

AA CONCEPTS

Northern Illinois Area, Ltd. Area 20 Service Letter

Winter 2014-2015

From the Area chair

I was thinking:

Since last May I have been attending a meeting that studies our three legacies, Recovery (the steps), Unity (the Traditions) and Service (the Concepts). It has been a wonderful experience looking at what Bill has to say about these 36 principles that have shaped our fellowship.

This past weekend I attended a "Concepts Retreat" where we spent Friday night through Sunday morning studying Concepts I, II, and III. We also heard from a woman, who has spent time researching in the Archives at GSO, about how all of our principles are embedded into the Big Book, Twelve and Twelve and the A.A. Service Manual, including the Concepts.

Some things stand out:

The Steps are about recovery: what I need to do to get and stay sober "Carrying the Message."

The Traditions are about unity: what we need to do to stay together and focused on being a fellowship "Protecting the Message."

The Concepts are about service: what they need to do to make carrying the message possible "Perpetuating the Message."

Concepts I reads: "Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship."

From the Area delegate

A couple months ago as I was driving to the sponsorship workshop in Barrington I passed a bar that was advertising its drink specials. The current special for a tapper is \$1.00 each. Not having had a drink in a few 24 hours, I suppose that's a fair price. Although when I quit drinking I attended quarter beer night. Which means the price of beer has gone up 400% since I got sober. Zow!

This made me think it's time to up my ante in the basket again. When I got sober to put a buck in the basket was suggested. When I was a couple years sober they started talking about the idea, maybe, that wasn't enough. I remember hearing about one group that "made" you put two dollars in the basket. People were aghast! How dare they! I attended and no one forced me to put anything in the basket. Most of them were old timers who put two bucks on the table and then in the basket. They led by example and I followed their lead.

A few years later, Starbucks and Monster drinks started showing up in meetings. People were still talking about the idea of putting more than a buck in the basket. Talk was that if you could spend it on coffee, you could spend it on AA. Another idea I heard was that I could "buy the price of my favorite drink but top shelf" for my Home Group. I'm glad I didn't drink foo-foo martinis. Do you know what some of them cost? But I do pick-up a Starbucks on my

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Editor's Page

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Heather S. and I will be your concepts editor for the next 2-6 years. I will be following the spirit of rotation and will not keep this responsibility for 10 years. I am planning on 4 years but the commitment is 2, so if someone else wants to do it in 2 years I will rotate. Although the co-editor has first dibs.

In my first edition there are some changes. I was told to change slowly. I probably have changed too much too fast for some. But I have been thinking about this job for 5+ years and have some ideas. In my enthusiasm I have made changes.

My plan is to have this space be my corner. We all know what happens to plans so if this is not a regular feature so be it. I have the luxury of reading everything and then writing something about it in the same issue. I know it is not fair. For those incensed about the injustice consider taking the position at some point.

My first thought after editing Cheryl's article was much of AA seems permeated with the idea that there is a separation: an 'us' and 'them'. There is GSO, Area, District, Groups and each calls the other 'them'. Every position in the service structure is filled by recovering alcoholics. Why this insistence that districts or groups cannot be supported by Area with purchases of literature? Most will answer "we are self-supporting through our own contributions".

People miss the first word in the sentence: 'we'. Each responsible body are made up of alcoholics. It is we who are asking us to help us buy literature to reach out to the still suffering alcoholic. Self-support in the Tradition is specific: it says 'outside

enterprises'. Area is not an outside entity to district who is not an outside enterprise to groups. Why the hesitance to follow our responsibility statement "when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for the hand of AA I want that hand to be there and for that I am responsible. This is not really the point of her writing, but what I thought when I read it. If District 12 has a short fall Area 20 might better serve the still suffering and GSO by purchasing the literature. GSO gets funds and the still suffering gets a powerful tool. Well written motions I believe is the key. Something we have been lacking lately.

I encourage you to write should you disagree coherently to my opinion. My policy will be to print everything submitted. If I feel there is a definite conflict with the Traditions in a particular article there will be a disclaimer at the bottom. You may not make the issue you want but it will go in. Publication will revolve around the Assemblies. We are going to try to print before the Assembly so that copies may be available at the Assemblies. The logistics of this have yet to be worked out. If you want something in the quarter have the writing to me one month before the Assembly. So February 28 will be the due date for next issue's articles.

