



## From our Chair

### A Little Grit and Determination

Hello to everyone in the Northern Illinois Area. It's time for another article in our wonderful Concepts newsletter. Over the course of time, in the NIA Chair position, this gets to be my time to reflect on how this service position affects my personal and spiritual being.

My home group, the Design for Living Group, which meets every Wednesday night at 7 pm in Johnsburg, has a meeting format. As part of that, 8-10 attendees are called upon to come to the podium and share how AA is working in their life today. That is a very good question and the responses are even better. Most of the time, the first one or two members who are called upon to share their answers are surprised that they have been called upon to share. The other members who follow have a little more time to at least begin to ponder the question and are more prepared if they are called, still totally by random. All of these responses still get to be honest and to the heart of the matter.

For most of us in the daily grind of life, we hardly get to reflect how AA is working in our life today. All of the constant obstacles thrown at us, i.e. family, school, finances, spouses, traffic, work, time, chores, recreation, commitments, etc., tend to get us distracted from being able to answer the question.

I do know from my own personal experience, that daily living can easily become unmanageable.

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## Delegate's Corner

### Selfish Program??

I have a thought I would like to share with you. That is after all the point of writing an article for any newsletter is it not? The problem is that some of you won't like the point. That's the bad news. The good news is that if you're reading this, the chances are real good that the point doesn't apply to you anyway. On the other hand if it does, you will know...I hope.

I recall hearing from our late friends Tex and Barb B. that Alcoholics Anonymous is not a selfish program. On the other hand I have heard many times from many people and even said myself that Alcoholics Anonymous is a selfish program. So which is correct? To which I reply – both, I think.

In the beginning ours is a necessarily selfish program. I needed to do what I needed to do for me to get and stay sober and I really could not afford to care what it took or what you thought of it. It was all about me. I went to meetings and I took what you had to give, and I took and I took and I took. It was really the only choice available as I had nothing to give anyway...that is nothing but anger, fear and resentment.

But the day came when things began to shift. I began to have experience and strength to go with my hope. I began to have some things worth sharing. In that transition my program changed from selfish to unselfish. It's probably more complicated than that but you get the idea. Besides, Bill knew this would happen to me long before it did because he described the process in the promises.

*That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.*

This is the point where I began to understand what you meant when you said I had to give it away to keep it. So, are you with me? Does it make sense so far?

Good, here's the part you won't like.

We have some districts in Northern Illinois that are struggling. We have some that have folded in recent years and others on the verge of folding. And why is that? Well, it's because there is no participation in the local service structure. Groups don't have G.S.R.s. G.S.R.s don't attend District meetings, let alone assemblies. No one is willing to be a service committee chair. No one wants to be DCM. In some cases there are a few people in these districts that have held the ship together for several years. But now they are tired and frustrated. They have repeatedly asked for help, for more participation or support and have been consistently disappointed. There may have been brief periods where change seemed just over the horizon but always they came up empty again.

I was at one district meeting recently and heard that there are old timers out there specifically telling people not to get involved in district service. If true it can only be described as sad. I talked to a long time answering service chair and asked him to hang on a while and just talk to people one on one to find a replacement for himself. He literally yelled back at me that he had done all that and he could not do it anymore. He was that frustrated.

In the affected areas there is no shortage of meetings. There is no shortage

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*Concepts is published quarterly by the Northern Illinois Area of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to keep the NIA committee, districts and GSRs informed of service opportunities, events and experience relevant to carrying the AA message in and through service. Comments, suggestions and subscription requests plus shares of experience, strength and hope, should be directed to the editor:*

Phil G.

20concepts@aa-nia.org

**Newsletter Editors and District Secretaries** please put me on your mailing list for newsletters or minutes.

**Area and District Committee Chairs** please let me know what your committees are doing. Share your successes and failures with others trying to do similar service work.

**Letters to the Editor** are welcome from anyone in the A.A. community reading this publication.

**Subscription is free** but generally limited to A.A. members within the NIA geographical area. All publication costs are paid by A.A. members through their contributions to NIA.

**All A.A. members are encouraged** to see Concepts on-line at:

<http://www.aa-nia.org>

*Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, NIA or the Editor.*

**Rotating Out of Service??**

If you are rotating out of service you will be taken off the Concepts mailing list unless you ask to be kept on. Use the request form on the back page of this issue of Concepts. You are more than welcome to get Concepts—we just need to know. Thank you.

**How to Find AA in Illinois is an Answering Service document. Ask Warren A. for more copies.**

CONCEPTS is a confidential document. It contains names and phone numbers. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc. It is meant for use in the Area 20 AA community only.

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**Calendar**

- 2007**
- 04/13-15** **45<sup>th</sup> Annual BNAA Round Up**, *The Chateau, Bloomington, IL, 309-662-2020, Georgia M. 309-319-1171*
- 04/14** **NIA Spring Assembly & Pre-General Service Conference Workshop Hosted by Dist. 61**, *Fox Valley Presbyterian Church, 227 East Side Drive, Geneva, IL 60134, Ray M., 847-659-8237*
- 04/27-29** **Spring Fling**, *Knights of Columbus, 1556 E Fremont St., Galesburg, IL 61401, Comfort Inn, 907 W Carl Sandburg Dr., Galesburg, IL 309-344-5445, Alice P 309-343-0576, Larry K. 309-484-6012 or AA\_SpringFling@yahoo.com*
- 04/28** **Unity Newsletter Banquet**, *Ingalls Park Athletic Club, Park Rd., Joliet, IL, Hamond D., 815-603-9071 or Carl P., 815-723-2819*
- 05/04-6** **Little Egypt Roundup**, *Ramada Limited, 801 N Giant City Rd., Carbondale, IL 62901, 618-351-6611, Gene 618-942-6039*
- 05/05-06** **13th Annual Cedar River Roundup**, *Kirkwood Community College, 6301 Kirkwood Blvd. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, David 319-378-9000 or 319-350-2590*
- 05/18-20** **56<sup>th</sup> Annual Area 75 Spring Conference**, *Marriott Madison West, 1313 John Q. Hammons Dr., Middleton, WI 53562, 608-831-2000, Ken G 608-221-2891*
- 05/19** **NIA Spring Committee Meeting**, *Amer. Natl. Bank of DeKalb, Sycamore, IL, Dist. 22 Host, Tiffany O., 847-741-6247*
- 06/02** **Fox Valley Open**, *Fox Valley Presbyterian Church, 227 East Side Drive, Geneva, IL, Open 7:00 pm, foxvalleyopen@sbcglobal.net*
- 06-16** **NIA Summer Assembly Post General Service Conference Delegate’s Report**, *Dist. 21 (Palatine Area) Host*
- 06/22-24** **7th Annual Midwest Motorcycle AA Convention**, *Emerald Acres Campground, Pearl City, IL, Dave S 815-389-2102 or Tom S 815-623-5329*
- 06/23-24** **Marshall-Putman AA Group 40th Anniversary**,

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*(From our Chair—Continued from page 1)*

Over the holidays a change in my work schedule totally threw me off. This period of time there was a respite from the AA grind. During this time there was a lull in AA action and on the AA Calendar. Oh sure, there were AA meetings happening and being attended, but the e-mails and telephones were not buzzing. I was trying to stay busy, but the sleep thing was getting in the way. The Holiday schedule and an abnormal work schedule combined gave me internal excuses. Every time I tried to motivate myself to get back into my normal mode it did not work to any degree of personal satisfaction.

