 Wayne Big Book
 Lafayette Women’s Group
 Sparta Monday Night
 The week that was Netcong
 Raritan Valley Sommerville

- Bellville Thurs Night
 Lyndhurst Sat Night
 Get with the program Birdgewater
 Happy Destiny Chatam
 Drip Dry Maplewood
 Sayreville Victory Group
 Monday Night Red Bank
 Circle of Friends
 Belmar Sat Night
 Give and Take east Brunswick
 New Vision Bridgewater
 WALDWICK Fellowship
 Union Hill
 Dodge City
 Haskell Group Sunday Night
 Not Butts Fair Haven
 Wayne Mountainview
 Stepping Stones Denville
 Turning Point Stanhope
 Ruby Slippers Westfield

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”

The Second Founding Moment

By John B. Area 44 Associate Archivist

Last month we talked about the First Founding Moment in the History of Alcoholics Anonymous. We talked about “Synchronicity”, The Providential Hand that is back of the founding of the AA movement as well as the basis for “carry this message”. Let’s see how we can continue to use AA History and the Four Founding Moments to “Carry This Message”.

The second founding moment was Ebby coming to visit Bill at 182 Clinton Street.

Perhaps we have another AA parable here. Let’s go back and review the chain of events that leads us from the 1st founding moment to the 2nd moment.

Rowland Hazard learns from Carl Jung that the only cure for alcoholism is a religious experience. That it takes the Power of God to overcome the power of alcohol. Rowland gets involved with a First Century Christian Fellowship known as the Oxford Group and finds sobriety through the practice of the Groups adherence to the Four Absolutes and the Four Spiritual activities also known as the Oxford Group Tenants. These tenants would later be developed by Bill into the 12 steps.

AA is the story of “Synchronicity” seemingly unrelated events coming together for a common purpose. The message of alcoholics needing a spiritual experience to recover from the alcoholic illness was destined to pass from Rowland to Bill Wilson’s schoolmate Ebby Thacher.

In the summer of 1934 Rowland Hazard is in Vermont vacationing with Oxford Groupers Shep Cornell and Cebra Graves when they hear of some trouble with Ebby Thacher. Ebby has run afoul of the law several times for drinking and creating a public nuisance and is about to be sentenced to confinement at the state mental hospital. Cebra’s father, Judge Collins Graves is to hear the case on Ebby. Rowland and Shep agree to make Ebby a “project” and persuade Judge Graves to release Ebby in their custody. Rowland brings Ebby to New York and gets Sam Shoemaker to put Ebby up at the Calvary Mission in New York. Under the influence of the Oxford’s Group

Four Spiritual Activities Ebby too sobers up. What were these “Spiritual Activities” that had helped both Rowland and now Ebby to sobriety?

From the book “What is the Oxford Group” c.1934

To be spiritually reborn, and to live in the state in which these four points (The Four Absolutes) are the guides to our life in God, the Oxford Group advocate four practical spiritual activities:

1. The Sharing of our sins and temptations with another Christian life given to God, and to use Sharing as Witness to help others, still unchanged, to recognize and acknowledge their sins.
2. Surrender of our life, past, present, and future, into God’s keeping and direction.
3. Restitution to all whom we have wronged directly or indirectly.
4. Listening to, accepting, relying on God’s Guidance and carrying it out in everything we do or say, great or small.

The basis of the AA program and our 12 Steps were the four spiritual activities of Sharing, Surrender, Restitution and Guidance. The Four Points that guided these activities were Absolute Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love! This was “the message” passed onto to Ebby from Rowland and the Oxford Groupers!

Another of the Oxford Group tenants was to “Pass it On” also known as “Continuance” Ebby thought of his boyhood school friend, Bill Wilson, as to someone he could help (sponsor). Let’s go back and review Bill’s story from the Big Book to see what was “The Message” that Ebby had passed on.

Ebby calls Bill and asks if he could come over. Bill deep in the alcoholic depression is thrilled he will see his old school chum. He looks forward to reliving the memory of their youth. Although Ebby sounds SOBER on the phone he is sure they will be able to drink together. Ebby arrives fresh skinned and glowing and refuses the drink that Bill offers him. Bill asks him what’s up . . . and Ebby says:

“He looked straight at me. Simply, but smilingly, he said, “I’ve got religion.”

Bill figures oh boy . . . here comes the pitch . . . now I’m going to get the lecture!

“But he did no ranting. In a matter of fact way he told how two men had appeared in court, persuading the judge to suspend his commitment. They had told of a simple religious idea and a practical program of action. That was two months ago and the result was self-evident. It worked!”

He had come to pass his experience along to me—if I cared to have it.”

Ebby was telling Bill that God had done for him that which he could not do for himself. Bill didn’t like the message but was desperate enough to listen

“He talked for hours. Childhood memories rose before me. I could almost hear the sound of the preacher’s voice as I sat, on still Sundays, way over there on the hillside; there was that proffered temperance pledge I never signed; my grandfather’s good natured contempt of some church fold and their doings; his insistence that the spheres really had their music; but his denial of the preacher’s right to tell him how he must listen; his fearlessness as he spoke of these things just before he died; these recollections welled up from the past. They made me swallow hard.”

Ebby is sharing his story with Bill and demonstrating his new found spiritual awareness. Bill’s childhood prejudices that he had acquired from his grandfather Fayette had governed his spiritual leanings up to now. Most alcoholics have a serious problem with “organized religion” or even “things spiritual” and Bill was no exception to this. But Ebby finds the right words to say to help crack the ego of an active alcoholic who is thoroughly agnostic. After arguing for a while back on forth Ebby says to Bill:

“WHY DON’T YOU CHOOSE YOUR OWN CONCEPTION OF GOD?”

Bill remembered in the Big Book

“That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last.”

Bill’s spiritual journey has begun. Out of the darkness and into the light; the sunlight of the Spirit! He can choose a God of his own understanding. Let’s look at the profound change which began in Bill and would lead to the Third Founding Moment.

“My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table. He shouted great tidings.”

“Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough. At long last I saw, I felt, I believed. Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view.” (Bill has gained a willingness to listen and lay aside spiritual prejudice He was “convinced.”) Bill has “come to believe”! He actually compares his awakening to the experience of Saul on the Road to Damascus! “Something like scales fell from eyes”. The hallmark of a sudden and profound conversion.

And lastly, the message of this founding moment that we can carry?

- Upon a foundation of complete willingness (to believe in the Power of God as I understand God) I might build what I saw in my friend.

- That God could do for me what I could not do myself. (God could and would if he were sought)

Stay Tuned for the Next Issue of This Day and The Third Founding Moment

Treatment Committee



Hello, my name is Theresa and I am an alcoholic. I am also the District 23 Treatment Facilities Committee Chair. This position is relatively new for me and I am very excited to have both the opportunity and privilege to help carry the AA message into treatment facilities.

