



FINAL REPORT
EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL FORUM
NOVEMBER 15-17, 2013
FORT WAYNE, IN

Dear A.A. Friends,

Please mark your calendar for the next East Central Regional Forum, which will take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 13-15, 2015 at the Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport Hotel.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

A.A. General Service Board
c/o General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
(212) 870-3120
Fax: (212) 870-3003
E-mail: regionalforums@aa.org
G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site: www.aa.org

ONLY LAST NAMES OF CLASS A (NONALCOHOLIC) TRUSTEES
AND NON-A.A. EMPLOYEES APPEAR IN THIS REPORT

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
WORKSHOP REPORTS.....	3
PRESENTATIONS	8
PAST TRUSTEES' SHARING.....	20
"CLOSING REMARKS"	22

INTRODUCTION

The 2013 East Central Regional Forum was held in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Registration for this Forum topped at 396. This included 229 members attending their very first Forum—many of whom were welcomed at the Forum Orientation on Friday evening. Sunday morning included a session for first-time forum attendees, followed by sharing from past trustees.

WORKSHOP REPORTS

“La Viña: The La Viña Rep and More—Bringing our Message of Hope to Alcoholics” (Moderator: Irene D.) The moderator and members of this workshop discussed the overall status and importance of La Viña to the Fellowship. They reported that some time in 2008 and again about two years ago La Viña experienced distribution problems and some subscriptions were not sent. It was suggested that any problems be reported by calling the numbers that appear on the magazine. Subscriptions have increased from 7,000 to 10,000 since 2008. About 11,000 more subscriptions are needed in order for the magazine to be self-supporting. The workshop participants thought that each district should have a La Viña committee. They noted that it is important for La Viña to be present at all events and for it to be distributed to prisons.

The moderator and members of this workshop also discussed the attractiveness of the content of La Viña to the Fellowship and the importance of the RVL (La Viña Representative). They reported that La Viña forums and workshops are excellent ways both to motivate A.A. members and to drive up subscriptions. There are now more articles being submitted for publication. It is a good idea to plan a La Viña celebration. Members can bring their families to these events. The next July-August issue will mark the magazine’s 18th anniversary. RLVs get a free subscription and the material they need to promote the magazine. People interested in becoming RLVs should register with the Grapevine/La Viña office. Clayton, a Grapevine trustee, apologized for the negative—but real—financial information about the magazine as well as for past distribution problems. A person with closer links to the Spanish-speaking Fellowship may be coming on the Grapevine board in the near future.

“How Do We Benefit from Group and Area Inventories?” (Moderator: Marty L./Reporter: Mary Jo R.) The moderator began this workshop asking the question “What is the best way to structure an inventory so that you can get results that can be implemented?” The members responded that using materials that are available in our A.A. pamphlets and checklists are helpful. Also, ensure adequate time for everyone involved to access the questions and respond either in-person or anonymously. In addition, provide time to assign action items, responsibilities for implementation and time to review the outcome(s) of changes. Review the outcome(s) of change with serious consideration of the spiritual elements of A.A. and remember that principals come before personalities. We need to set aside our egos so the voice of loving God can be heard (this is not mechanical but spiritual). We should also evaluate what we are doing well and then move onto asking what we can do better. The moderator of this workshop also asked the question “How can we promote unity and responsibility while enhancing the Three Legacies through the inventory?” The members responded to develop an understanding of those involved on how decisions for change will be made (e.g., unanimity, substantial unanimity or simple majority). The use of substantial

unanimity builds unity by allowing both the majority and minority voices to be heard and compromise is easier to accept. Helping participants to understand how lengthy debates can be healthy is also critical in this process. A benefit of an inventory at any level is the introduction of awareness and that awareness is achieved through the process. It is important to establish why we are doing an inventory and talk about the importance of learning the meaning of “Carrying the Message” in each setting.

