

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SELF-SUPPORT

A.A.'s evolving Tradition of self-support was to move a long way from the financially desperate period, around 1938, when Bill and others around him wished silently and urgently that John D. Rockefeller would bestow the fledgling Fellowship with large donations.

In 1947, Bill said "Voluntary contributions or pledges of A.A. members ought to be A.A.'s principal support, and, eventually, its sole support." Although it was necessary in the beginning when A.A. desperately needed a little outside help (which, he noted, made possible the Alcoholic Foundation, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the General Service Office) times had now changed. He sensed "... a very powerful feeling... spreading among us that A.A. ought not to be takers from society, any longer. Instead, let us be givers." Additionally, the news that every A.A. group had become self-supporting would create invaluable goodwill in the outside world.

The General Headquarters, predecessor to G.S.O., published a monthly newsletter for distribution to the Fellowship. In the February 1949 issue, the purpose of voluntary contributions was defined: 1. To meet the expenses of General Headquarters, which operated a plan of service to alcoholics the world over, in keeping with A.A.'s primary purpose (it was described as international Twelfth Step work); and 2. To meet those expenses of General Headquarters incurred in its operations as a coordinating center for all A.A. groups. The article emphasized the voluntary nature of the contributions; they were "not dues or fees." It also stated that such contributions would... "be used for A.A. operating expenses only."

In September 1950, lack of voluntary contributions led Bill to issue to the Fellowship a five-page plea for support, including a request that the group secretaries call a special business meeting for the purpose of reading his (Bill's) written plea. "Without A.A.'s Services we'd often fumble that new man or woman just coming in the door; without our Services, we'd certainly spoil the main chance of those millions who don't yet know."

In November 1957, Bill wrote a Grapevine article entitled "Respecting Money," in which he juxtaposed outside contributions and self-support: "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility—one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and our bills paid."

Ten years later, as if in conclusion, Bill wrote in the A.A. Grapevine, "Both these principles we understand: that A.A. wants no charity; that we support our own services. We understand—but we sometimes forget."

SERVICE DELIVERY
AT THE GROUP LEVEL

A.A. groups listed at the General Service Office are treated alike. Groups that can contribute nothing for services rendered receive the same attention as groups that contribute a great deal. Also, groups receive *Box 4-5-9*, A.A.'s quarterly newsletter, at no charge.

The staff at the General Service Office responds annually to approximately 53,000 letters and e-mails. A.A.s write for shared experience on a wide range of issues, from how to handle a disruptive A.A. group member to taking a group inventory.

Less than half of the groups in the U.S. and Canada listed at G.S.O. contribute anything at all.

Please send your contribution to G.S.O. made out to "General Fund" at the following address:

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

If a group is to be credited, please indicate the group service number in addition to the name and location of the group.

_____ OR _____

HELP CARRY THE MESSAGE
THROUGH THE A.A. MEMBER.
BIRTHDAY PLAN

To help support A.A. services worldwide, you can contribute to G.S.O. on your A.A. birthday/ anniversary, one dollar or more for each year of sobriety. (see enclosed Birthday Envelope)

If your group is to be credited, please indicate the group service number in addition to the name and location of the group.

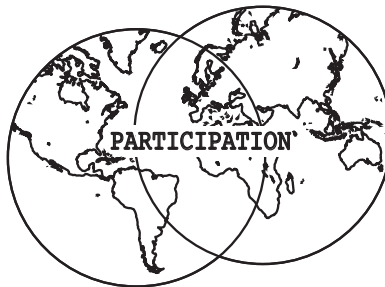
PLEASE POST

“But we
do have
expenses...”

When you “put money in the basket”
you support your group and A.A. worldwide.

You help make sure that:

- Your group gets meeting space
 - Phones get answered
- Alcoholic inmates get Big Books
- Professionals get correct information about A.A.
 - Loner A.A.s get letters
 - Newcomers get literature and meeting lists
- A.A.s around the globe share experience, strength and hope