There was a savior in all of this. One day the telephone rang and it was another recovering alcoholic. A member of this Fellowship whom I deeply respect. This member got right to the heart of the matter. What's going on with you? You don't seem to be your normal self. You appear to be going through the motions, but not like I know you. Like in a prize fight, all of a sudden I heard the bell loud and clear. It was time to get back in there.

It's not like I had not been, but I see now how AA is working in my life today. That reminded me of the course of action on a daily basis I need to take to have the daily reprieve from this deadly disease of body, mind, and spirit.

It is wonderful being on track. There is a course for the Fellowship to follow; several events now taking place in the Northern Illinois Area could certainly use a little grit and determination. That needs to come from within. How is AA working in our lives today? Will you be attending the NIA 2007 Spring Conference? Are you, as a group GSR, or even as a member of AA, participating in the Group Conscience and passing that along to our Panel 56 Delegate to the General Service Conference? Will you be attending The NIA 2007 Spring Assembly?

The journey continues on a regular basis. I have visited a couple of Districts. There was a Sponsorship Workshop in Bartlett that I attended, just to get to learn more about Sponsorship. I was in Kankakee with our standing Delegate on a Saturday and listened in on a 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Workshop. The very next day I traveled with the Alternate Chair to Moline to sit in with the NIA 2007 Spring Conference Planning Committee. These are all great times to be sitting and participating with the Fellowship.

After the Area Committee Meeting in January, I attended the Conference of Delegates Past and Present in Cleveland. It is a marvelous event to attend, as the

East Central Region hosts an event to prepare Area Delegates for their General Service Conference duties. At the conclusion of the Conference, as we packed up and headed home, our little AA entourage took a detour. We were offered the chance to visit Akron and some of its AA historical sites. We stopped at the Akron Inter-group Office, which is not normally open on Sundays, and took in their tour. I marveled at the Archives and history that is on display. Our next stop was the Gatehouse, which is where our Founding Fathers first met and conversed about the dreaded disease of alcoholism. Then we ventured on to Dr. Bob's home. I was a first-timer and my, how a chill ran up and down inside of me. There was a point in this adventure, in Dr. Bob's bedroom that I got on my knees, and just prayed and asked for guidance and help in whatever I do next in life and AA, that the path be made. This is how AA is working in my life today.

May your Higher Power Bless you today,  
John C.  
NIA Chair

## Palatine P.I. Event

A public information event hosted by the Palatine Monday Night Big Book Study Group in late January was enhanced with materials borrowed from the Area 20 Public Information Committee. About 20 interested people came to learn what Alcoholics Anonymous is, and isn't, and how the program works at the Palatine Public Library.

We began planning the event in December using guidelines available from the Area PI Committee. The first task was to find a meeting space. Another subcommittee screened several of the videos and chose *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous*. We made flyers that members posted at grocery stores and coffee shops, police stations and library; some even found their way onto bulletin boards at liquor stores. We also mailed the flyer to all of the churches in District 21. About three weeks before the event we sent a one-page news release to the *Daily Herald*, the weekly *Pioneer Press*, and *Chicago Tribune*. The *Herald* ran the story as news (twice), and the *Palatine Countryside* included the event in the community calendar.

A panel of four members of our group answered questions from an "Ask-It Basket" and described their own experiences after the video. In addition to the video, the event included coffee and cookies and A.A. literature (we ordered PI discount package P-77, 393 pieces for just \$15) including the District 21 meeting schedule. Attractive framed posters borrowed from the Area made the literature display more attractive. *Barbara H., GSR Monday Night Big Book Study*

*(Delegate's Corner continued from page 1)*

of attendance at meetings. Yet no one seems willing to participate in general service. Still there must be service taking place. People must be chairing meetings and making coffee. Someone is giving people rides, sponsors are still available and the program still gets shared at meetings. People remain sober. Yet finding someone to take responsibility for the answering service is difficult or apparently impossible.

So one night it occurred to me that situations like this might just be the epitome of selfishness. Or maybe ours really is a selfish program and I'm missing something. But what do we have? Well, we seem to have large numbers of people who got sober, stayed sober and are willing to do only the bare minimum to maintain sobriety. And they are certainly not willing to share the message of AA outside their group. If the still suffering alcoholic stumbles in the message will be shared but that's it.

In short they came to AA, took what they heard, got sober and now they are keeping it to themselves. Or maybe we just have a bunch of people who assume someone else is taking care of it. Or maybe I'm overreacting.

Our book indicates we need faith in a higher power to recover. We are encouraged to expand our relationship with that higher power. We are told that faith will increase as our experience in recovery unfolds and we continue to live in the steps. But in the chapter Working With Others Bill says:

*To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action.*

I looked up the word vital and got the definition 'full of animation or vigor and relating to life,' which seems to mean alive or active. In my mind what Bill means is to be real, faith must be accompanied by...

Well, maybe I'm way off base. I hope so. Either way, every once in a while I need to blow off some steam. Because the problem has never been about whether you or I could stay sober. It's about whether the next guy has an opportunity to get sober. It's about who will take the responsibility to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers? Who will ensure the integrity of the message? And I'm not trying to lay a guilt trip on anyone. I know that won't work. But sometimes I'm as frustrated as a DCM who hasn't been able to find a replacement for five years.

The message I need to convey is one of personal responsibility. The question I need to ask and I think you need to ask is "Am I willing to be personally responsible for the future of Alcoholics Anonymous? Am I willing to be responsible for carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic? And if not me then who?"

Larry S.

Panel 56 Delegate, Northern Illinois Area 20

## **12th Step Safety Tips from District 51**

Dear Phil,

Thanks for acknowledging District 51's 12 step safeties; it inspires us to try new things to carry the message.