“Sponsorship” (Moderator: Becky B./Reporter: Paula E.) The moderator began this workshop with the Serenity Prayer and a brief overview of her experience with her own sponsor and service sponsor. The moderator then asked the members the questions “What are the benefits of having a sponsor? What are some techniques to become a sponsor? How do we handle relapses?” The members collectively agreed that sponsorship helps to keep them sober. There are many ways to sponsor someone and one technique does not work for everyone. There are guidelines for sponsorship in A.A. pamphlets and sponsorship is referenced in the stories in the Big Book. Some members reported that they let newcomers approach them if they are looking for a sponsor, while other members said that they themselves approach the newcomer. Members knew when they were ready to sponsor by firstly discussing it with their sponsor and also by praying and meditating. Ultimately it is a God-given gift to be an instrument to another still-struggling alcoholic. They also felt that relapses should be handled on a case-by-case basis.

The moderator then asked the members “What is a sponsor? What is the difference between a general sponsor and service sponsor?” The members responded that a general sponsor’s major functions are to help a member connect with the tools of the program, including the Big Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and to help them to get connected with meetings. Sponsors also provide guidance to the sponsees and encourage and motivate them to establish their journeys. General sponsorship is discussed in great detail in the stories in the Big Book. There were several opinions among the members about the role of the service sponsor. Of the members attending the workshop less than 10 actually had a service sponsor. It was agreed however, that a service sponsor helps the person understand what service work is and the multifaceted nature of the work (e.g., committing to a meeting, being a greeter, cleaning up, chairing a meeting, and serving at the General Service Office (G.S.O.)). The members felt that the level to participate in will depend on our mental and spiritual capabilities and motivation. A service sponsor helps define what the roles, requirements, backgrounds, responsibilities, etc. are for different service positions. Importantly, as a service sponsor, members agreed that we must be familiar with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts and the Legacies and we should have served in various service capacities and be aware of all they entail. Service sponsors should be the voice of reason when decisions are needed to be made, as to whether a person is ready to stand for a service position.

“Fun, Service and Sobriety” (Moderator: Bob S./Reporter: Dennis M.) The moderator of this workshop asked the members “How do we promote service and make it attractive?” The members responded that service is an opportunity for growth and it is important to have an attitude that service can be fun. The members felt that, “We are in service when we help in unity by planning and participating in positive events, listening without judgment, and by sharing our message with those who ask for help.” Participation in service to others also gives members the opportunity to feel connected to a positive Fellowship. Fun in service comes through gratitude, balance and humility in our lives, which replaces the terror of alcoholism.

The overall sense of this workshop was, “When we are in Loving Service, our members can identify with the sincerity of our example.”

The moderator also asked the members, “How do we in long-term sobriety have fun?” The members responded that fun in long-term sobriety comes in many forms. When we feel a part of our A.A. Groups by fellowshipping before and after the meeting, we have fun. When we participate in the activities of our groups, districts and areas, we replace the negative activities which required drinking to enjoy the fun of participation. When we take another member with us to an A.A. function, we have fun. When we pass on our experience, strength and hope with humor, it comes across to the newcomer as helpful and wise, which also is fun. The overall sense of this workshop was “Long-term sobriety, demonstrated by those who are Happy, Joyous and Free, by accepting and applying the 12 Steps to our lives, daily, is the best example of having fun.”

“Singleness of Purpose vs. the Third Tradition” (Moderator: Randy R./Reporter: Nancy H.) The moderator of this workshop opened the meeting by asking “How do we treat people who come to meetings and identify themselves as addict-alcoholic?” The members responded that we quote from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, “What would the master do?” The members also agreed that we need to focus on alcoholism at A.A. meetings. Some members reported that groups are told at meetings to identify themselves by their primary addiction, which was disconcerting to one member because it negated the ability for someone to say they are an addict. It is always important to say “welcome.” Some members would ask the person identifying as an addict “Why is it important to identify yourself as something other than an alcoholic?” to see what they say. It is also helpful to talk to a person individually after the meeting. It was suggested that chairs of meetings redirect conversations back to alcoholism and ask a new person coming in if they are an alcoholic or have a desire to stop drinking. If not, then tell them this is a closed meeting and give them a Narcotics Anonymous meeting list. Some people want a reminder that they have a problem with alcohol and other drugs. Tolerance is necessary because we are all different. One member said, “It took a long time to see and accept that I was an alcoholic but once I got rid of alcohol the other problem went away.” It is also helpful to share the “Language of the Heart” about recovery to the person identifying as an addict-alcoholic. This problem will never go away. We can’t just talk about one Tradition at a time. Newcomers don’t understand the difference; therefore, it is our job to help newcomers find the right place for help. What people are besides an alcoholic shouldn’t matter to us. We need to be patient. We need to look at what we are doing to “carry the message.”