The theme of this edition of This Day is “We”, an extremely powerful word that had a significant impact on my own recovery. As we all know far too well, alcoholism is a lonely disease; it isolates the still sick and suffering alcoholic. Hearing that Alcoholics Anonymous was a “We” program gave me the slightest bit of hope that with the help of other recovering alcoholics, I too might be able to recover. Hearing from sober AA members that I never had to walk this path alone was life-changing. I began my own journey in recovery by attending a 28 day rehab facility and looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. Though frightened and foggy when I entered rehab I was eventually able to hear the message of “We” from members of our fellowship who took the time to come in and speak to us. Being in a treatment facility was a life changing event in my life, it was the first time I began to feel hopeful that there was indeed a solution for my alcoholism, a progressive and fatal disease that almost destroyed me and my family.

Though many recovering alcoholics do not go into rehabilitation facilities to begin their journey in recovery,

I did and I believe that is why I feel so passionately about my new role in carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic. Coordinating with different home groups and individual members as to who will cover which meeting is just one way of me trying to give back “what was so freely given” to me. I consider it both an honor and responsibility to contribute in whatever way I can to spreading the message of AA.

Currently, District 23 brings a weekly meeting into two rehabilitation facilities in our area. We are currently seeking out additional facilities to help us reach more people in need of hearing the AA message. In my opinion reaching out to the still sick and suffering alcoholic and letting them know that there “Is a Solution” has enhanced my sobriety. Treatment facilities that invite AA members into their centers to carry the AA message to their clients afford these newly sober alcoholics an opportunity to hear firsthand how recovering AA members stay sober one day at a time.

If you are considering becoming active in your district and/or Area by carrying the AA message into treatment facilities please come to one of our monthly meetings at the Area Office in South Plainfield. The Treatment Facilities Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm. By continuing to carry the message of hope to those who desperately need it you can enhance your own sobriety and show that gratitude is indeed an action word.

With Gratitude,
Theresa A.

GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee



Outside the weather was dreary (which is becoming the norm for day of the luncheon) but inside the atmosphere was uplifting and cheerful. Despite the fact that I attend this luncheon almost every year, I still get excited to see friends that I haven't seen for a while and be able to catch up on what's happening in their lives. This year, I was honored to be part of the luncheon committee and was one of the many greeters who were charged with welcoming everyone and showing them to their tables. I feel blessed to know so many of us and to be able to participate in this event.

After opening comments by the Mid-Winter luncheon chair and introductions by our Area Chair and Delegate, two GSRs came up and made short presentations on how being a GSR has affected their sobriety. Both of the GSR presentations were very good and hopefully they sparked some interest in being a GSR. I was also pleasantly surprised by the number of GSRs in attendance. As they came up to give their names and home groups, the line seemed to go on forever. What an example of how this program works! How fortunate we are in this area to have this much participation but having spent many years in Area service work, I am well aware that we always need more representation from our groups and also more participation on our service committees. If you feel something is lacking in your sobriety, give service work a try. You could be surprised at the changes it will make in your sobriety. Okay, enough of the commercial break, back to the luncheon. I have always found Class A trustees to be very interesting speakers.

It never ceases to amaze me how they find their way, as non-alcoholics, to the Board room of AA General Services. Terry was no exception to this and his story was very interesting and humorous. His work background in alcoholism and addiction gave him experience and understanding of AA and also provided him the opportunity to be on the Board of Trustees. When he first got involved, he was very surprised to find the happiness that we share now that we are sober. He commented on how we are such a happy bunch of people and he loves being around us. Our other speaker, Greg T., shared his experience, strength and hope and his love for service work and how it has changed his life. I've known Greg since his days as a DCM and he has travelled far in his AA journey. I remember his wonderful presentation at the day of sharing for the 75th Anniversary of the Big Book. Now as the General Manager of the General Service office he continues to give back what was given to him. His love for Alcoholics Anonymous comes through not only when he shares his story but also in everyday conversations. I'm sure many other people felt it even when just thanking him.

All in all it was a very enjoyable afternoon. I encourage any of you who have yet to join us at this event, to come join us next year. It is always an amazing day and yet another reminder that we are sober by the grace of God and this fellowship. If you'd like to have a lot of fun and do service at the same time, come join us as part of the Mid-Winter Luncheon committee. We meet the first Monday of the month at 7pm at the Area Office. Hope to see you there!

Yours in Service,
Marge K.,
Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee.

NIGHTWATCH

My name is Merle and I am an alcoholic. First I would like to thank all the groups that make this possible for the live alcoholic who dials that number and gets a live volunteer on the other end when the office is closed. I would like to thank you for allowing me to be your Nightwatch coordinator for Essex/Hudson Counties.

My experience, strength and hope is as a coordinator is really nice. In the beginning when I took this commitment I didn't know what I was doing. With the help from the Nightwatch committee I have learned what to do, but I am still learning.

It is great to get to go to new meetings I never went to before and meet new people and run into people who I have known from before. The groups are the best part of my job. With newbies doing it for the

first time, I can really identify with them because I was there once too. The members who have experience doing it is a big help. The leader of the group are so important all way round because they keep track of manuals and returns them to me when their week is done. Nightwatch is when a group takes the commitment for 11 slots or 13 slots when there is a holiday involved. No matter what there is a committee behind you when a group is on. It is suggested to have one year of sobriety because you have gone through the holidays.

Thank you again for this experience.

Merle F. (Montclair "Down to Earth" Group)
Essex/Hudson Nightwatch Coordinator

Alcoholics Anonymous
Area 44
District 12

Spiritually Breakfast

Food, Fellowship and guest speakers.

Church of the Madonna
Christ the Teacher School Cafeteria
359 Whiteman St.
Fort Lee, NJ 07024
April 22, 2017
9 am - Noon

Mini - Conference Topics for Discussion

TOPIC II: Grapevine

A. Should we reconsider the 2010 Advisory Action regarding La Vina? (V. B.)

BACKGROUND

In 1995 the conference approved an advisory action that instructed the Grapevine Corporate Board to develop a plan for a bi-monthly Spanish edition of the Grapevine with funding for up to five years to come from the General Service Board Reserve Fund. The outcome was our La Vina magazine. After the five years in 2001, the Conference approved another advisory action that directed La Vina continue to be published by A.A. Grapevine and be supported by the General Service Board as a “service” to the Fellowship using A.A. Grapevine resources in order to achieve efficiencies in production and distribution. In 2010 the Conference was asked to again look at the need to continue publication and its status as a “service” to the Fellowship. This resulted in an Advisory Action that directed that La Vina be published in such a manner that it achieve spiritual parity with A.A. Grapevine as follows: be bi-monthly, be perfect-bound, black and white, and 68 pages. The belief was that this would create a publication that was spiritually equal to the English version (doing the right thing for our fellowship) and possibly as a result would increase subscriptions in the Spanish Community – thus reaching more alcoholics. The directive was that it be done in 2011 and a study be done in 2012 and be brought back to the 2013 General Service Conference for review.