The 12 Step Safeties basically developed out of necessity. The district made a large banner with the A.A. telephone number and people were putting a flyer with the A.A. telephone number on "tear off tabs" onto public bulletin boards. Naturally we started getting more calls to the answering service.

We realized that some of the A.A. members willing to go on 12 steps calls had never had the opportunity to go on one before, though they had usually done 12 Step work through a treatment facility or by taking meetings to correctional facilities.

Some of the more seasoned A.A. members got together with their sponsors and others and decided that what was needed was not how to do 12 Step work, but how to be safe when meeting with the person asking for help, before this person ever gets to a jail or treatment center; or even to their first A.A. meeting.

The district DCM called Northern Illinois Area and talked with the literature chair. He discovered that NIA had been working on a 12 Step pamphlet but the focus was not on safety so that's why we came up with these safeties.

We hope these can help those who are privileged to go on a 12 Step call. Nothing will insure our continued sobriety so much as working with others. Once you get a taste of it you will want more.

These safeties are not written in stone and if there are more suggestions please share them with us. We see it as an evolving project.

Yours in Service,  
For District 51,  
Jim D. & Gini L.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Step Precautions**

There are opportunities for 12<sup>th</sup> Step work and to know why you should work with others all you need to remember are the opening paragraphs of Chapter 7, Working with Others, in the book Alcoholics Anonymous:

*Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they*



are very ill.

*Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends-this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.*

The book Alcoholics Anonymous was written in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and while the solution to recovery from alcoholism in the A. A. 12 Step program has not changed, the 21<sup>st</sup> century environment in which we recover has. We do not need to tell you how to work with others. There is chapter 7 of the Big Book; there are helpful suggestions in the Grapevine magazine, from your sponsor and from others within the meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. What we want to tell you about 12 Step work is the practical considerations for your safety.

#### Some Suggestions:

Do not meet someone alone; take someone else, if possible someone who is in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Prior to meeting arrange a "call in time" with someone who is not going. If you do not call in at the pre-arranged time then they are to come find you.

Arrange to meet at public place if possible. Remember that the person who is meeting you may not be alone either.

Women talk with women and men talk with men.

If the person who has called for help is having seizures, hallucinations, tremors or any other medical condition call 911. Severe withdrawal from alcohol is a life threatening medical condition. Even the Big Book recommends taking care of the medical condition before doing the 12 step work.

Make sure you have your own transportation; that the buses are still running, or you have transportation fare, car or other vehicle. Do not get into the new prospect's vehicle.

Bring Alcoholic Anonymous literature with you, and have some pamphlets and a meeting list to leave with your prospect.

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**Many thanks go to my wife Julia** who carefully proof-reads this rag every quarter and finds far more to correct than I would ever expect.

Phil G., Editor

## My Home Group (Reflections of a Group Member)

We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men. What seemed at first a flimsy reed has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living" that really works (P. 28 *Alcoholics Anonymous*).

How powerful this mantra for reflection has become over the last 14 years of Recovery, Unity, and Service. Little did I know that reaching out for what appeared to be a flimsy reed would get me a seat in a lifeboat. Was I pulled into that lifeboat by a higher power? It certainly seems that way today on the eve of another AA anniversary. Today, standing on solid ground, a firm foundation under my feet as a result of a strong spiritual relationship, I serve the fellowship that, through a power greater than me, pulled me into the lifeboat, got me to shore, dried me off, and re-kindled the flame that was flickering in my soul. For that I am truly grateful.

This brings us to where we stand today, healing together. You have served me to understand that we express our gratitude by our actions. By carrying the message of hope to each other we heal one day at a time from our spiritual malady. Over the last several years I have experienced these actions in an infinite number of ways. It all boils down to: *In serving-we are served. Through service we are healed.* Having served the fellowship in many capacities, I have found that there is no greater service than group service. If I practice spiritual principles for the remainder of today, I have an opportunity tomorrow to get up in the morning and reflect on the words in the *Daily Reflection* for the last day in February. If I humbly practice spiritual principles, eventually it will be 6 pm, when I will show up to help set up for the weekly Open meeting of the Design For Living Group, my home group. The Group has entrusted me to serve as their Literature Chair. Setting up the Literature Display is one of many tasks executed by several Trusted Servants in the hour before our 7 pm meeting.

Our greeters stand out in the cold winter air to extend a hand and let folks know there is warmth just inside the door. Our coffee and refreshment committee assures that hot coffee and snacks are available for folks to enjoy before the meeting. Our setup committee members make sure everyone has a place to sit. Our contact list person makes sure everyone wishing to be on our contact list is on it and newcomers get a copy. Our calendar person assures that individual AA anniversaries are celebrated and that

*(Continued on page 6)*

King's House Retreat, Henry, IL, 309-364-2833, 309-238-4048, 815-488-8719

- 07/13-15** **55<sup>th</sup> Michigan State Convention**, Radisson Plaza Hotel, 100 W Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007, 269-343-3333, Gregg K. 231-723-4483 wmaa34.com
- 07/28** **NIA Summer Committee Meeting**, Amer. Natl. Bank of DeKalb, Sycamore, IL, NIA Archives Committee Host
- 08/03-05** **2007 Illinois State Conference**, Lincolnshire Marriott Resort, 10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire, IL 60069, 847-634-0100, Steve K 847-746-3479
- 09/08** **Fall (Election) Assembly**, Rockford Area, Dist 70 Host
- 10/05-07** **24th Annual Midwest Woman to Woman Seminar**, Holiday Inn, 7550 E State St., Rockford, IL 61125, Amanda K, 815-227-5585, Cathy W., 847-803-8562
- 10/12-14** **27<sup>th</sup> East Central Regional Convention & 56<sup>th</sup> Fall Conference of Area 75**, Holiday Inn, 4601 Calumet Ave (I-43 & Hwy 51) Manitowoc, WI 54220, 920-682-6000, Mike S. 920-452-3791 or Nancy G. 608-221-2891, nancyt43@charter.net
- 10/20** **NIA Fall Committee Meeting**, Amer. Natl. Bank of DeKalb, Sycamore, IL, NIA Treatment Fac. Committee Host
- 10/27** **14th NIA Big Book Conference**, Dist. 64 Host
- 11/09-11** **2007 East Central Regional Forum**, Sheraton-Chicago Northwest, 3400 W Euclid Ave., Arlington Hts., IL
- 12/01** **NIA Winter Assembly**, Crystal Lake Area, Dist. 11 Host

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collectively we celebrate our group's anniversary. Although we don't save seats at our meeting, our corrections chair assures a chair is symbolically saved for our incarcerated members and that everyone is aware that they can serve the incarcerated alcoholic through correspondence. Our Grapevine chair takes the opportunity to connect group members with our journal in print. Our GSR informally polls group members on matters concerning AA as a whole. Our international convention chairperson serves us in providing a way for each of us (if we so choose) to individually reserve funds so that we can collectively attend the 2010 International Convention in San Antonio. When the meeting starts, others dutifully perform tasks entrusted to them. Our water-for-the-speaker person assures a bottle of water is on the podium for our main speaker. The chairperson of the day welcomes everyone and conducts the meeting. Our secretary makes announcements. Our treasurer passes the basket respectfully helping us remember that we are not self supporting if we can't pay our own way. Our clean-up committee assures that the building is in better condition than when we arrived. Everyone who wants a job in our group has one. This is how we gratefully take action to

heal together through what I have found to be the greatest service of all, group service.