The moderator then asked the members “Are we in the beginning stages of turning Alcoholics Anonymous into Addiction Anonymous?” The members responded that it is important to be aware of the message that we send to the outside world. We hear from professionals that they send clients to us to help them figure out if they are an alcoholic. One member asked where they are supposed to go if all they are is an alcoholic. Members reminded themselves that people need to identify with the Twelve Traditions and literature. What A.A. does and does not do depends on what is in the Traditions and literature. If a person thinks they have a problem with alcohol it is our business to help them. We don’t need A.A. police to tell people to leave. Nothing can destroy A.A., for without it we will die from within. Meetings that don’t focus on A.A. don’t last. It’s all about respect—at an A.A. meeting I need to respect the Traditions by pulling people aside and talk with them. It doesn’t matter how people introduce themselves. The Forward to the First Edition—the program may have its benefits for all and once we are

beyond Step 1 how much talk is there about alcohol anymore? It bothered one member that we don't address the addict and they asked, "Are we doing them a disservice?" Today it is easier to get drugs than alcohol and identification is important; therefore, "Keep it Simple." A quote from Concept 9 "Need to take a stand at the home-group level." Have a compassionate heart and listen to our Higher Power. Bill's story talks about sedatives so let's keep this thing simple. Remind ourselves of the Responsibility Statement. Talk to newcomers, encourage them to just say they are an alcoholic and stick to Conference-approved literature. Are we forgetting that A.A. was the first group around and other groups started because someone came and didn't identify. Stop being bleeding deacons and become elder statesmen and carry the A.A. message.

"Grapevine: The Grapevine Rep and More—Bringing our Message of Hope to Alcoholics" (Moderator: Ami B./Reporter: Jim S.) The moderator of this workshop led a discussion on topics relating to the Grapevine, including the role of the Grapevine Rep, possible topics for future editions and how to increase subscriptions. The members commented that Grapevine Reps try to increase awareness and they create excitement and local curiosity about the Grapevine. In some areas members reported hosting workshops and having information kits about the Grapevine. Potential new stories could include long-timers and the impact of changing locations in retirement, coming back after a relapse or after being gone a long time and how to give a report at a home group meeting. To increase subscriptions it is important to identify a goal. Circulate Grapevine information in newsletters and the Grapevine workshop book. Host workshops and get information from other areas —e.g., digital workshops, writing workshops, reading workshops and Grapevine panels. Provide the Grapevine to members for their anniversaries. It is also good to participate in committees at the local and district levels and when we visit corrections, bring group members a Grapevine. Take advantage of deals and order multiple subscriptions. What's in your heart, guides your goals and objectives.

"A.A. and Advancing Technologies" (Moderator: Blaine B./Reporter: Randy J.) The moderator of this workshop began by talking about the tech-team and the G.S.O. e-Book project. The moderator reported that we have exhausted the ability to deliver advanced technology and maintenance—there are delivery problems with no requirements currently gathered. The moderator and members also discussed "How do we deal with anonymity?" The answer is at the group level by educating members within the boundaries of the Twelve Traditions. For example, if we reply to an email address or unknown "Bridge the Gap" contacts, the full names of the sender are in the email addresses. To protect anonymity there could be secured areas on websites that are password protected: these could be used for the posting of minutes. There really is no privacy on-line. We need to form ad-hoc committees to explore these challenges.

Members also thought we need to consider other people's right to privacy, anonymity and responsibility. If we use free products we may sacrifice privacy. A second version of minutes with last names redacted sometimes individual choice to use anonymous email addresses. All groups are autonomous and nobody asked to provide central tech services. There are also the questions regarding social networking. The moderator talked about rebuilding the G.S.O. meeting directory and the questions that arose regarding meeting locations and dates. Streaming video is definitely a big anonymity concern. The topic of tech services should be a

future agenda item in future conferences. Who should go to the tech workshops? Some members thought only A.A.'s who are service-minded.