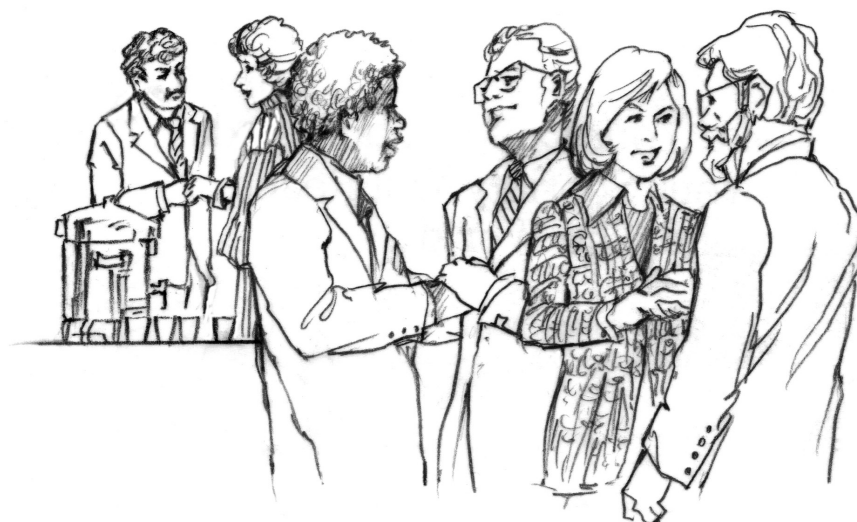


Region, Country, World

“I want the hand of A.A. always to be there...”

PLEASE POST

Want the Hand of A.A. Always to Be There?



- Alcoholics Anonymous
- АНОНИМНЫЕ АЛКОГОЛИКИ
- Alcolisti Anonimi
- 단주친목교본

Make Your Contribution Today,
So Your Sobriety Will Reach
Around the World

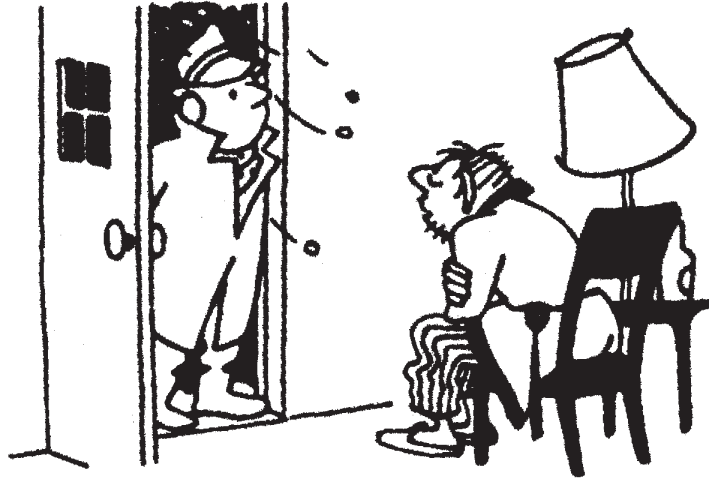
Region. Country. World.
“I want the hand of AA always to be there...”



GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, INC. P.O. Box 459 GRAND CENTRAL STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10163
(212) 870-3400 • FAX: (212) 870-3003 • www.aa.org

PLEASE POST

This is Twelfth Step Work...



So is This...



CONTRIBUTIONS EQUAL SERVICE

Money in the basket is Twelfth Step Work

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IDEA STARTERS

(For shared experience of members and areas)

- Declare February “Self-Support Month.”
- Take a group inventory on the Seventh Tradition.
- Hold workshops at the area and district level on Carrying the Message of the Seventh Tradition to nonparticipating A.A. groups.
- Explain the A.A. Birthday/Anniversary Plan.
- Ask your district to distribute the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.”
- Have districts include the addresses of all A.A. (service) entities in their district minutes, so members will know where to send contributions.
- Publish articles in area/district/central office newsletters to inform members about self-support.
- Leave self-support posters, pamphlets and flyers at A.A. groups.
- Pick a particular date during the year and have a drive for each member to donate \$2.00. You might call it “Fellowship Day.”
- Declare and encourage fellow A.A. groups to celebrate the day A.A. was born—June 10, 1935—as an International A.A. Holiday. It might be called “Our International Day of Gratitude” and in an expression of gratitude *a special* basket could be passed for contributions.
- Set some specific goals for individuals and for groups. Utilize current data, such as the present average contribution per member, per meeting, and the needed average per meeting per member.
- Encourage groups to be listed at G.S.O. through a direct appeal by D.C.M.s.
- Stress Tradition Seven at each district meeting.
- Invite speakers from your local intergroup or central office, area committee, P.I. and C.P.C. committees to district meetings, and have them explain how contributions help them to carry the message.
- Let your G.S.R.s see the quarterly lists of contributions to the area and the district. This lets them know if their group is contributing on a regular basis.
- Contact groups that have not contributed. Often it is simply a case where the group conscience is not informed about the A.A. support system.