Robert wrote about participation. For me, a great barrier to participation is the 'us' and 'them' mentality. I have heard people say 'they' referring to district in my own groups. This is a failure to follow the first Tradition: unity. We are all alcoholics, we suffer from the same disease. And we must carry the message if we are to survive. In manufacturing a separation between parts of service structure a barrier to participation is made.
Heather S.

From the delegate, continued from p 1

way to my Tuesday night home group, and I put the price in the basket.

I don't share this to tell you how good I am. I'm not particularly philanthropic in any part of my life, and AA is no exception. Like many of us, I got a little tight-fisted with money when I got sober. I wanted to make up some of the crazy spending that got me in debt. I pinched pennies trying to pay off the debt I had accumulated and trying to clean-up the wreckage of my financial past.

Like many, I also struggled with that part of the 9th Step promises that refer to fear of financial insecurity. I thought it meant that problems with money. That I would magically learn to either live within my means or that I would get a wondrous, well-paying job that would solve all my problems. I thought my problem was lack of money.... Turns out it was more like lack of faith.

This doesn't mean that I didn't have to learn to live within my means. I learned to budget. I learned that if I charged it I would have to pay for it. I also learned that if you don't pay it all off each month you pay a lot more in the long run! What I had to learn though is that I needed give to AA regardless of my fear of financial insecurity. I had to learn to trust that God would provide enough for my needs, as long as I did the footwork.

When I started attending that meeting that "made" you put in two bucks, I was in the process of getting divorced. I was going to be paying my own way, at about half the income that my alone husband made, much less our combined income. I was struggling with fear that I could not pay my bills, and with the faith that God would provide. So I made what seemed to be a bold decision and started putting two dollars in the basket at that one meeting. Big surprise, my lights weren't turned off, the mortgage got paid, and I learned to trust that God maybe had a plan. Now, that plan also included a roommate and

a part time job, but everything I needed was paid for, and I got a few wants along the way.

Some of you may be asking, "What does this have to do with service?" Nothing... and maybe everything. Our Concepts editor raised some questions about self-support and how it looks at the various levels of service. He threw out some ideas about who pays for what and where our funds should be used. He also mentioned the reference in our guidelines regarding "individuals must participate financially in our service experience," and what that might mean.

As is my habit, when I meet with questions about anything in AA I reach for my bookshelves. I've accumulated an amazing amount of information over the years. One piece I reread was the pamphlet Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix. I think in it I found the answer to my question about what portion of my service experience must I participate in... the pamphlet references a portion of Bill's writings from AA Comes of Age. Bill writes about Ebby visiting him and that he spent his own money to ride the subway and make the phone call. So in my service work of one drunk talking to another, I pay my own way. Bill also goes on to say that there is sacrifice in time and money.

I support my group by putting money in the basket to pay the groups expenses. Those expenses include rent, coffee, literature, and any other item that my group pays for on a regular basis. Our group gives Big Books to people at their first meeting, so that money comes out of the basket.

What other things can a group pay for? Depends on the Group Conscious; and this may be where some groups loose some ground. I think there are plenty of groups that when they get "too much money" they

From the delegate, continued from p 3

simply say “send it on.” They then do a split between District, Area and the General Service Board (GSB). But I would challenge you to ask yourself, is this best choice? Perhaps a better choice would be to first look around and see if there is something they can do to reach out to the still suffering alcoholic. Can they take a meeting to a treatment facility or correctional institute? A man or woman attending that meeting would use his or her own time and money to attend. They would be of service to carry the message to the drunk. But the group could buy books or pamphlets for that meeting.

Does the group reside in a place that has a radio or TV station? They can buy a PSA (Public Service Announcement) and ask that it be used. Is the group aware of a deaf person in the local area? Perhaps they can offer to hire a signer once a month so that person can participate. Or maybe a babysitter is needed and they can fund that. The group can use the money in the basket to help the individual alcoholic get the support they need to find recovery.

Now, don't think I'm saying that they should not send money along the path to District or beyond. In fact, I think if the District is healthy and doing service, they will have plenty ideas for groups to spend money on. The role of the District is to support the effort of local AA groups to carry the message in ways that the group or individual can't do alone. The obvious one at District level is an answering service and meeting schedules. Something that generally an individual group would probably could not do on it's own.