Why, you ask, does group service appear to so profoundly transformational in my life. I believe this is what the editor of our *Concepts* Newsletter was looking for when he asked me to share my experience. The transformation that was vital came in the form of "spiritual experience". Most of my spiritual experiences come through my home group's connection to the AA Service Structure. Through the committee system, our district treatment facilities chairperson co-operates with professionals to connect us to the alcoholic who still suffers as described by Bill W. in this quote: (*Alcoholics Anonymous p. 15*) "Many times I have gone to my old hospital in despair. On talking to a man there, I would be amazingly lifted up and set on my feet. It is a design for living that works in rough going".

Later on the Chapter, *Working with Others*, we are reminded that our group exists far beyond the one weekly meeting that our group currently holds: (*Alcoholics Anonymous p. 89*) "Perhaps you are not acquainted with any drinkers who want to recover. You can easily find some by asking a few doctors, ministers, priests or hospitals. They will be only too glad to assist you".

**Get Your A.A. Group or District Events on the Calendar**  
**Mail, or preferably email, your information by the deadlines of March 12, June 12, Sept. 12 or Dec. 12.** Send the name of the event, the date (s), the name of the place and the full address including zip and if room reservations may be required, the phone number, and an event contact name(s) and phone number(s).  
**Send to: Phil G., 20concepts@aa-nia.org**

The spiritual entity that exists 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is my home group. Together, as a spiritual entity, we roll up our sleeves and try to work to identify ways to fulfill our single purpose inside and outside of our weekly meeting. In my home group no one legacy is stronger than the other. Recovery is foundational to the success of the Design for Living Group. Unity and Service make Recovery possible. There is an old Ojibwa Native American proverb: *Tell me and I will forget. Show me and*

*I may not remember. Involve me and I will understand.* My home group is all about making a commitment to involving each other.

Like everything else in AA my home group did not invent this on our own. We humbly respect that it comes from ancient principles adopted by those who went before us. We call on our elders, who soon become our ancients for guidance. Through a Greater Spirit, our collective memories guide us to stay a course of action allowing the freedom from bondage that we and those who love us have sought for so long.

Anonymous



Insert State Conference Flyer

Insert State Conference Flyer-2



## More Thoughts on the Traditions

An article in the last issue of *Concepts*, “The 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition!,” suggested that some members of the fellowship misunderstand that Tradition. Right on; and probably 11 others, too.

As a society we pay scant attention to the Traditions. Even less to how they are interrelated. Before most members of the fellowship get their first-year token, they can and will tell you that there are 12 Steps and you have to work all of them. On the other hand, I can’t recall a discussion that treated the Traditions as an integrated set of principles that provide direction for our corporate well being. When discussed at all the Traditions are considered and applied one at a time, without regard to each other.

“Working” the Traditions separately is, in my opinion, just another manifestation of “I’ve got mine” sobriety. It’s a selfish approach in which individuals, concerned exclusively about their own recovery, do little or nothing to assure that the fellowship continues to grow. They go to meetings and drop something into the basket and, because they’re not drinking, think that’s all they need to do.

The Red Herring identified by our Alternate Delegate—that using Area (or District) funds to pay the expenses of volunteers who are doing service work is a violation of Tradition Seven—calls out for further discussion. I suggest we study that claim in the context of two Traditions—Seven and Four—and an examination of why we pass the basket.

Let’s start with Tradition Four: *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups and A.A. as a whole.* As I read it, the phrase beginning “except...” is the very reason we have Districts and Areas as well as the General Service Conference. These entities are how we can accomplish collectively what we could not do as individuals or Groups. They are the organizations we use to conduct service work more efficiently and administer the business of A.A. But here I disagree with the Alternate Delegate—they are not Groups.

In the third paragraph of the narrative explaining Tradition Four there is an important sentence: “... the original statement of A.A. tradition carried this significant sentence: ‘Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.’” *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p.p. 146, The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing (now known as Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.), emphasis added.

Although we’re all alcoholics when we are meeting as the Area Assembly or the Area Committee or as a District Committee we are meeting to conduct A.A.’s business, another affiliation, not for sobriety per se. We are representatives of our groups but we are not a group. From one perspective these are legislative bodies. We certainly fit within a dictionary definition of a corporation, too—“a group of people acting as a single entity.”

Another useful concept might be to think of the Area Assembly as a meeting of shareholders in which every participant has a vested interest in the wellbeing and growth of the “corporation.” Keeping that focus might help us overcome some of the pettiness and time-consuming, pointless squabbles we’ve endured in the past.

Although we’ll never end disagreement and debate—and we shouldn’t—as an organization we’ll be better served if we can have informed discussions. The misinterpretation of Tradition Seven that prompted the previous article is a good example. Tradition Seven addresses where we get our money. It says nothing about how we should spend it.

Which brings us to why we pass the basket—*Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting...* Each group needs to pay its own way—meeting expenses such as rent and coffee and costs associated with carrying the message, Big Books and literature, etc.

We need to keep the doors open and for most of us it wouldn’t be a meeting without coffee. But Twelfth Step work isn’t done at 475 Riverside Drive in New York or a P.O. Box in Bourbonnais. We carry the message, one alcoholic to another, much closer to home. On the other hand, there are some things that can be done better collectively, answering services and literature are good examples, as well as carrying out that second phrase in Tradition Four: *...except in matters affecting other groups and A.A. as a whole.*

To do that groups have supported the administration of the fellowship through donations to the Alcoholic Foundation (now the General Service Office) since our adolescence and later to units such as Areas and Districts. Many groups, after they have paid their expenses, divide any surplus between the District, Area and GSO. Other groups, in recognition of the importance of this aspect of our fellowship budget these contributions.