PLEASE POST

HEART OF THE FELLOWSHIP

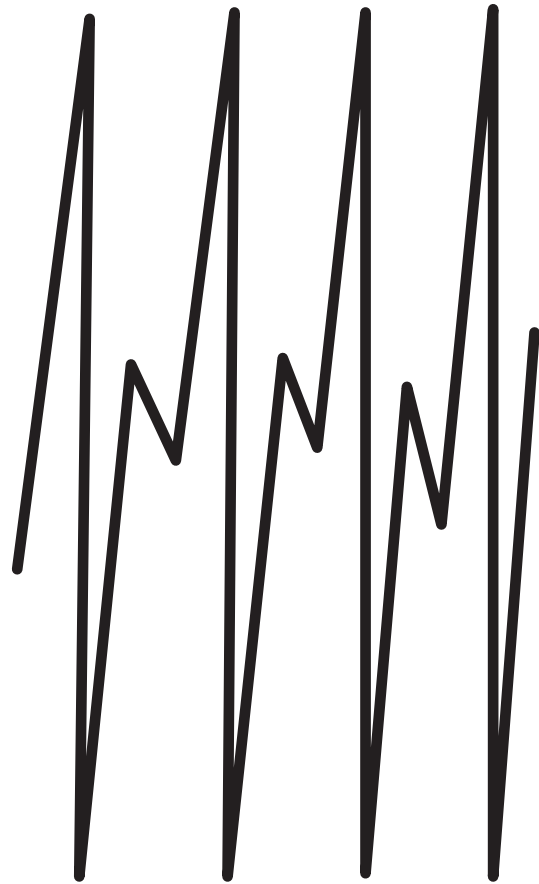
WHAT MAKES IT BEAT?

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

SERVICE: From G.S.R. to group secretary, service is simply getting involved and giving back in any way we can. And this giving back is helping *to carry the A.A. message to our fellow alcoholics.*

LITERATURE: More than 12 million pieces of A.A. literature, distributed annually, has but one goal, *to carry A.A.'s message of hope to alcoholics*, both within or to those looking for our Fellowship.

CONTRIBUTIONS: From dollars in the basket at our home groups to writing a check to intergroups, C.O.s, areas and districts or G.S.O.; every time we give, we are helping *to carry A.A.'s message of hope to alcoholics everywhere.*



PARTICIPATION: Attending a meeting, putting out a hand, putting up a hand. Simply being there. That's participation. Calling a fellow drunk. Twelfth Step calls. That's participation. And *all* participation has but one goal — *to carry A.A.'s message to other alcoholics* — both within or to those looking for our Fellowship, so that we may stay sober ourselves.

“When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help...
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there...”

Self-Support talking points

Tradition Seven: Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

The following "talking points" were compiled jointly by the trustees' and Conference Finance committees, with input from areas, the A.A.W.S. Finance Committee and A.A. members.

1. Discuss the spiritual value of contributing to the Fellowship. Does it give us a connection to the greater whole?
2. Discuss the seven-page service pieces "services provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S., which outlines the various services available for reaching the still-suffering alcoholic.
3. Member contributions provide support to the Fellowship where many of us felt a sense of "fitting in/belonging" for the first time.
4. Discuss contributions online at aa.org.
5. A.A. is self-supporting through its own contributions, declining outside contributions. Discuss what happens when contributions are down.
6. Due to inflation, a dollar in the basket will no longer pay the bills the way it once did.
7. A.A.W.S. is selling fewer books, as is everyone in publishing, and Literature Sales accounts for approximately 56% of our income.
8. Currently only about 44% of A.A. groups and A.A. members contribute to G.S.O. Discuss possible ways of reaching the other 56%.
9. Contributions to G.S.O. provide financial support to facilitate co-founder Bill W.'s vision of carrying the message worldwide.
10. Suggest that areas that are financially able considered fully supporting their Area delegate to the General Service Conference.
11. Remind members of the birthday/anniversary plan for both individual members and groups and have a supply of G.S.O. contribution envelopes available.
12. Encourage areas to discuss financial support of A.A. at all levels.
13. Discuss the fact that although there are no dues or fees for A.A. membership, A.A. is not free.
14. If possible, budget the amount the group wishes to contribute to various service entities, rather than waiting to see what is left over after standard group expenses.
15. Discuss various International efforts to carry the message, including the roles of trustees-at-large and G.S.O. staff.
16. Discuss what would happen to A.A. if the groups that do contribute stopped providing money?
17. Are there A.A. entities that have large sums of money on hand?
18. Are groups aware of the green card, and if so do they make it a practice of reading it at meetings?
19. What works in your group to make your group self-supporting?
20. How does your group inform new members about the importance of our Seventh Tradition responsibility?
21. Should we present a more dramatic, realistic picture of A.A.'s financial situation? If so how?