Districts can generally help members and groups get connected to those institutions that need members to visit. These institutions don't necessarily buy our literature. So groups can buy literature for people to take inside. An individual probably can't afford to buy a Big Book each week to give away. But the various groups banded together can support that effort. A group can afford a subscription to the

Grapevine for the local library. A District can decide to reach out to the professionals in their local area to help them get to know who we are. It may be that an individual man or woman will drive to the local churches or doctor's offices using their own car and gas, but the collective groups through the District will buy the pamphlets to give to those professionals.

Regarding those professionals, do they understand who we are or how to find us? A District can fund a local workshop, buy pamphlets and put them in packets to give to those professionals. Individual AA members can spend their time to put those packets together. They can spend their money to drive to various places and extend the invitation to attend the event. A District can put up a billboard with their local answering service number. They can put pamphlets with that same number in any numerous locations like libraries, police stations, hospitals, etc.

From the Delegate, continued on p 5

The basket:



Where money and spirituality mix.

So what about the Area? I think this is where things get a little murky for many of us. The Area supports the Districts, and is a conduit between the General Service Conference and the individual AA groups. How does it do this?

For me, the Area foots my bill to talk about the General Service Conference (GSC) I attend. They do this in a variety of ways. They reimburse me to drive to any District meeting that invites me to talk about the GSC either before or after the event. The Area makes a donation to GSO specifically to offset the cost of my attending it. The suggested donation to that is \$1600. Northern Illinois Area (NIA) voted several years ago to move toward being more fully self-supporting in that arena. It was estimated that if we were to divide the cost of the full conference by the 93 Delegate Areas it would be approximately \$6000 per Area. Our Assembly voted to do that.

It can be very humbling to attend the GSC. Particularly if you think about how many dollars out of the basket go to fund that. I get to fly to New York, stay in a nice hotel, and eat nice meals. The only thing I have to do is take the voice of NIA to the conference and think about AA as a whole when I vote; an activity that takes about 12 hours per day.

But I got so much out of it. My recovery was enhanced by this experience. So I had to ask myself how could I be self-supporting in this effort? What could I do to make sure that I wasn't taking advantage of AA's dollars?

I certainly am not paid well enough to fund the trip myself, nor do I think this is the right answer even if I could do it. However, there was one part of the trip that is not paid for. Breakfast. I was on my own for that. Do you know what breakfast costs in New York? I can eat pretty good in Antioch, Illinois for that price! So maybe buying breakfast every day in the hotel was beyond my means. But the

room had a refrigerator and a microwave, and my normal breakfast is pretty light fare. So I choose to buy my normal breakfast meal at the local shopping center and be self-supporting in that manner. I participated financially in my own service experience.

What about that stuff about supporting the Districts? How do we do that financially? This is the really difficult question that we often wrestle with. Where is the line? Is there even a line? I've come to believe that there is.

As was pointed out at the Committee Meeting last month, I've said at the microphone that I don't believe it's the business of the Area to buy Big Books for meetings. As noted above, I think that's the business of groups. It was asked of me then why, if I didn't think that we should be buying books for meetings, was I proposing a motion to buy literature for Districts. Should they be buying this themselves?

I've had to think about this one for a bit to understand my own thinking on it. What I came down to might simply be rationalization to support my own motion. But I think there is a difference between buying a well-established book to support meetings and buying a new item to help groups learn about it. The General Service Conference created a new pamphlet, completely revised another one, and updated a DVD on the history of AA. I believe it is part of our responsibility to make the groups aware of these items. This gives them the opportunity to decide if they should buy more of these for their group's efforts.

How will a District know about the video Markings on the Journey if they haven't seen it? How can they decide if this is something that could be given to

professionals to use in their practice of helping the still suffering alcoholic?

Certainly a District could consider buying a selection of pamphlets to give to each group as part of their local service. But how do they know what the new pamphlets are if we don't tell them? Shouldn't we consider bringing them the newest item that carries the message? Next year we may be approving a new PSA and a video for Corrections. If approved wouldn't we want to get these into the hands of our Districts? Couldn't we consider funding this at least to the level of one per District so that they might then show it to the GSRs so they can consider using the items?

I think the Area does for the District what they can't do for themselves. The Districts can't individually fund the Delegate to conference, but collectively they can. The groups probably can't fund an answering service for themselves. (Not to mention how confusing this could be if each group had their own.) A single group can't pay for all the Big Books needed for a local correctional facility, but the collective groups of the District can. An individual person can't buy a Big Book for every newcomer that walks through the doors of AA, but the group can probably do it.