Once these contributions have been made however, I believe the membership expects the Area to use the money it has been given to fulfill the Area’s respon-

sibilities and spend the money on activities related to A.A. in the Area. Remember that these groups have already made a contribution to the GSO to administer A.A.'s activity in the U.S. and Canada.

The Area Assembly, as described in *The A.A. Service Manual*, "...consider(s) a variety of issues from General Service Conference business to area problems and solutions and financial affairs, while sharing sessions, public information programs, workshops and video programs keep A.A. strong and participation in service growing." Facilitating any of that activity by underwriting the expense is well within the Area's mandate and responsibility.

More importantly, it is discriminatory to require or expect any member doing service work outside of their own neighborhood to pay their own way. Frankly, I think it's an outrageous proposition in an egalitarian so-

ciety. We can't deny a member the opportunity to do service work because of their income (or lack of it) any more than we can turn away a drunk because they don't drink top-shelf booze.

In addition, a good case can be made for the proposition that not claiming reimbursable expenses is a violation of the Seventh Tradition. Volunteers who don't claim appropriate expenses are in effect subsidizing the Area. They are certainly distorting the financial accounts and they make it difficult to know the real "cost of doing business." Groups and Districts that practice the Twelfth Step with their checkbook don't help either. But those are issues to be discussed at another time.

The intent of this essay is to stimulate discussion of Traditions Four and Seven and an honest appraisal of why we pass the basket and what happens to that money.  
Tom G.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Northern Illinois Area 20 Membership,

### **The service structure is not the problem.**

### **More bureaucracy is not the solution.**

*The Interim Report on the NIA Service Structure that was accepted for further study and possible implementation at the recent Winter Assembly on 12/2/06 is deeply flawed.*

Before you make any decisions to move forward on this idea you are going to need to ask a lot of questions that were not addressed in this Interim Report. This Report lacks any of the necessary details that would allow for a coherent discussion and understanding by the Groups here in the NIA.

This Ad Hoc Committee's Report does not suggest "a more open, responsive, and attractive" service structure as was their mandate. Instead, it would serve to insulate the Assembly process from the voice of your Home Group. Make no mistake; your Home Group will be affected by these proposed changes.

**Nullification of the Home Group's Voice:** Based on the information provided it is clear that this proposal, if successful, would serve to nullify the voice of Home Group by channeling all communications, motions, ideas, and Group concerns through one of the new 15 standing committees. Instead of the Assembly being the opportunity for the Groups to voice their conscience, the Assembly would instead become the voice of the "standing committee".

**Inefficient communication between the Groups and the AREA.** While this Interim Report does partially describe the new flow of information between the Groups and the AREA it does not address nor acknowledge the time lag, and numerous communication inefficiencies that it creates. Nor does it address specifically how this plan is supposed to foster increased participation at Assemblies other than requiring more people to attend the Assembly/Conference by virtue of their new job

descriptions. (*More bureaucracy*).

Under this proposal the Group's voice might possibly still be heard, although it is entirely conceivable it would be heard anywhere from six months, to a year or more after it had spoken. For example this year, (2007), the Spring Conference is set for March 30-April 1, 2007 and the BBK Conference is set for October 27<sup>th</sup> 2007. Exactly 6 months & 27 days apart. Even under the most timely and efficient interpretation of this proposal is it in the best interests of the fellowship to only conduct Area business once every six months?

**As a reminder** AA's organizational structure vests all power to the individual Groups, not to standing committees that have insinuated themselves into the bureaucracy as self-appointed gatekeepers for the Assembly process. In its present form it is entirely conceivable that this plan could only serve the homegrown ideas and pet-projects from the new standing committees. By vesting too much power in the service committee chairs to decide what goes on the Assembly Agenda you effectively block and delay participation by the rest of the Groups in the NIA. (*Please see: Traditions Four, and Nine.*)

**Was GSO consulted?** Since the plan outlined in this Interim Report would require changes to *The AA Service Manual* and will greatly affect all the Groups here in the NIA, I am forced to ask if this Ad Hoc Committee sent its suggestions to GSO for advice and counsel as our 4<sup>th</sup> Tradition requires? (*See Tradition Four, Long Form*) If the GSO was consulted, why was their response withheld from this Report? If this Report was not submitted to the GSO for review prior to publication then I need to ask why not? Tradition Four is not a two-way street. You cannot assert autonomy on one hand while adversely affecting other groups at the same time. I believe that Tradition One covers that idea.

**How much will it cost?** This report contains no men-



tion of new budgets, or new spending guidelines for these 6 brand new committees, nor does it address the budget impact of having 15 total committees with a minimum of 3 members each, all of whom will be required to attend the new “**3-day Conference-based**” Assembly system.

This report does not detail which “*standing committee members*” will have their Conference registration fees and hotel rooms paid for from the Area budget. This Report does not mention who is eligible for gasoline and travel expense allowances to and from these two Conferences, or to and from the two other required meetings of each of these 15 committees. (We AA’s love to talk about money, so why were those facts omitted/ deleted/neglected in this Report?)

**Lets do some simple math** by using this Committee’s suggestion of holding two, 3-day Assemblies in conjunction with the Spring and BBK Conferences. Assuming a hotel cost of \$75 per night (X) 2 nights = \$150 in hotel costs per person. Assume a \$35 Conference registration and banquet cost per person, and you now have a basic minimum cost of \$185 per person to attend each of the (2) required Conferences. (*not including gas & travel allowances*) If you don’t agree with my cost estimates plug in your own numbers and tell me why this Committee left out all these important financial facts in their Report.

Under present NIA practice the Area budget (*and therefore the Area membership*) is already footing the bill for a minimum of 9 of these same people to attend just the Spring Conference. (*the 9 current service committee chairs; PI, TFC, CPC, etc.*) Presently the NIA service committee chairs are not required by their job descriptions to attend the BBK Conf. The minimum current cost to the Area budget under our present system for those nine people is approximately \$1665. (9 people (X) \$185 = \$1665) for just the Spring Conference which is currently a 3-day conference. Under this proposed “new plan” the number of required attendees could swell to a minimum of 45 people or more. (3 people (x) 15 committees = 45 people at a minimum required to attend each Conference).

- 45 people (X) \$185 each = \$8325 for the BBK Conference as a 3-day conf.
- 45 people (X) \$185 each = \$8325 for the Spring Conference as a 3-day conf.
- \$8325 + \$8325 = \$16,650 per year at a minimum.
- New plan costs of \$16,650 (-) Current plan costs of \$1665 = **the Area budget would have to increase by a minimum of \$ 14,985 per year** to pay for these 45 standing committee members to attend the two required Conferences.