At the 2013 Conference the Grapevine Conference Committee reviewed the report done in 2012 as directed by the 2010 Advisory Action. It noted increased subscriptions with associated costs. At that conference, the Committee was also asked to discontinue the required specifications set in 2010 as it was believed they were in effect taking away the right of decision of the Grapevine staff and ability to publish the best document they could. At that conference no action was taken by the Committee and, as a result there was a floor action on the same subject which failed.

At this time, the Grapevine Committee is being asked again to con-

sider lifting the specifications set in the 2010 Advisory Action. As outlined in the background this year, the main reason is that it restricts the Grapevine staff and board from publishing the magazine in the most efficient way and stripping them of their right of decision.

PROS

- It would return the right of decision on the size, material, and total content of the magazine. As the number of pages is set, there have been times when the staff has struggled to obtain content. It is felt this is supported in writings by Bill W. including one that outlines the Editor should be the ultimate judge of what is printed.
- It would allow the staff to operate and publish the magazine in the most cost efficient manner utilizing the subscription income and reserves.
- It is felt that spiritual parity does not mean quantity – and can be achieved without the restrictions/specifications.

CONS

- Since the 2010 Advisory Action specifications have been put in place, subscriptions have continually increased while the English version has continued to decrease indicating support from the Spanish Community.
- While the costs have increased due to increased subscriptions, it does not appear that this request is questioning the 2001 action/direction that the magazine’s status is as a “service” to the fellowship. Accordingly, the magazine would continue to be published as a service and would not be required to produce a profit allowing it to use the more expensive format.
- We would be able to continue to produce a publication for the Spanish Community that is on par (parity) to the English version

TOPIC II: Grapevine

B. Should we reconsider the 2004 Conference Advisory action on outside sales? (V. C.)

Our Fellowship is greatly concerned about affiliation with outside companies, entities and organizations. The long form of Tradition 6 states:

“...While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such co-

operation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied...”

In 2004, the Grapevine Conference committee brought a recommendation to the floor “that to allow the widest distribution of the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña to all purchasers, while guarding against affiliation with any outside enterprise, a) subscriptions to the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña magazine be issued only by the A.A. Grapevine Inc., or by A.A. trusted servants directly...”. This recommendation was adopted and became an Advisory Action. The recommendation was brought to the Conference to clarify a 1993 Advisory Action which stated:

“That the Grapevine Board not actively pursue the placement of Grapevine materials in commercial (non-AA) outlets.”

Several years ago the General Service Board undertook an inventory known as the Strategic Plan to address the challenges facing the General Service Board and the Fellowship. They identified a number of goals and process improvements to address these challenges to be examined by the General Service Board, our operating Corporations (A.A. World Service Inc. and the Grapevine Inc.). the General Service Conference and the Fellowship. Two of the goals in the Strategic Plan, identifying new places and audiences to bring the A.A. message of hope (Goal 6) and sustaining the financial viability of the Grapevine Inc. (Goal 13), are affected by the 2004 Advisory Action.

To study this issue, a Subcommittee on Outside Sales comprised of 3 Trustees was formed and presented a report to the General Service Board at the October, 2016 Quarterly Board meeting. The report stated that the subcommittee believed that the Grapevine and La Viña should be available wherever it may be useful to the still sick and suffering alcoholic and that finding ways to grow this community has a great spiritual value in providing the most recent experiences of the Fellowship. The report recommended that the 2004 Advisory action be reconsidered because it “limits creative thinking and leaves possible opportunities for introducing A.A. to larger and more diverse populations outside

the scope of the Grapevine Board.” One example cited in the report is the large audience for reaching the potential alcoholic through the medical community, in particular treatment centers. In 2013, 58.6% of those admitted to treatment centers were having problems with alcohol (either primarily or as the primary issue with a secondary drug). The report asks the question: “Why wouldn’t the Grapevine sell subscriptions and literature through these large corporations that work at a scale outside the scope of a local committee or Grapevine rep...?” What do you think about the report by the Subcommittee on Outside Sales? What does your Group think?

PROS

In 2004, when the Advisory Action stating that subscriptions to the Grapevine and La Viña should only be sold by the Grapevine Inc. or A.A. trusted servants only, attitudes towards affiliation are different. This is especially true of online sales through organizations like Amazon or Barnes & Nobles for either the printed version or for the electronic eReader version. Today, the Grapevine Inc. does sell their books like Step by Step or the 365 Daily Quote book directly on websites like Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com. However, due to the 1993 and 2004 Advisory Actions, the Grapevine and La Viña cannot be sold on these websites.

Also, consider the example provided in the Subcommittee report on Outside Sales, for providing subscriptions through the Treatment centers. This is not allowed currently and we are missing an opportunity to help increase our declining subscriptions through this and other channels.

With new sales channels and avenues being opened up by technology on a seemingly daily basis, what other opportunities might the Grapevine be able to utilize for subscriptions if given the opportunity?

CONS

Affiliation is affiliation. Even though attitudes may have changed, we still need to be careful how and by what channels we make our materials available to ensure that we are not implying our

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Mini - Conference Topics continued

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endorsement of the organization providing subscriptions.

We should also consider that when other organizations or outside enterprises are offering subscriptions for our Meeting in Print, we could lose control over the message on how these subscriptions are offered or whether these organizations are implying that we endorse their product or service.

What do you and your Group think? Would providing Grapevine and La Viña subscriptions through other organizations be implying affiliation?

Topic VI: Literature Consider Request for Revisions to the Pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship"

Background: A letter was brought to District 9 in April of 2015 from a group in that district, The Three Legacies Group, to remove two statements in the pamphlet. After several months of discussion, it was voted on by the district and passed unanimously in July of 2015 to bring it to the area for consideration. The district was hoping to get a broad conscience from the area which would include asking their delegate to submit this agenda item to the General Service Conference Coordinator. The issue was brought to the area assembly on November 7, 2015, and passed with substantial unanimity.

The group had been studying the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" (P-15). During weekly discussions, two concerns came up: The first concern is on Page 24, which states, "A file of names, addresses and phone numbers of newcomers (who wish to volunteer the information)". The second concern was the statement, "Review of newcomers list by a steering committee (or twelfth step or sponsorship committee) with follow up activity where it seems needed." They feel that the problem with these statements is that in three other pamphlets the message was all the same, but different than the two concerns mentioned above in the "Q & A on Sponsorship" pamphlet. In "The Newcomer Asks" pamphlet on Page 3, in "A.A. and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic" on Page 19, in "The A.A. Group"

pamphlet on Page 39, and in the "A.A. Fact File" sheet on Page 4, - - all state we don't keep membership lists!