Speaking of the Big Book... Next month the price of a Big Book will go from \$8.00 to \$9.50 each. I think they were \$3 when I got sober. That quarter beer.... A dollar now.

So it comes back around to the beginning. What am I putting in the basket so that my group can carry the message? Plus, I am once more facing some financial insecurity. Perhaps I should consider trusting God once more and raising the amount I put in the basket. Easier than a 2nd job and far more rewarding in the long run!

Cheryl V.

Tradition Two reads: "For our group purposes there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

I have often heard members talking about "our group conscience" and how the groups are at the top of our organizational chart (the upside down triangle). Ultimate authority starts at the top, our groups forming a group conscience and that conscience being collected by the various service structures as it moves down the triangle and in the end manifests itself at the General Service Conference where our delegates vote on matters affecting A.A. as a whole.

But is that really our "Collective Conscience?" Concept IV reads: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge. I can't think of a more responsible position than the Group Representative (GSR)

I remember when I was the DCM (District Committee Member, or district chairperson) for District 40. When I took over I felt this responsibility to visit groups that didn't have a GSR listed. Time after time I was told "we aren't interested in having a GSR." All they wanted to do was to have their meeting, staying sober and helping any newcomer who came in. I had to respect that and still do. But what we are left with is a small percentage of groups being represented at the District Meeting, the Area Assembly and ultimately the General Service Conference.

Are we really getting a “Collective Conscience” or are we getting a “Sort of Collective Conscience?” I wish more groups would participate. I wish more members would participate. I wish every group, in every district, would have a GSR and all of them would show up at the District Meetings, that all 1100 or so GSR’s in NIA would show up at our Area Assemblies. No, wait a minute, how much could we get done if we had 1100 people at an assembly – talk about chaos.

I guess, in the end, I am glad there are people that are passionate about “Carrying the Message,” people that are passionate about “Protecting the Message” and people, like myself, that are passionate about “Perpetuating the Message.” I have often said that what really turns me on about the service I do is that I am doing my part to make sure that the alcoholic who picks up the phone and calls the A.A. Answering Service on November 16 2097 gets the same message that I got on November 16 1997. But just as important, and this is what I need to remember the most, I want the person on the other end of that phone call to be just as passionate about carrying the message as the person on the other end of my phone call.

Anyway, I was just thinking.

Robert S. Area Chair



Rule 62

A normal drinker finds a fly in his beer and asks the bartender to pour him a fresh drink. A heavy drinker finds a fly in his beer, pulls it out by the wings, and continues drinking. An alcoholic finds a fly in his beer and yells, 'spit it out! Spit it out!' Rabbit walks into a bar p 4



A sober father was raising his young son with the help of AA slogans and sayings.

If the boy was angry or agitated, his dad would say, "Easy does it." If the boy was sad or unhappy, his father would counsel, "Let go and let God." This plan backfired one day when the boy asked to go to the toy store. "Absolutely not!" said the father. "Aw, c'mon Dad," said the boy. "Bring the body and the mind will follow." Rabbit walks into a bar p 76

A hangover is whiskey that thinks the party is still going on. Rabbit walks into a bar p 8

Should We Keep Our Money In Our Area?

It is becoming apparent that getting motions to pass on the usage of available moneys after expenses in Area 20 is an exercise in futility. At the 2014 fall assembly Area Officers were asking motion presenters to withdraw motions that would have done what the title suggests. One individual was approached 3 times by an area officer asking him to withdraw his group's motion. And a breakout committee was visited by another officer asking them to delay the motion of sending money to Area 21 for corrections literature which, in essence, would have killed the motion at that time. (These 2 instances were reported to me from the individuals involved and are considered here say until the area officers involved shed light on these reports.) Is it the responsibility of our trusted servants to encourage sending money to the GSO or to maintain a self-supporting area?

Are we doing a terrible injustice to the alcoholic who still suffers when our trusted servants are seemingly trying to keep money from the area committees when it is needed? Are we doing a terrible injustice to our districts that can use this excess money?

I'm sure some of you will say that the districts should support themselves first before donating to the area, and I agree to an extent. What about the districts whose budgets simply can't handle the volume of 12 step work they have in their districts? What about the districts that temporarily house other districts AA's during their period of

incarceration, or their stay in halfway houses etc.

Is it the responsibility of the housing district to provide all that is needed to ensure sobriety or should their home district support them while they are in another district getting the help they need? Isn't it the Area's responsibility to ensure all its districts are getting the support they need when their districts budgets simply cannot handle the influx of 12 step work?