**What Area programs and services are going to be cut out** to afford this new “*more open, responsive, and attractive*” service structure as defined in this Interim Report?

**What are the effects on previously “Assembly Approved” NIA Guidelines?** This Interim Report does not mention the fact that all of the following NIA Guidelines will

need to be changed in order to implement this radical idea:

1. *The NIA Guidelines for Hosting Assemblies*
2. *The NIA Guidelines for Hosting Committee Meetings*
3. *The NIA Spending Guidelines for Budgeted Trusted Servants*
4. *The NIA Service Structure Guidelines*
5. *The Duties and Responsibilities for NIA Trusted Servants*
6. *The NIA GSR Handbook*
7. *The NIA Spring Conf. Guidelines*
8. *The NIA BBK Conf. Guidelines*
9. *The Pre-General Service Conference Guidelines*

In order to change any of those documents each of those changes would also require Assembly approval and a two-thirds majority vote. That would entail changes to these 9 documents with a total of 96 pages of previously Assembly approved materials. It could conceivably take several years before you could legally institute this new plan.

There was also no mention made in this Interim Report of the need to revise The AA Service Manual to conform to this Report’s suggestion of replacing the AA Groups with a “*standing committee*” as the voice of the fellowship. Someone should have let GSO know about this plan so that they can begin that process.

**Effect on the AREA 20 Inventory dated 12/2/2002:**

Nowhere is it disclosed that this proposed action would serve to nullify and contradict the most recent Area-wide Inventory dated 12/2/2002. Had this Ad Hoc committee read and studied that Inventory I doubt that so many of the ideas expressed in this Interim Report would be in direct opposition to that Inventory. Wouldn’t a new Area Inventory be in order before discarding the wisdom from the last one? (*I wish Barb Brown were still alive to ask these questions. I’m sure her voice would be heard better than mine will*).

**One year’s worth of work:** Approximately one-third of this Interim Report (2 of the 6 pages) is devoted to defining the “*Standing Committees*”. Evidently it has taken this Ad Hoc Committee a year to compile the definitions for what the Answering Service Committee is, along with definitions for the other service committees. If it takes a year for this Committee to agree on, and define, what a “*standing committee*” is, and it takes two-thirds of their first Report to copy that definition out of the GSO Guidelines, how long will it take this Ad Hoc Committee to actually solve all the problems their Interim Report creates? How long do you suppose it will take to re-write, and get Assembly approval for, changing 96 pages of NIA Assembly approved Guidelines?

**In Conclusion** this Interim Report lacks too many pertinent facts and offers no explanation of the costs, delays, and ramifications of the radical changes it suggests. I am especially perplexed by the decisions of this Ad Hoc Committee to willfully ignore, and/or, intentionally omit the effects of this

Report's ideas on previously approved NIA Guidelines, the Area Inventory, and AA's 12 Traditions, not to mention that it contains absolutely no information regarding Area budget ramifications.

*If you really want to increase participation at Assemblies and enhance Area service why not follow through on previously submitted suggestions such as those given to the "NIA Committee on the Budget" at the 2004 Spring Conference? If you're not happy with GSR participation take a new Area inventory and find out why attendance is low at Assemblies (if in fact it is). Wouldn't the Area be better served with less costly and more immediate changes that do not require a two-thirds vote of the Assembly and such a massive outlay of capital? Perhaps centrally located Assemblies could be a consideration rather than holding election Assemblies in Moline as the Area did in 2006. (And some people wonder why attendance may be low).*

Many Area Trusted Servants like to wear those lapel buttons that say; "**Service is the Secret**". Well, why not keep it less of a secret? Rather than looking for all the ways to block participation (*standing committees*) find ways to reach

out and carry the message of involvement and service in the Area. How about holding workshops throughout the Area to educate the fellowship? Let people know why they would want to participate, rather than putting up roadblocks to their participation.

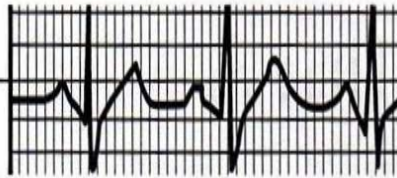
**The service structure is not the problem. More bureaucracy is not the solution.** (please see Tradition Nine). If the Area wants to increase participation at Assemblies from the GSRs and the Groups why not find ways for increasing the service work ethic amongst the fellowship? Education is the key, and it won't cost an additional \$14,985 a year either.

Lastly I would like to thank this Ad Hoc Committee for their time and effort to bring these suggestions to our attention. Without their work we never would have know about the problems, pitfalls, and all of the Tradition violations that would be in store for us if we ever decided to go against the combined experience and wisdom of the AA fellowship gathered over the years.

Respectfully submitted in the spirit of our Third Legacy, Concept Five, and on behalf of all of our Traditions.

Jim T.

## Area Beat



**District 10:** Most committee chairs are filled. The hardest to fill was Webmaster and Alt. because of special knowledge required. District has followed the Area's example in having the business portion of its meetings at the beginning. District is excited about co-hosting 2007 Illinois State Conference with Dist. 12.

**District 11:** District's 12+ LCMS are attending meetings and educating groups on the responsibilities of a GSR. The corrections committee has all meetings at McHenry Jail covered. The district voted to have a website and appointed a Webmaster. P.I considering posting meetings in newspaper. GSO says "no problem."

**District 12:** The District Meeting has moved to First Congregational Church in Waukegan at 4 pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Starting work on co-hosting 2007 Illinois State Conference with District 10. Also working with Dist. 10 on Spring Breakfast, April 15.

**District 20:** District is very active with workshops. Hispanic meetings are being held at Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles and at Altage in Rockford.

**District 21:** Did a PI event at Palatine Public Library hosted by the Monday Night Big Book Study Group. Helping Hands Group plans a 12th Step workshop. District is hosting the Summer Assembly

**District 22:** Implementation of LCMs has been very successful. There are now more groups with GSRs and more

GSRs at the district meeting. PI purchased plastic brochure holders and business card holders to be used by groups to place literature in public locations like police departments, hotels, hospitals and doctors' offices.

**District 23:** Providing copies of "Alcoholics Anonymous", "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", "Experience, Strength and Hope", "AA Comes of Age", and "Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers" to libraries in the district. Had a sponsorship workshop in Feb. Pink Can funds are steady.

**District 28:** Answering service is providing opportunities for 12th step calls. Literature has placed a large order to get discount. Literature should last most of the year. Volunteers are needed at the "Last Chance House."

**District 40:** LCMs are active with every group visits to get more GSRs in place and active. District won bid for 2008 Spring Conference. Website is underway. Strong interest shown in starting an ER program at Central DuPage and Glen Oaks hospitals.