Here are some Pro's, in favor of the revisions:

- All pamphlets should read the same regarding lists, or no lists. No mixed messages.

- Is the message about having lists in the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" a positive one, or will it scare the newcomer away?

- Does it sound like a rule signing up for a club?

- A.A. as a whole is not the same as other organizations. We are a member when we say we are!! Here are some Con's, against the revisions:

- The group is comparing GROUP membership lists to membership lists for A.A. AS A WHOLE. They are two completely different things!

- The pamphlet has worked well all these years, having no complaints from sponsors or newcomers. It must be fine just the way it is.

- Don't we need membership lists for our home groups so that we can call each other when needed? The majority of groups in Alcoholics Anonymous do have membership lists, which is a good thing. They are usually given to home group members only, and they are confidential.

- They help the newcomer feel like they are a part of the home group.

- Membership files for groups are good for many reasons. However, we don't sign any type of membership list when we join Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole! A clear distinction should be made between the two!

TOPIC VI: Literature B. Should we develop literature and/or language regarding safety? (VI. J.)

Over the past several years there have been numerous requests from members, groups, and Areas for AA to develop literature regarding safety. Included in the Conference background material are requests from numerous groups, districts, and Areas.

The request from Washington (Area 72) in December 2015 was

for "GSB/GSO to create an AA Guideline or AA Pamphlet or written collection of experiences and solutions regarding Safety in AA". They specifically expressed a concern over instances of illegal behavior including sexual harassment (13th stepping). They cited numerous examples and pointed to our collective responsibility to make AA a safe, welcoming, and attractive place for newcomers and all members.

Oregon (Area 58), through their Panel 64 Delegate wrote a letter to GSO in November 2015 stating that at their September Assembly they voted with substantial unanimity to request an agenda item that "GSO create literature on Safety in AA" for the 66th General Service Conference This came after lively discussion at two assemblies and significant group input. Their letter included seven pages of minutes detailing their discussion on predatory practices and unsafe environments in AA, concern about making sure that AA is a safe place for all, and the need for literature regarding safety.

Southern California (Area 05) also asked the Conference to consider development of AA Literature "providing information and guidance to A.A. groups regarding matters of personal conduct, safety and the protection of our members". Arizona (Area 3) made a similar request to be sent to the 2015 Conference.

There were several requests from other Areas to revise current literature to include language regarding safety. In 2014, North Carolina (Area 51) asked that language be added to "The A.A. Group" pamphlet that encourages groups to recognize their role in creating a safe A.A. meeting. New Hampshire (Area 43) even provided suggested language to update our literature:

"Individual safety is something each person attending an AA meeting should be individually mindful of. Groups should endeavor to provide a safe meeting place and encourage one another, especially new attendees, to not engage in any behavior, which may place themselves or others in fear for any reason. The Tradition of Anonymity should never be used as a shield to conceal wrongdoing. Should a situation arise where a person's safety is in jeopardy or criminal behavior is occurring, the appropriate authorities should be consulted and cooperated with."

Additional background includes "The International Conference of Young People In Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA) Non-Discrimination And Anti-harassment Policies".

So it appears that over the past several years there has been an "expressed need" by the Fellowship for literature on safety. AA was unable to consider these requests before now, as AA had been named as a defendant in a wrongful death lawsuit (since dismissed).

In February 2017 an AA Guideline titled, Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare (SMF-209) was released. Even with this release, the Fellowship requests were so numerous, that the Trustees Committee sent this agenda item on to the 2017 Conference Committee on Literature. The guideline doesn't include shared experience from groups and members, which might be helpful.

So, should we create new literature or is the service guideline adequate? Is it possible that the service piece is a good beginning but more is still needed? Or should we update current literature? Do we also need an official policy statement regarding non-discrimination and anti-harassment like ICYPAA?

What do you think? What does your group think?

PRO

Safety is a very important concern in today's AA, and anything that will help with this problem is welcomed. The more literature and shared experience available to groups and members, the better.

It's every member's right to feel safe and secure in AA, and expanded literature will help inform the fellowship.

Several years ago AA was named as a defendant in a wrongful death lawsuit, and has since been dismissed as a defendant. This is indicative that there is a real need for literature regarding safety.

The new AA Guideline Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare (SMF-209) is a great start but in AA, our most effective resource is shared experience; member-to-member and group-to-group. We need literature that

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features sharing on this most important topic.

CON

We already have enough recovery literature and GSO just released the new service piece: Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare (SMF-209).

We don't need to develop new literature. We should just update the literature we have as they come up for reprint.

GSO/GSB is not a governing body, and therefore it's not their job to tell members or groups how to behave or respond to a problem. Sharing and work on this issue should be done at an Area and Local level. Groups should develop their own policies and procedures.

Topic VII: Policy/Admissions

A. Should we add an "YPAA Subcommittee" to the service structure?

Area 8, San Diego-Imperial Area Assembly has requested the General Service Conference consider adding a Young People in AA Subcommittee to the General Service Structure. This request will be considered and discussed by the Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions. Area 8 states they have two active young people committees in the area. They also state "In spite of YPAA's highly visible and regular participation in service, it has been the experience of YPAA members to be frequently met with both objection and question about being part of AA." This questioning of validity may occur at some local levels but throughout US and Canada and AA as a whole, Young People Groups, activities, and committees, such as ICYPAA, are not only recognized but activities are published in AA publications such as Box 459 and Markings, Your Archives Interchange.

While currently not a specific part of AA General Service Structure, young people committees at the state levels provide liaison representatives to Area Committees and Assemblies to exchange information and ideas. Young people AA Groups abound throughout AA and participate in the service structure as listed groups with our General Service Office and have

GSR's participate in District Meetings and Area Assemblies. Archives from International Convention of Young People in AA have been and still are donated to GSO Archives and have been displayed at the office in New York (Markings, Your Archives Interchange, Spring 2006). GSO Archives Department continues cooperating with ICPAA. In addition, throughout the years members and groups ask questions about AA directed to our General Service Office. One of these questions, posed and published in February-March 2008 Box 459 asks; "Is ICYPAA (International Convention of Young People in AA) part of AA? The response was "Yes, ICYPAA is a part as are young people in AA Committees, at the state and regional levels as long as the events they organize are run by AA members." ICYPAA is listed in our confidential AA Directories under "Special International Contacts."

Now that we have established the Young People Groups and committees are part of AA let us consider the question in front of the General Service Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions. Should there be a Young People in AA Subcommittee added to the AA Service Structure for the AA General Service Conference? Some would say, based on the history and participation of young people committees in AA at the local, national, and international level, yes there should be a committee added. This subcommittee would further the work of young people committees and possibly coordinate activities at an even more active level than occurs presently. Area 8 believes the spread of Young People Committees would grow and possibly generate additional GSR's at the group level which would benefit the Area and AA as a whole. Others would say the current model works well and should not be tampered with. The young people groups are already part of AA and their committees and committee sponsored events are recognized by AA as a whole. Some will point to the fact that Intergroup Committees are recognized as part of AA but not part of the AA General Service Structure. Both serve AA and have specific purposes. Young People Committees, in particular, are to serve the young population, need to, and should continue to be supported by AA as a whole. The added expense and additional time requirements for participation in a new subcommittee may not be in the best interests of AA as a whole.