Let us take a look at the facts of one district in Area 20. The figures below are current as of 11-1-2014 per website confirmation, phone calls made to agencies mentioned, and firsthand knowledge of AA's who currently are doing 12 step work in these areas. Here is a list of the need for 12 step work in one district:

-20 Oxford Houses with a total of 140 beds with 120 currently in use (Per the Illinois State Oxford House Directory and all having alcohol based problems).

-1 halfway house with 20 beds available and in use (all having alcohol based problems).

-Salvation Army Men's Residential long term treatment with 90 beds available and being used (with nearly 50 % being alcohol related).

-Veteran's Administration with 66 beds available and in use (reporting 50-60 % are alcoholics).

- Regional Treatment Program with 16 inpatient rooms, all full.

-Regional detox program with 5 beds all currently in use

Continued p 9

Should we keep our money, continued from p 8

- Psych unit with 20 beds, all full. Roughly 50% of those in the psych unit are alcoholic according to AA members that carry the message to the facility.
- County outpatient program which has 15 spots available rotating patients throughout the month.
- County Jail with 740 beds which is full and 60 % being alcohol related according to info available to us.
- County work release with 45 beds all in use at this time with 60 % being Alcohol Related
- County drug court, mental health court, and Veterans court with over 100 clients. 100% are court ordered to attend some sort of 12 step program and roughly 72% are attending AA meetings.
- Women's Residential Services which houses 12 beds, all in use.

Putting a % on the number of alcoholics in the treatment program, outpatient program, and detox program along with the psych unit is an always changing figure. Just the above figures would roughly mean 950 big books and that does not count the new arrivals that enter these programs on a weekly basis or the large community of Latino AA's we so desperately need to reach out to in our district. The base cost for these big books would be roughly \$9025.00 a figure I'm sure would break most districts backs.

The list still goes on, but I think you can get the idea of how much 12 step work is available and the need for help. With the number of beds in this district how much literature should this district have on hand? Is it the district's

responsibility to put a Big Book in every ones hand that needs one?

Is it not the responsibility of the Area to ensure this gets done? Are we not responsible to do this? According to the Responsibility Statement of AA I believe it is our responsibility to do exactly that which helps each and every one of these people who so desperately needs our experience, strength, and hope in our area.

Our promise as a district was to put a Big Book in every hand of each person housed in our district. So far this year we have managed to purchase 640 Big books, 20 12&12's, and 4300 pamphlets. We have only scratched the surface here. We have not even taken into account the extremely large number of AA's in the Latino community.

You might be wondering what kind of Budget do we have as a district and how do we handle the distribution of contributions that come in from are groups? Let us look at that also.

-The current budget sits at roughly \$3500.00 with a \$2500.00 reserve fund With the above purchases you can figure out how the budget sits.

-Currently we have 144 active groups

-Only 30% of groups are currently contributing on a continual basis to the district. A sad commentary on district participation. And 1/3 of our meetings take place in clubs, treatment centers, and jails. The 7th tradition collection is very minimal or nonexistent. We, as recovering alcoholics, are still responsible to all these AA's.

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Should we keep our money, continued from p 9

We have 20 or so people who try to do all this work. Thank you. You know who you are. Does our district contribute to Area 20? We have not in a while as we cannot keep up with our own needs.

Our district is very wealthy in 12 step opportunity and extremely poor in dollars needed to be self-supporting. Again I ask "Shouldn't We Be Keeping Area 20's contributions closer to home?"

As I go through the 2014 GSC Report it astounds me to see there has been \$105,690.84 in area contributions (which includes groups) to the General Service Office. With the average donation per year of roughly \$73,362.00 per area for North America, I have to ask why we are sending so much to the GSO and not helping out our distressed districts?

The area contributions from January through August 2014 are about \$18,800.00 and the year ending 2013 Area 20 donated to the GSO \$18,000.00 (per Area 20's Treasurers Reports). Should we be sending \$4000.00-\$6000.00 a year to GSO for our Delegates stay when we have districts that need help?

Why are we asking our groups and committees to withdraw motions or delay motions to keep "OUR GROUP'S MONEY" here in our own Area or state where it is needed in? Maybe it is time to slowdown the contributions coming to Area20 and start practicing "POWER OF THE PURSE".