**District 41:** Working on automated answering service and trying to find other districts to join in. 4th Step Workshop and Back to Basics Program both went well with good attendance.

**District 42:** Hosted Winter Assembly at Hinsdale South High School, Dec. 2nd. Workshop committee is very active. January workshop hosted by PI Committee drew 48 participants. February workshop hosted by Hinsdale 12 Step Group.

**District 43:** Hosted Winter Committee meeting. Developed ad hoc committee to help increase GSR participation. Need volunteers for Wed. evening detox at Linden Oaks.



Created new position of Directory Chairperson.

**District 51:** Good response to Pink Can campaign. Looking at possible shift to different answering service. Posting a banner and public bulletins throughout the community.

**District 52:** District's groups are active and contributions have improved. The DCM, Alt. DCM and secretary are doing an all meeting visit to encourage registration and GSR involvement.

**District 61:** Will host the Spring Assembly and Pre-Conference Workshop on April 14 and the Fox Valley open June 2. The 12th Step Call/ER program at Delnor Hospital is still successful.

**District 62:** Changed answering services. Still sharing with Dist. 64. Pink Can funds are going to purchase Big Books for Sheridan prison. New meeting started at Sheridan prison. Volunteers are still needed at Sheridan for meetings on Thursday evenings.

**District 64:** Some District 63 meetings have joined District 64. Although the district is struggling to fill chair positions, GSR attendance is up. Made a successful bid at Fall Assembly to host the 2007 Big Book Conference.

**District 70:** Working on distributing background material to all interested groups so they may make informed group conscience on GSC issues. Gearing up to host Fall Assem-

bly

**District 71:** There are many open positions, one of our members made a flyer asking groups to send GSRs to district meetings. CPC/PI is an effort to get AA's number in the phone book and local newspaper. Corrections is always looking for men & women to carry the message to the Sycamore Jail.

**District 73:** Corrections is providing two meetings a week to Dixon Correctional Facility and to two jails in the District. Pink can funds support buying Big Books and Twelve and Twelves for inmates in these facilities. PI/CPC is creating a card with the District's web address to be posted on bulletin boards in grocery stores, laundromats and restaurants.

**District 90:** District 90 is planning, in conjunction with district 91, the 2007 NIA Spring Conference. The size of the planning meeting has

been growing steadily and we have most things in place, particularly the ones that needed doing by this point. District will fund the registration fee to the Spring Conference for 24 district AA members.

**District 91:** Working with District 90 on 2007 NIA Spring Conference. Also working on Spring Fling in Galesburg, April 27-29, 2007. District is providing Big Books to inmates in the county jails.

**DCMs—Secretaries  
Let Us Know About Your District's  
Service Projects, Workshops,  
Dinners, Dances, etc.**

Now is the time for all Secretaries to get Concepts on the email list for District Minutes and Announcements. Send them to [pbgoodwin@aol.com](mailto:pbgoodwin@aol.com). Let's get your activities listed on the Calendar and described in the Area Beat. Thanks for your help!

**Nell Wing**

**May 27, 1917 - February 14, 2007**

Many of us in AA feel that God brings the right people into our lives, at the right time and in the right way. This was certainly true of Nell Wing, who died on Wednesday, Feb. 14. She came to work at GSO in a temporary job in March 1947 and stayed until her retirement in 1982.

Though a nonalcoholic, her devotion to AA became nearly absolute, and as the years passed she formed friendships with members throughout the world. She never married, and AA really became her extended family, with Bill and Lois Wilson as her surrogate parents.

Nell was 29 when she reported to work at GSO (then called the Alcoholic Foundation). She had attended Keuka College in central New York state and served two years as a SPAR (a female Coast Guard sailor). She only wanted short-term employment until leaving for Mexico to study sculpture under the G.I. Bill. But as she recalled later, "From the beginning, I was caught by the A.A. Fellowship, particularly by the caring. It was not so much a general 'caring for our fellow-

man,' but a one-on-one caring, a love for one another without thought of any reward." Mexico faded into the background, and she spent 35 years at GSO.

Nell served as receptionist and did other clerical work at GSO before becoming Bill's secretary in 1950. Highly competent as a secretary, she also became Bill's staunch defender, giving him support and reassurance when members wrote angry letters or when he became plagued by self-doubt and depression. More than almost anybody, Nell knew how much Bill suffered when attacked by the very people who should have been grateful to him. After his death in 1971, she said she lost "my close friend and confidant, the big brother/father figure of my middle life."

She then became AA's first archivist, with responsibility for organizing and filing all the documents and other records of our history. Though not trained in library science, she quickly learned the essentials of archiving and set up a logical system that works extremely well to this day. She also continued as Bill's loyal advocate and carefully documented his specific contributions to AA's origin, growth, and success.

By Mel B., Toledo, OH

## Susie Rose Memorial

About 60 AAs from near and far gathered at the Joliet Club Sunday afternoon, March 4<sup>th</sup> to remember Susie Rose, a strong NIA and AA corrections supporter for many years. Ninety-five when she died, Monday Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, Susie was a diminutive, German woman with a big heart and a bigger mouth. The memorial was laced with comments about both. They ranged from memories of how many people she helped in 35 years of carrying the message to "her girls" in Dwight prison to a comment of "I feel sorry for Heaven."

The turnout included two NIA Past Delegates, an East Central Regional Past Trustee and lots of past Dwight prison volunteers. Then there were many of the people who drove her here and there while buying her lunches and dinners and helping her prove that you don't have to have a car or even much money to be a very active AA service worker.

One of the many people close to her writes:

*Susie Rose*

August 5, 1911- February 26, 2006

Sobriety Date March 2, 1962

Susie accomplished so much in her days here on earth. She may have not left anything monetary but she left her memory all over. She gave her all to AA, believing and exhibiting recovery first. I can only tell a few things about Susie during the years I knew her; many others have known her much longer than I.

Susie was the queen of ticket sales and would always be selling tickets to a banquet or raffle. There are plenty of stories that go around about her sales technique. She was at every banquet if she could find a ride and she would arrive dressed elegantly with her nails done.

Susie held many service positions in the Joliet District and NIA. The most loved was being appointed as the archivist for NIA. She held that position for years and was named as Honorary Archivist not too long ago. I remember reading that to Susie while she was in the nursing home and the smile that came to her face brightened the whole room.