The answer to the question as it applies to Area 44 rests with our Home Groups. The question should be taken seriously and discussed in detail, pro and con, so that an informed group conscience can be reached.

Topic XII:

Agenda item a: Consider a proposal for a new publication, unity in action: Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951 - 1970 (working title).

We have a few books that show us the history of AA. A.A. comes of age, Dr. Bob and the good Old-Timers and Pass it on. We can even look at the past Conference Advisory Action book. It covers the first general service conference to the present. We all should read these books.

I personally would love to read these talks and see what kind of hot bed issues may have been talked about or what was on Bill's mind at the time. I could also read Language of The Heart a Grapevine publication to see what was on Bill's mind.

So I have a question. Is this just some way to help bring up the literature sales? Wouldn't we be placing Bill higher on that co-founder pedestal?

I've heard it said if you spend too much time looking back you can't see where you're going. Winston Churchill who said "those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

The more information we have about our history can only help keep us on that A.A. beam.



SPEAK OUT! *This Day* Newsletter provides this forum for individual AA's viewpoints and opinions. The opinions expressed here are individual opinions only and not necessarily the opinions of *This Day*, Area 44, North Jersey Intergroup, or AA as a whole. We welcome your comments, opinions or viewpoints on anything found in this newsletter. — *The Editor*

WE. What hope that word gives me. Before hearing it in AA, 'we' meant nothing. I WAS ALONE.

WE. The first word I was taught that had significance, hope. It was suggested that I look at it as my new map for living. This is how WE gave me new life.

YOU taught me that when it's WE, I would enjoy a life, free of the chaos I craved. WE; can calm whirlwinds, slow down the months, weeks, days, hours & even minutes. 'WE' would teach that – I could learn that!

I am an Alcoholic. I liked to drink, was told I could drink most men under the table. I didn't always remember my actions; who did? Much of what I did was a disgrace; blackouts were a gift. Wanting to fit in, yet, shutting everyone out.

I came into AA at 22. By then I had learned more than some twice my age. I grew up quicker– my motto? "Let me learn from MY OWN mistakes". DID I LEARN! I had 3 friends at the end, 1 @ work, 1 I partied with & the last, we met partying & she didn't drink like that anymore & she didn't judge.

So many 'I's', did you notice? Life was so "I-based" it was deadly & lonely. The morning after my last drunk I woke up. I WAS LIVID. When I called AA, they suggested I go to detox, HUH! I only have a little problem. Miss work? I was too important. With my Mother's support I went to a meeting; came late, left early, it was a candlelight meeting, THANK GOD! WHAT if someone knew me?

After awhile discontent brought me to a place of desperation. It was snowing but I went to a women's meeting. WE sat in a cold house; the heat "wasn't" – but the room "was". WE sat close to each other, read from a book & discussed what WE read. I felt more at home.

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A few women asked if WE could go to another meeting. Could WE? (My time, precious & I, so important) WE went & it was smoky, but there were people saying “WE go to the diner after, want to come?” So, WE went. (I wasn’t busy after all!) HOW MY LIFE CHANGED! WE not only went to the diner, but also down the shore; there are meetings around the clock in Belmar. WE went bowling, to dances & weddings. WE went on commitments! I was dying: WE were learning to LIVE!

Life was changing: quickly, YOU & I willing to become WE. The first word of the steps: WE. WE wouldn’t be alone ever again. I was among my peers; age, sex, race, creed, color; NOTHING MATTERED. WE are Alcoholics. There is a future, WE BROUGHT PROMISE.

WE learned about a Power greater than ourselves. WE shared Experiences, Strengths & Hopes. So many, so great the lessons: WE had the promises of life. “We are in the business of living!” And live WE did!! WE worked the steps, realizing “I” alone = the problem, WE, together, the solution.

WE, who were once broken, grew mentally, physically, & spiritually. AA gave new hope. WE embraced life, together, facing life’s joys, sadness, births, deaths, weddings, divorces, calamities, health & illnesses. In all, trusting that WE were together; there is a future.

Life today? WE accomplish anything TOGETHER. WE hold AA’s future. WE were freely given this program, its hopes & life. WE must share this, reaching OUR hands to the new. WE must pass along the promise, hope & life. MY life is now WE.

WE close OUR meetings with thanksgiving to OUR FATHER. WE live as never before.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

I am an alcoholic. I never understood what that meant until I joined the fellowship of AA. I never understood a lot of things until I joined AA. I started drinking in college when I was eighteen and kept at it steadily until April 26, 2011 when I crawled into my first meeting at the age of 58.

My life, up until that night, was the story of “I”. They say the heart of a sentence is the verb but I suspect it’s really the subject, the

“I” demanding all the attention it can claim, “I want, I need.” And by the end of my drinking it really was just me and, of course, a bottle. When I finally collapsed in a bar (where else?), bleeding from a gash in my forehead after hitting the floor, I was completely alone. There was no one around to shovel me onto the stretcher except the ambulance drivers or so I was told later by an overworked cop at the scene. I was unconscious at the time. Everyone else in my life, it seemed, had had enough.

And then AA happened. Of course, in the early days, I felt at once put upon, arrogant, angry and scared. I was even convinced that I could lick this minor dilemma by myself. How wrong I was involved the gradual shift from “I” to “We.” In AA I learned I was not the smartest person in the room. I learned about patience, understanding and kindness all of which were shown to me even when I was at my most obnoxious and, seemingly irredeemable.

Eventually I got a sponsor, a home group, and began the AA 12 Steps. And things did get better but something was always nagging at me. I stayed clean but the urge for a drink clung to me. I couldn’t shake it. It was maddening. My sponsor suggested I revisit the Steps but that made me feel put upon, arrogant, angry and scared. And then something happened.

About a year into the program I was at a meeting on a cold January night. I didn’t want to be there. I was getting tired of the routine and felt myself slipping backwards. Across the table from me, two young men sat like mirror images of myself back when I was active. They had to be at this meeting as part of a rehab program to which they had been sentenced. It was clear they would rather be somewhere else. They looked put upon, arrogant, angry and scared. As the meeting opened and members were reading the AA Preamble, the Steps, and Traditions, I was given the page entitled “How It Works.”

I don’t know what came over me but I read that brief summary to those two young men as if they were the only ones in the room. Midway through I paused, pointed at them, and said, “If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it – then you are ready to take certain steps.” I had read or heard those words nearly a thousand times since my first meeting. The funny thing was this time I meant it. When I said, “If you want what

“WE” have,” I finally understood what this was all about. “WE admitted WE were powerless over alcohol.” I thought to myself, “My God, I’m really in this thing. And I can’t do this without these other guys.”