“Spirituality in Recovery—What’s Its Purpose?” (Moderator: Dennis M./Reporter: Bob S.) The moderator of this workshop asked the members, “How do you maintain contact with your Higher Power?” Various members responded that they get on their knees every morning and night; they talk to their Higher Power every day; they read the Big Book and the Bible; they bless and pray for others; ask how they can help others; forgive others; work the Twelve Steps; share their spiritual awakening with others; and stay in “touch” with themselves. They also ask for help and know that God has a sense of humor. One member mentioned that God was their Grandpa because he was the best person they knew and others found God in nature. Members also attend A.A. meetings every day; do the next right thing; ask their Higher Power how “I can be an instrument of His will”; read the Daily Reflections and One Day at a Time every day; watch out for the “little things”; sit quietly and listen to the answers. Action of some sort is required to maintain contact with our Higher Power. We cannot rest on our laurels.

The moderator also asked the members, “How do I know if you have Spirituality?” The members commented that it would be by their attitude and how they feel about themselves and others. Be of maximum service to others; the Third Legacy of Service; make amends when wrong; learn from mistakes; give their will to their Higher Power; recognize the miracles that occur; and doing things that are not “about me.” One member truly believed that they are a spiritual being and he/she maintains sobriety through being of service to others and by being honest, generous and humble. We must surrender to “win”. Willingness to do for others without getting any credit or recognition is an important way to stay in touch with our Higher Power.

“How to be an Effective District Committee Member (DCM)” (Moderator: Marge M. for Gary B./Reporter: Danny F.) The moderator of this workshop asked the members, “How do you keep meetings on track?” The members responded that as DCMs they follow the two-minute time limit for GSRs to give a report; they use basic Robert Rules Parliamentary Procedures to run meetings; and they provide GSRs with a preliminary agenda before they attend district meetings. The moderator also asked the members “How do you get GSRs to show up to meetings?” The members responded that they use a punch card system for attendance; they only use Conference-approved literature; and they give literature (e.g., Big Books, 12 x 12's) at meetings as a reward. Members also call GSRs ahead of time or email agenda items before meetings; have GSRs give a Tradition or Concept meeting the following month; they explain to GSR's how important their job is; and they ask the GSR's to bring fliers advertising anniversaries and picnics back to their homegroups.

“C.P.C. Committees —The Importance of Reaching Professionals” (Moderator: Clay R./Reporter: Jeni F.) The moderator of this workshop asked the members, “What are court systems mandating and what is next?” The members reported that the courts sometimes are not aware of what A.A. does and does not do. A variety of groups deal with court signings and there is an effort to improve communication and educate the courts. Being proactive and seeking out professionals is important. The moderator and members of the workshop also discussed the topic of “Boundaries: Attraction vs. Promotion.” They reported that PI and CPC do not have to be separated. Ask professionals and others, “Can we talk with you about A.A.?” Find out what works in your community because our groups are breaking down and if

A.A. goes away we can't help anybody – so we can explain what we are and what we are not. We do actively reach out but it's important to wait to go out when you know what you are going out for. Carry the facts, and not personalities.

PRESENTATIONS

“Our Primary Purpose” Rich H., Delegate Panel 62, Area 20 Northern Illinois

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. So as a member of an Alcoholics Anonymous group, my primary purpose (and likely my sole purpose) is to carry the message of recovery to still-suffering alcoholics. I do this because it is the only thing I and others like me have found to insure immunity against drinking—and I am a person who has put a lot of effort into different methods to quit drinking. What is also true is that if our Alcoholics Anonymous group falls away from its primary purpose it too may ultimately die.

How do we carry this message? Well we show others precisely how we have recovered from alcoholism. We have found that in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, specifically through the guidance of those who have done this work before us. By showing others exactly as I was shown, I am giving them the same opportunity that was given to me years ago. At the same time I am paying respect for those who took the time with me when I appeared to be a hopeless case, doomed to die from this disease.

And then you may ask, where will we find these still-suffering alcoholics? If our home group is healthy, their friends and our friends will send them to us. Here “healthy” means that we adhere to our primary purpose of helping alcoholics, as well as by having knowledge of our remaining Traditions and using them to guide our group.