For years Susie chaired the meeting on Wednesday nights and 2 Sundays a month at the Dwight Penitentiary. She referred to the inmates there as her girls and loved every one of them. She would make Christmas bags (hundreds) every year filled with cookies, candies and little crocheted items she would make. She would get people to donate money or cookies and at times a luncheon would be held for the ladies and you were required to bring cookies in order to attend. She would then get girls to come to her house to stuff the bags. This was a sight in her small apartment. She loved doing this and was very sad when it was stopped. I will be ever grateful for being able to be part of this with her.

Susie loved the conferences and could always be found with a group around her saying hello or gabbing in the Archives room. She loved to dance up until the day her little legs could no longer hold her body.

When sharing about her higher power Susie would refer to him as George. She spoke to me often about going to the big meeting in the sky with her sponsor and others that passed before her and seeing George there.

This AA woman was blessed with having Susie as part of my life. Dwight Penitentiary was the place that was chosen for Susie to become part of my life. I was not an inmate but a volunteer sent by a strong suggestion from her sponsor. I remember the first day we met. I drove over an hour on a cold winter day to the prison and had fear all the way thinking of what I had to give to the girls. Upon arriving I walked into the guard shack to find a short, gray haired woman looking me up and down. She spoke first, "Why did you wear boots?" I was stunned and could only think of one answer/question "Because it is cold out?" She said, "do not wear them again they are not allowed." The guards never mentioned the fact that I was wearing boots. Today I know that was to let me know *she* did not approve of the boots and *she* did not allow them.

From that day on I found myself sharing my experience, strength and hope with Susie's girls and going on a regular basis until I moved further away. I became Susie's ride to many conferences, assemblies, meetings etc. Susie continued to carry the message to Dwight up until her health would not allow her to go any longer. She loved the girls and wanted to see them get the message for when they returned to the outside. On many occasions we would meet one of those girls at a function and Susie would just gleam.

She will always be remembered and loved by my family. She taught me that AA starts at home; I need to work the steps at home. She taught me I could be angry with someone but still love them, forgive them, be forgiven, and go on with life. She most definitely taught me patience as I assume she did others.

Today Susie's soul shines upon me bringing me comfort and warmth from heaven above. I believe I was blessed with an Angel here on earth that was selected by God for me. She was revealed to me through her love of AA and mankind. Had someone told me on my journey I would befriend an elderly woman I would not have believed it. She became a confidante, a grandmother to my family, an example (good and bad), part of my recovery and story, but most of all she became a Good Friend.

So Susie my friend rest in peace, enjoy the big meeting in the sky and hold a spot for me, as I will see you again some day.

Love Always  
Terri G.



## Wintry Storm-Perfect Backdrop For Movie Night.

White outs, 40 mph winds, drifting snow, sounds like you'd have to be crazy to venture out in the evening, doesn't it? On Friday March 2nd in Palatine about 60 people did brave the elements for Movie Night-Bill's Own Story.

The Women's 12 and 12 group came up with the idea in January for something for us to break up the winter hibernation season. Flyers were printed two months ahead of time and distributed. We borrowed the movie from the Area PI Committee. Mike F, Chair of the Area's Electronic Equipment Committee, trekked from Elburn to Palatine in the blizzard to bring the Area's electronic projector to show the video on a big screen. We rented a room in a church, had popcorn and refreshments, and the people came and came and came!! We couldn't believe the turnout. Thank goodness the church had plenty of extra folding chairs. After the movie we had a discussion time and a raffle, with items such as a Bill W. Bobble-Head, (a big hit) and four of his books.

Service and Fellowship, these are areas of our sobriety that bring the greatest joy. A good time was had by all. Simple idea-results priceless. Thanks for letting us serve you. Looking forward to our next event.

The Women's 12 and 12 of Palatine

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## Communicating with the G.S.O. Reimbursing G.S.R.s

The following is a communication to and answer from the G.S.O. on a subject that came up during a G.S.R. meeting. This material has been edited only to preserve anonymity. Please note that the process is reasonably swift and easy. The General Service Office is there to help.

### Email to G.S.O.

**From:** xxxxxx@sbcglobal.net [mailto:xx@sbcglobal.net]

**Sent:** Friday, March 02, 2007 12:18 AM

**To:** Publicinfo

**Subject:** Question Re: District Financial Support for GSR Participation

We had a heavy hearted discussion tonight at our District 11 meeting, McHenry County in Illinois. A motion was made to provide financial support for the GSR's to attend conferences. In my experience and that of other members of AA, a GSR should be supported by the group that they represent but this is for district and area meetings, assemblies, and any other business related events. This did not include conferences such as our Spring Conference or Soberfest held each year in November.

It would be so helpful I we could have a suggestion as to

how to make this determination. Should a GSR have the expenses of attending a conference paid for by the District and to what extent? (Hotel, food, mileage)

Please reply with your message by email or phone number (xxx) xxx-xxxx (home) or cell (xxx) xxx-xxxx. We would appreciate any clarification about financial support, and each group is "self-supporting though their own contributions".

Thank you for your help,

Carol H

### Response from G.S.O.

**From:** Publicinfo [mailto:publicinfo@aa.org]

**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2007 1:35 PM

**To:** xxxxxx@sbcglobal.net

**Subject:** RE: Question Re: District Financial Support for GSR Participation

Hi Carol,

I hope that this email finds you well. After trying to play phone tag I am going to try to answer as best I can via email but please feel free to call me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx if you have further question.

In a simple way, what events a G.S.R. gets reimbursed for is determined by group conscience of the group. This varies from group to group, and from area to area. Generally a group will reimburse their G.S.R. for the activities they consider will be beneficial for the group and, in our experience, may include a convention or conference. In terms of the district, our experience is that the district will cover the expenses and activities of the D.C.M. they consider appropriate. This doesn't mean that a district can't or hasn't funded the activities of G.S.R.s, just that it is not the general experience. It would be, of course, a matter decided by the group conscience of the A.A. members involved.

I hope that this sharing is in some way helpful. In the meantime, all of us here send our best wishes.

In fellowship,

Julio E

General Service Office

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## Woman to Woman Seminar

**The Woman-To-Woman Seminar** is a weekend of workshops for sober alcoholic AA women.

**There will be a fund raiser luncheon** and closed meeting, April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Hoffman House, Holiday Inn, 7550 E State St., Rockford, IL. Doors open at 12:00, lunch is at 1:00 and **the guest speaker is Marcia S.** Tickets are \$30 and will not be available at the door. Call Amanda K 815-227-5585, Jan S. 815-398-6208 or Pat K. 815-229-2542.

**The weekend workshop** is October 5, 6, & 7, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in Rockford, IL. Contact: Amanda K.. 815-227-5585, amandakirchner@netzero.net or Linda W. 815-633-0067, westthreedogs@aol.com

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Spring 07