There was talk of rewording of the Area 20 Handbook on Financing. Should we take a hard look at asking

our finance committee to send e-mails out to all DCM'S when we have this abundance of money and see if our districts could use some help? I don't know these answers or any previously presented but what I do know is that, automatically paying extra money forward to GSO is not helping THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS in this district which is in Area 20.

This article is intended to shine a light on what just one district struggles with. How many other districts are in the same shape? I don't have the answer to that question either and I would encourage them to let the area know as well with their own article or at the committee meetings and assemblies.

Are we asking the area to fund us? NOT AT ALL! WE are asking that we as an Area rethink how we use our excess moneys. We have to ask ourselves is it time to redistrict. Is it time to seek out another Area to belong to? Just something to think about I guess. In Service with Gratitude,
Paul Perini
Alternate DCM District 12

NEEDED IN AREA 20

**ALT CHAIR FOR COOPERATION WITH
THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY**

PUBLIC INFORMATION CHAIR

ALT CHAIR PUBLIC INFORMATION

BIDS FOR 2016 STATE CONFERENCE



FROM THE NIA ARCHIVES

Dear friends!

With all our heart we greet you, the representatives of the General Service Office on the hospitable Moscow land!

More than a year has passed since that time when you registered our group, "Moscow beginners" - the first group of AA in the Soviet Union. It is very pleasant today to thank our dear friends J. W. C. and Julia S., who helped us a lot in formation and strengthening of "Moscow beginners". The name of our group is symbolic. There are newly sober people in the group and those who is carrying the noble message of recovering from the first steps of AA in the Soviet Union.

We can solve our common problem together!

One day at a time - to sober life!

Moscow
20.XI.1988

Group of AA
"Moscow beginners"

[Handwritten signatures and scribbles]
Cepred
Hag
Hag 91
officer



Corrections Correspondence

— a special kind
of A.A. Service



CORRESPONDENCE FORM — for Outside A.A. Members Only **CCS-3**

PLEASE PRINT - Return to address below

I am a **MALE** **FEMALE** (please circle one) How many inmates are you able to write to?: _____

Name: _____ Phone (office use only): _____
(First and Last)

Address: _____ E-mail (office use only): _____
(P.O. Box or Street Address, City, State or Province, Postal or Zip Code)

Corrections Desk, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
Direct: (212) 870-3085 E-mail: corrections@aa.org Fax: (212) 870-3003 Web site: www.aa.org

Corrections Correspondence —a special kind of A.A. Service

I know how important our Twelfth Step work is and I enjoy writing to men who are locked up. It is one of the tools that I use to keep me sober. I myself found A.A. in prison almost 20 years ago. And it hasn't been necessary for me to return to prison since I was released in 1979. —Outside Correspondent

We are in need of A.A. members on the “outside” to correspond with A.A. members in correctional facilities. It is suggested that men correspond with men and women with women. Most of the inmates who want an outside correspondent are men, so we are appealing to men on the outside.

If you would like to share your experience, strength and hope with A.A.s who are confined, please mail the tear-off form to G.S.O.'s Corrections Desk, or e-mail the information on the form to corrections@aa.org, or e-mail the information on the form to corrections@aa.org. The name of an inmate will be sent to you from your General Service Office and you will make the initial contact through the mail.

Those who have participated in this service have found sharing with inmates a very gratifying form of Twelfth Step work. We are happy to know there are A.A. members like you willing to help make it possible for the A.A. message to be carried to those on the “inside.”

Guidelines for Corrections Correspondence Service

Welcome to one of the most rewarding and rarely mentioned forms of Twelfth Step work.

A.A. General Service Office, Box 459 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

In addition to observing the rules in Correctional Facilities regarding mail and correspondence, the following are suggested guidelines drawn from shared experience to help you when writing to A.A. members on the “inside:” To begin, remember that when writing to an inmate, *you must use your last name on the envelope* or it will not be accepted by most institutions. The G.S.O. does not forward CCS mail.

1. We introduce ourselves by qualifying briefly in our opening letter.
2. We try to let the inmate know that writing, like all forms of sharing, helps us as much as it helps him or her.
3. We let the inmate know that he or she is not alone.
4. Most correspondents use their home address, since we match up correspondents from different regions. Some correspondents *ask permission* of their A.A. group or intergroup/central office to use the office P.O. Box for receiving mail.
5. We share sobriety and sobriety only.
6. We have found it best for all concerned if no emotional or romantic involvements develop.