After the meeting, my sponsor asked me how I was getting on. “Great,” I said. “I just finished taking my first step.”
Martin F.

Reliance, not Defiance

No one was more stunned than I when I cracked open a bottle of champagne on the edge of the deep sink in my laundry room and drank it down with complete abandon. Somewhere two floors up was a box of sober medallions, the most recent of which displayed the roman numeral XV. My relapse was brief; two weeks of drinking and haphazard pill use. When I knew I was done, I shamefully called my sponsor. “I’ve been drinking,” I said. “I had a slip.” Without skipping a beat, she replied: “A slip is a woman’s undergarment. Drinking became an option for you again because sobriety lost its priority.”

Unsure whether she was right or wrong, I went to a meeting, began counting days, and dove back into the program of action that had provided many useful suggestions for staying sober one day at a time. For years, I’d regularly attended meetings, worked the steps to the best of my ability, immersed myself in AA literature, willingly helped the newcomer, and carried the message by sharing honestly and going on out-speaks. While all of the 9th step promises may not have been realized in my life, I did, at least in theory, believe that God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. At the very least, I knew that a power greater than me had helped me walk in the door of a church basement years prior and shown me that in some indefinable way there are no coincidences.

I truly respect and am admittedly envious of those who seem to have a clear sense of who God is. I’ve read the literature and know that people of faith look to God as a friend, a comrade, a life preserver. I observe how my sponsor lives her 3rd and 11th step. At times, I’m awestruck by her ability to regularly turn her will and her life over to her higher power. She has conviction and trust in not only the process, but the outcome. In times of personal pain and struggle, I contact her. With an empathic

ear, she listens, then gently points out that if nothing changes, nothing changes. I continue to run my own show.

At a recent celebration meeting, a fellow AA pointed out that she’d been to three celebration meetings that week. Her take-away was this: “the message I heard repeatedly from those who had relapsed and were coming back was that they had not prayed that day.” I left the meeting with a huge resentment. How dare she? How did she know what went on in the hearts and minds of those who found themselves with a drink in hand; those for whom drinking had no longer been an option? How did she know what it felt like to feel so alone that the ONLY option was to drink again? I was so resistant to this woman’s observation that I wanted to head for the hills and never return to the meeting that up until that moment had been a daily anchor in my recovery,

I called my sponsor to vent, knowing she’d be on my side, hoping she’d fuel my fiery resentment. Instead, she asked me a question, “What is God to you?” I replied instantaneously. “I like the acronyms I learned from the old-timers: GOD: Group of Drunks (my sober friends with whom I speak daily, the inspiring messages I hear at meetings), GOD: Good Orderly Direction (the sober reference and guidance I get from my sponsor, the pearls of wisdom I gain from AA literature)...” “What else?” she pressed. “GOD,” I whispered. “Gift of Desperation.” I began to cry. It felt as though a dam had broken. I may’ve been sober for a long time, but at the core of my being, I was completely and totally relying on myself.

It’s a new year, the first month of which focuses on the first step. The daily reflections have been a source of strength for me; a reminder that I’m powerless, that I don’t have to do anything alone. I’m starting to pray and meditate slowly, in my own way, at my own pace. Upon awakening, I ask for help. And as each day ends, I become more convinced that I need to look to my higher power with the same fervor that I’d looked to AA to try to stop drinking. By opening my heart to a power bigger than me, I have everything to gain. There is peace in knowing that there is a plan, there is peace in once again having hope. And when I falter or forget or judge myself for not praying “rightly,” I pause and remember that this is all new for me. Change won’t happen overnight.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Awareness, acceptance, action. I'm determined to let go of the reins. If people I love, people I respect, and people who have walked this path before me have learned to turn their lives over to a God of their understanding, and know peace in a way they'd never dreamed possible, then so can I. It's time to stop fighting everyone and everything. Just for today, I am willing to try.

Debbie B.
Wyckoff, NJ

A Morning Blessing

You know I woke up this morning unconsciously wanting to run to the liquor store, Today I will have 8 days sober, recently coming out of detox. I then thought for a second ... Hold on, your body doesn't need it. You went through your withdrawal; you suffered like hell; you got through it. Now you don't have to put alcohol in your system to function. This feeling in me feels great. What a relief. The clawing, the sweating, the waiting for the clock's hands to turn for the store to open up. It's all gone away. I don't have to hide bottles anymore. I don't have to brush my teeth ten thousand times to speak to anyone. I can eat my breakfast, instead of throwing up my saliva. Squirting visine in my eyes like I'm watering my plants. Today I feel great; I feel in touch with myself. I have respect for myself, and I can do what I love to do most. Take care of myself and love myself. I can also do something that I really love to do is write. With a clear mind and my hand is not shaking. This my friends is a blessing. Thank God I stopped drinking because I was killing myself slowly.

Jason B.

**NNJGS AREA 44
SCHEDULE OF DELEGATE'S 2017 PRE-CONFERENCE REPORTS**

Wednesday March 1, 2017 @ 7:00 PM
SECTION SIX
West Park Community Center
615 West Park Ave.
Ocean, NJ 07712
Hosted by District 26

Saturday, March 4, 2017 @ 1:00 PM
SECTION FOUR
Hunterdon Medical Center (Auditorium)
2100 Wescott Dr
Flemington, NJ 08822
Hosted by Districts 15/21

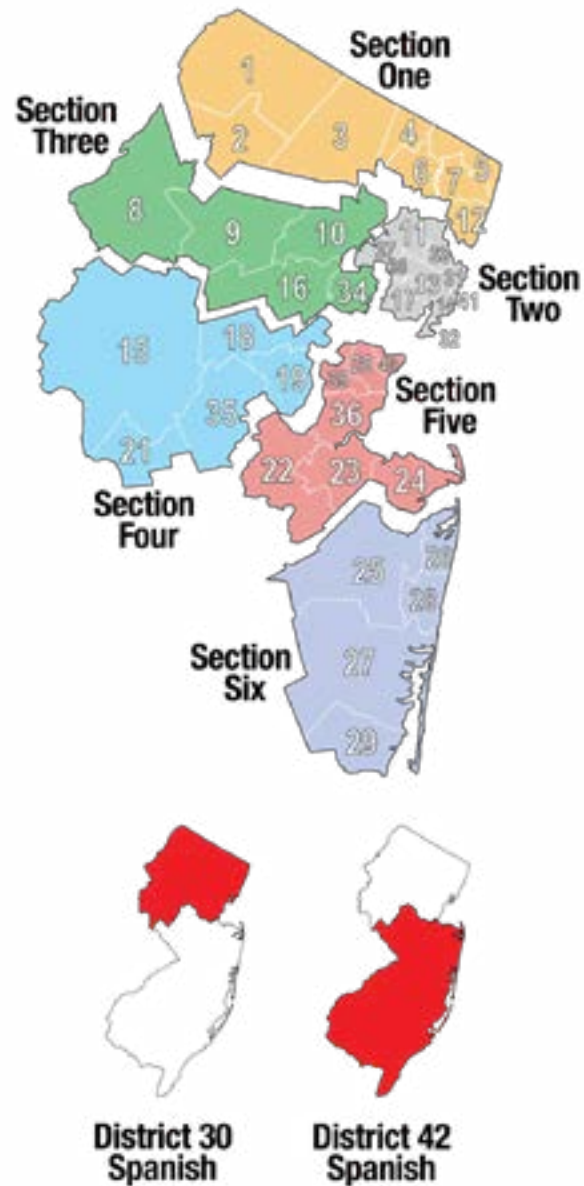
Tuesday March 14, 2017 @ 7:30 PM
SECTION TWO
Wesley United Methodist Church
225 Washington Ave.
Belleville, NJ 07109
Hosted by District 13