Some of us bring meetings into treatment centers. A lot of my friends and I bring meetings into jails and prisons. These meetings usually start off easily because our potential members are put in front of us; however, the meetings can become difficult because many of these people are so damaged that we really have to work to gain their trust, to show them what Alcoholics Anonymous is, what Alcoholics Anonymous is not, what alcoholism is, and that there really can be hope for them.

It means, too, that I have to show them what alcoholism is, what it might look like in their lives, and if what they suffer from is truly alcoholism. If necessary, it also means that I help guide them to where they need to be, because we do have a singleness of purpose. Remember, Bill Wilson used words similar to this: Let us not think that because God blessed us with the ability to help those that suffer from alcoholism that we should then be able to give help for other problems.

I got a firsthand look at our need for singleness of purpose in what appeared to be very innocent dialogue one night. A young man was doing an A.A. talk and spoke about how consuming a particular substance gave him the ability to drink all night long. It appeared as though we all were nodding in the fact that we had had that experience. All of us, except for a

friend of mine. He had a blank look in his eyes, and it was obvious that this wasn't his experience. Here was a man suffering from alcoholism and feeling different in an A.A. meeting. We are here because of the one common thing that nearly killed us all, and to share with others the common solution to overcome this disease.

“Shoemaker, stick to thy last”—better to do one thing supremely well than many badly. That is the central theme of this Tradition. Around it our society gathers in unity. The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle.

When Bill wrote “Problems Other Than Alcohol” in 1958, he made clear our singleness of purpose: “Sobriety—freedom from alcohol—through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.”

From the trustees of Narcotics Anonymous: “One of A.A.'s greatest strengths is its single-minded focus on one thing only: By limiting its primary purpose to carrying the message to alcoholics, avoiding all other activities, A.A. has done that supremely well—and they have paved the way for Narcotics Anonymous by freely giving us their Steps. The simple fact is that both Fellowships have a Sixth Tradition for a purpose—to keep from being diverted from our primary purpose. Each Twelve Step Fellowship must stand alone, unaffiliated with everything else. We each have a separate unique primary purpose.”

In *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, we find this powerful statement: “We think we should do one thing well rather than many things to which we are not called. Our society gathers in unity around this concept. The very life of our fellowship requires its preservation. Together we have found a substantial remedy for a terrible malady. As a fellowship we know we must not be diverted. It is our experience as alcoholics that make us of unique value on our sector of the total alcoholic front. We can approach sufferers as no one else can. Therefore, the strongest kind of moral and ethical compulsion is upon us to do this and nothing more. We shall direct our energies where they count most. Most emphatically, then, A.A. has but one single purpose: To carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is our basic objective, our real reason for existence.”

It's our *only* reason for existence.

“What Does It Mean to Be a Trusted Servant?” Mark E., Delegate Panel 62, Area 56 Ohio

This topic must be a serious item in our A.A. program, because we address it quite directly in both our Traditions and Concepts. First, Tradition Two clearly states that “Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.” Then, our trusted servants are again addressed in at least three separate Concepts. If you want to follow along, look at Concepts II, III, IV, and X. I’ll address the Concepts first, since they are probably less familiar to at least our newer members.

Our Service Manual includes many suggestions and thoughts as to what makes, and what is expected of, a trusted servant. In Concept III Bill writes, “For example, knowing that theirs is the final authority, the groups are sometimes tempted to instruct their Delegates exactly how to vote upon certain matters in the Conference. Because they hold the ultimate authority, there is no doubt that the A.A. groups have the right to do this.” And, a bit later, Bill writes, “Nevertheless, the ‘instructed’ Delegate who cannot act on his own conscience in a final Conference vote is not a ‘trusted servant’ at all; he is just a messenger.” At the end of the essay on Concept III, Bill concludes, “Our entire A.A. program resets squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A. and we trust each other.” Further, in Concept IV we are reminded that all of the members of the Conference have a right of participation and that instructed delegates are agents and order takers rather than trusted servants. Next, in Concept X we are reminded that “when delegated authority is operating well it should not be constantly interfered with.” That is to say, as I understand it, if we are generally pleased with the functioning of our service entities, we should continue to trust our trusted servants.