Announcement

Alcoholics Anonymous: www.aa.org NIA 20: www.aa-nia.org

Sat, Jan 3 Still Waters is having its annual New Years' breakfast again (after a hiatus!) on at 9:30am (right after the 8:00am women's AA meeting)

Jan 16-18 We Are Not Saints convention 5300 W. Touhy Ave Skokie IL. Wearenotsaints.com

Jan 16-18 2015 Annapolis Intergroup Annual Convention Annapolis, MD

Sat Jan 17 District 91 Winter Workshop Anonymity on the Internet. 224 S. Seminary st. Galesburg, IL (309) 343-1530

Sat Jan 24 Winter Committee meeting @ Lord of Life Church SE corner Rte. 38 & La Fox Rd, La Fox. Elburn for GPS devices.

Sun Jan 25 2015 No name group 30th anniversary celebration @10:30 am Lake Zurich Police Station, 200 Mohawk Trail, Lake Zurich

Feb 6-8 The usual suspects men's retreat Walworth WI. Joe H. 815 728 1281

Sat Feb 7 District 91 Winter Workshop Working with Others 224 S. Seminary st. Galesburg, IL(309) 343-1530

Feb 13-15 Women's retreat. Walworth WI. Debbi H 815 728 1281

Sat March 21, 2015 District 91 Winter Workshop Restraint of Pen, Tongue, and text. 224 S. Seminary st. Galesburg, IL (309) 343-1530

March 27-29 Spring Conference Pheasant Run 4051 East Main Street (Rt. 64), Saint Charles. Joe M. (847) 401-2595 or John G. (630) 204-4661. On line registration at www.NIASpringConference.com

Sat March 28 Spring Assembly Pheasant Run 4051 East Main Street (Rt. 64), Saint Charles. Joe M. (847) 401-2595 or John G. (630) 204-4661. No registration required.

Sat April 11 Pre-General Service Conference Workshop Lord of Life Lord of Life Church SE corner Rte. 38 & La Fox Rd, La Fox. Elburn for GPS devices.

Sat May 9 Spring Committee meeting at Lord of Life SE corner Rte. 38 & La Fox Rd, La Fox. Elburn for GPS devices

Sat June 13 Summer Assembly

July 2-5 2015 International convention of AA. Atlanta GA. www.aa.org

Sat Aug 8 Summer committee meeting Lord of Life SE corner Rte. 38 & La Fox Rd, La Fox. Elburn for GPS devices

**Aug 28 - 30, 2015 Illinois State Conference Normal, IL
2015ISCAA@gmail.com**

Sat Sept 19 Fall Assembly/ Area Elections

Sat Oct 17 Fall Committee Meeting Lord of Life

Sat Oct 24 Big Book Conference at Countryside Church Unitarian

Seventy years old and looking better every year. Yes, our Grapevine's first issue came out in June 1944. Copies of a facsimile of Vol.1 No.1 are available as well as two new books. "Sober and Out" Members' stories from the pages of the Grapevine by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (and a few friends). The other new book is "the Grapevine Daily Quote Book". This pocket-sized book captures the first 365 days of the online Grapevine Daily Quote, which first appeared in June 2012. These quotes were taken from the pages of the Grapevine.

If you want to order these or any other Grapevine publications, you are in luck. For the rest of this year there will be no shipping charge. This is a good deal. If you ordered a copy of "Emotional Sobriety" at \$10.99 last month you would have paid a \$6.25 shipping and handling charge.

So this is my tip for those of us buying copies of "Language of the Heart" for the good little pigeons on your list. Another gift suggestion

that is offered until 12-31-14, is 2 Grapevine gift subscriptions for \$42.00. I found out that you need a code to get this offer. 44B2GS is the code you need to use to get this discount.

In my term as Grapevine Guy, so far, I have been invited to bring the area Grapevine display to two workshops. The first was a service workshop held in district 40 on 11-8.

I attended a 4th Step & Grapevine workshop in district 70. We talked about how you could search the archives if you had the Grapevine online subscription. There were copies of GV articles on the 4th Step handed out as well as a few books given as quiz prizes.

If you are having a workshop and you would like to highlight the usefulness of the GV in carrying the AA message, let me know. HAVE DISPLAY—WILL TRAVEL
JIM HAAS
NIA Grapevine Chair
Don't forget, the 2015 Grapevine wall calendar and the pocket planner when making your order.