Thursday March 16, 2017 @ 7:00 PM
SECTION FIVE
Presbyterian Church
140 Mountain Ave.
Westfield, NJ 07090
Hosted by District 39

Saturday March 18, 2017 @ 10:30 AM
SECTION ONE
The United Methodist Church
71 South Sparta Ave,
Sparta, NJ, 07871
Hosted by Districts 1/2

Sunday March 19, 2017 @ 10:00 AM
DISTRICTS 30 & 42 (Spanish-Speaking)
Area Office
2325 Plainfield Ave. Suite 2J
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

Tuesday March 21, 2017 @ 7:00 PM
SECTION THREE
Stanhope United Methodist Church
2 Route 183
Netcong NJ 07857
Hosted by District 9



DCMs please copy and distribute to all GSRs. All interested AAs are welcome!
Questions? Please contact your Delegate, Lester G. at delegate@nnjaa.org.

Save the Date!

The Area 44 AA Grapevine Committee's



GRAPEFEST

A Celebration of AA Grapevine & La Viña

Guest Speaker TBA

Lunch will be provided!

You'll laugh; you'll cry! You'll want a subscription!

Saturday, May 6, 2017, 10am – 1pm

**At the Area Office: 2325 Plainfield Ave., Suite 2J
(2nd Floor, Rear Entrance)
South Plainfield, NJ 07080**

For more info email: grapevine@nnjaa.org

Northern N.J. Intergroup & Area 44
2017 Corrections' Workshop



Saturday, May 13th 9am – 1:00pm

What do we (Corrections) do? How do we do it? Why do we do it? And how can we do it better?

Come join us as we discuss specific topics uniquely relevant to our service work. In sharing our collective experience with each other, we hope to grow and improve in our effectiveness of delivering the A.A. message of recovery to those incarcerated.

We hope to see you there!

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST & LITE LUNCH WILL BE SERVED

All are welcomed

LOCATION: Area Office – 2325 Plainfield Avenue Suite 2J (rear entrance)
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

Need more information email CFC Chair @ - CFC@nnjaa.org

District Service Meetings

- District 1&2** - 2nd Tuesday. 7:30 pm, Sunrise House Cafeteria, 37 Sunset Inn Road, Lafayette
- District 3** - 3rd Friday 7:00 pm; Hillcrest Community Center, 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, 7:30 pm, St. Mary's Church corner of High and Legion, Closter
- District 8** - 2nd Tues. 7:30 pm, Panther Valley Ecumenical Ch, 1490 Route 517, Allamuchy
- District 9** - 3rd Tues. 7:30 pm, Stanhope United Methodist Ch, Rte 183, Netcong
- District 10** - 2nd Tues. 7:00 pm, 1st Presbyterian Church, 513 Birch St, (corner of Church & Birch) Boonton
- District 11/33** - 4th Wed. 7:00 pm, Clifton Library, 292 Piaget Ave Rm A, Clifton
- District 12** - 2nd Thur. 7:00pm, St. Francis of Assisi Parish Center(basement), 124 Park St, Ridgefield Park
- District 13** - 2nd Tue. 7:30 pm, Wesley Meth. Ch., 225 Washington Ave, Belleville
- District 14** - Last Tue. 7:00 pm, St. Nicholas School Cafeteria, 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. 7:30 pm Hilldale Park Pres. Church, 85 Ridgedale Ave, Cedar Knolls
- District 17** - 3rd Fri. 8:00pm, 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** - 1st Tues 7:30 pm, 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. 8:00 pm, New Monmouth Baptist Church, 4 Cherry Tree Farm Rd, Middletown
- District 25** - Last Wed. 7:30 pm, Hope Lutheran Church, 211 Elton-Adelphia Road., Freehold
- District 26** - 3rd Thur. 7:00 pm, Christ United Meth Church, 300Ridge Rd, Fair Haven
- District 27/29** - 3rd Mon. 7:30 pm, St. Luke's Parish, 1674 Old Freehold Road, Toms River
- District 28** - 1st Tue. 7:30 pm, 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, 2nd Floor, 77th Street & Broadway, North Bergen
- District 32** - 3rd Thur. 7:00 pm, Bayonne Library, 31st St. & Ave. C., Bayonne
- District 34** - 3rd Sat. 09:30 am, 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, St. Luke's Church, 17 Oak Ave & Route 27, Metuchen
- District 37** - 3rd Wed. 7:00 pm, First Evangelical Lutheran Church 153 Park St, Montclair
- District 38** - 2nd Mon. 7:00 pm, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 271 Roseland Avenue, Essex Fells
- District 39** - 1st Wed. 7:00 pm, Presbyterian Church, 140 Mountain Ave., Westfield
- District 40** - 4th Sunday 10:45 am, 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 Sunday 9:00am, 103 Bayard Street, Suite B-12, New Brunswick

NNJGS Area 44 Office Calendar

MARCH

- 1 Mailing Committee 7:30 PM
- 1 Translation Committee 7:00 PM
- 4 Grapevine Committee 10:00 AM
- 6 Remote Communities Com. 7:00 PM
- 6 MidWinter Luncheon Com 7:30 PM
- 7 Officer's Meeting 7:00 PM
- 8 History & Archives Comm. 7:30 PM
- 8 Treatment Committee 8:00 PM
- 12 Film Committee 9:00 AM
- 12 Area Committee Meeting 10:00 AM
- 13 Computer Tech Comm 7:30 AM
- 14 Public Information Com 7:30 PM
- 15 Convention Committee 8:00 PM
- 16 Newsletter Committee 7:30 PM
- 14 Corrections Committee 10:00 AM
- 19 Garden State Young People 5:00 PM
- 20 Literature Sales 6:30 PM
- 20 Literature Committee 7:30 PM
- 21 CPC Committee 7:00 PM
- 23 Website Com@Intergroup 7:30 PM
- 23 Policy & Admissions Com. 7:30 PM
- 27 Finance Committee 7:30 PM

APRIL

- 1 Grapevine Committee 10:00 AM
- 4 Officer's Meeting 7:00 PM
- 5 Mailing Committee 7:30 PM
- 5 Translation Committee 7:00 PM
- 8 Mini-Conference 8:00 AM
- 10 Computer Tech Comm 7:30 AM

- 11 Public Information Com 7:30 PM
- 12 Treatment Committee 8:00 PM
- 12 History & Archives Comm. 7:30 PM
- 17 Literature Sales 6:30 PM
- 17 Literature Committee 7:30 PM
- 18 CPC Committee 7:00 PM
- 19 Convention Committee 8:00 PM
- 20 Newsletter Committee 7:30 PM
- 24 Remote Communities 7:30 PM
- 25 Finance Committee 7:30 PM
- 26 Ad Hoc Communications 7:00 PM
- 27 P&A Committee 7:30 PM
- 27 Website @ Intergroup 7:30 PM
- 29 Treatment Workshop 9:00 AM

MAY

- 2 Officer's Meeting 7:00 PM
- 3 Mailing Committee 7:30 PM
- 3 Translation Committee 7:00 PM
- 6 Grapefest 10:00 AM
- 8 Computer Tech Comm 7:30 AM
- 9 Public Information Com 7:30 PM
- 10 Treatment Committee 8:00 PM
- 10 History & Archives Comm. 7:30 PM
- 13 Corrections Workshop 9:00AM
- 15 Literature Sales 6:30 PM
- 15 Literature Committee 7:30 PM
- 16 CPC Committee 7:00 PM
- 17 Convention Committee 8:00 PM
- 18 Newsletter Committee 7:30 PM
- 21 Film Committee 9:00 AM

- 21 Area Committee Meeting 10:00 AM
- 23 Finance Committee 7:30 PM
- 23 Joint Unity 7:30 PM
- 24 Ad Hoc Communications 7:00 PM
- 25 P&A Committee 7:30 PM
- 25 Website @ Intergroup 7:30 PM
- 26 This Day - Deadline
- 29 Remote Communities 7:30PM

JUNE

- 3 Grapevine Committee 10:00 AM
- 6 Officer's Meeting 7:00 PM
- 7 Mailing Committee 7:30 PM
- 7 Translation Committee 7:00 PM
- 10 Area Assembly 8:00 AM
- 12 Computer Tech Comm 7:30 AM
- 13 Public Information Com 7:30 PM
- 14 Treatment Committee 8:00 PM
- 14 History & Archives Comm. 7:30 PM
- 15 Newsletter Committee 7:30 PM
- 19 Literature Sales 6:30 PM
- 19 Literature Committee 7:30 PM
- 20 CPC Committee 7:00 PM
- 21 Convention Committee 8:00 PM
- 22 Newsletter Committee 7:30 PM
- 22 P&A Committee 7:30 PM
- 26 Remote Communities 7:30 PM
- 27 Finance Committee 7:30 PM
- 28 Ad Hoc Communications 7:00 PM

Intergroup Calendar

MARCH

- 2 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, Clark 8:30PM
- 12 Booker's Exchange, Cranford 6:30AM
- 15 Nightwatch Committee 7:30PM
- 23 Joint Website Com - Area Office 7:30PM

APRIL

- 6 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, Clark 8:30PM
- 14 Holiday (Office Closed) Good Friday
- 27 Joint Website Com - Intergroup Office

MAY

- 4 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, Clark 8:30PM
- 17 Nightwatch Committee 7:30PM
- 23 Joint Unity Meeting - Area Office 8:00PM
- 25 Joint Website Com - Area Office 7:30PM
- 29 Holiday (Office Closed) Memorial Day

JUNE

- 1 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, Clark 8:30PM
- 11 Bookers Exchange, Clark 6:30AM
- 22 Joint Website Committee 7:30PM

**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE MAY 26
NEWSLETTER@NNJAA.ORG**

Statement Of Purpose:

This Day is published quarterly as a joint newsletter for Northern New Jersey General Service Area 44 and the Northern New Jersey Intergroup. *This Day* functions to promote communication between the groups in Northern New Jersey and to provide members with service-related information. *This Day* is also a forum for the diverse opinions of the Area 44 Fellowship through shared experience, strength, and hope in all three of AA's legacies: Unity, Service, and Recovery.

Editorial Policy:

Articles submitted from the Fellowship are encouraged, and should not exceed 800 words. The newsletter committee may edit submissions for grammar, readability, and content. 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 mailed to the attention of 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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- *Co-signing your excuses and rationalizations!
- *Work only the Steps you want, in the order you choose!
- *Learn the secret of giving it away before you even have it!
- *Why "walk the walk" when you can just "talk the talk?"
- *Remember, it's better to look good than to feel good!
- *Why save your ass at the cost of losing your face?

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Your Northern New Jersey A.A. Website

**The theme for the Summer
edition of This Day:**

What worth does your sobriety bring to you
and your life?

THIS DAY

Joint News of NNJGS Area 44
and Northern New Jersey Intergroup
2325 Plainfield Ave., Suite 2J
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Spring 2017



Some of the District 23 Committee took a trip to Dr. Bob's house in Akron, Ohio to read This Day.

Giving An AA Talk

I have learned that that which does not come from the heart does not reach the heart & I wish to reach your hearts to-night. I came here to participate in your anniversary, not to perform. I would rather talk about the program than to talk about myself because the message is far more important than the messenger.

AA talks can be, and too often are, a repetition of past or present sorrows. Sketching the background is important, and has its place, but it's merely the foundation of the talk. The best talk, the one that helps the most people to the highest degree, is the one that brings out just how the Program works & just how the speaker follows It. A good talk may be divided into three parts - how sick I was, how I got better, and what helped me to get well. Of these three, a strong emphasis needs to be on what helped me to get well. If there is an issue in our life that we want to talk about, I suggest to Sponsees that it's okay to share it, but ALSO share what Steps and spiritual practices we are using to DEAL with the issue. Then the sharing changes from just dumping problems to being an example of applying the solution in all of our affairs and better serves those hearing the talk.

Another good example to follow is Chapter 1 "Bill's Story" in the Big Book. This story is 16 pages and the first eight pages are about what he used to be like, and the second eight pages are about what happened and what he is like now. That's a 50/50 split between the problem and the solution. Too many talks are mostly about the drinking career of the speaker but that doesn't help newcomers very well. We all know how to drink. I believe that we need to emphasize the solution a whole lot more. But of course we need to have worked all the 12 Steps first before we'll have any significant message to carry.

Just Love,
Barefoot Bill
Pathway to Power Group in Ridgewood NJ