Next, I thought it might be helpful to look at the words and their separate meanings. “Trust” is a word most of us understand, and “servant” is an equally understandable concept. Let’s take them from the last word first. I think “servant” is a clearly comprehensible concept, one who serves as opposed to one who directs. As a servant to my group, district, or area, I am there to perform the duties that my group assigns me to implement, and they expect that I will perform the assigned duties without complaint and as thoroughly as instructed. However, as a servant, I am also expected to think and use my experience to do the assigned jobs in a manner that is best for the group. Since none of us can predict the future, my instructed duties assume that I do this work in a certain set of normal or regular circumstances. If the circumstances change, then I am similarly expected to adjust and yet still do the job.

Now, there might be occasions when I will have the time to return to my group, report the changed circumstances, and get new directions to meet the new conditions. Then, too, there might be moments when I will not have the luxury of time to return to my group with this new information, so I will have to act in a manner which is best for the situation and then, when back with my group, report the actions which I took on their behalf based on the added information or changed situation.

This is where the trust comes in. My group trusts me to be fully aware of their opinion and directions, and, at the same time, they are willing to allow me to listen to new ideas, added facts, and changed situations to make an even more informed decision. I am reminded of something told to me a long time ago while discussing the Eleventh Step. I was reminded that “my will for me is exactly what God’s will for me would be—if I had all the facts.” Of course, the

problem is that none of us ever have all of the facts, so even an informed group conscience, at its best, is probably lacking every fact and idea relating to that subject.

In April 1959, Dr. Jack Norris wrote the following for the Grapevine:

“Our life is full of paradoxes, seeming contradictions that go deep into the heart of things. The last part of A.A.’s Tradition Two is one of these: ‘Our leaders are but trusted servants . . . they do not govern.’

“How often we find an answer to our own problems as we serve someone, or a group. As we become successful in this service, we are given positions of leadership among our fellows. And then something happens to us. We begin to feel that we know all the answers. We are hurt and resentful when anyone questions our wisdom and authority, and everyone suffers. Jesus said, ‘Whoever would be great among you must be your servant.’

“Let us be thankful that A.A. has had as its founder’s men who saw and lived by this wisdom, and built it into the structure of the Fellowship. May we be vigilant to do our part, each of us, each day, to keep this tradition of leadership at the center of our own lives and of the group we serve.”

So, for me, I think I understand and respect the trust placed in me by my group and my area to carry their informed consciences and respect their wishes and concerns. I am obligated to voice their thoughts and opinions, and I am equally obligated to hear the thoughts and opinions brought by *all others* as we strive to find the best answer to the issues at hand. I have found that there are times when my group and my area have reached conclusions which are contrary to the better good. I am trusted to follow my conscience and vote for the best, and I am trusted to inform my group and my area just exactly what I learned and why I voted in a manner contrary to the wishes expressed when we originally discussed the item.

At the 63rd General Service Conference, for example, my area clearly supported the idea of A.A. publishing a 75th Anniversary replica of the first printing, first edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Then, while at the General Service Conference, once I heard all of the discussion, both for and against the proposal, I became conflicted enough on the subject that I decided that I could vote neither for nor against the proposal. I heard many thoughts for honoring our history, and thoughts against our fellowship delving into the trinket business. I heard objections from those who spoke and read languages other than English wanting a version in their language. I heard questions as to the potential confusion that a new member might suffer when presented with two very different versions of our book. As a result, I was quite comfortable in reporting to my area that I did not vote as they wished. I explained my reasons and my decision was respected. What more can a trusted servant do?

Thank you for the opportunity to serve and I wish all of you the best as we “trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.”

“How Does an Item Get On the General Service Conference Agenda?” Bill R., Panel 63, Area 22 Northern Indiana

During the A.A. Fellowship’s hectic and tumultuous first fifteen years, it became apparent to our founders that there needed to be a serious consideration of how the Fellowship would continue to conduct itself after the founders and old-timers were gone. So in June 1950 at the first International Convention at Cleveland, the Twelve Traditions were adopted, and in April 1951 a five-year experiment began with the first General Service Conference. At the 20th Anniversary Convention in St. Louis on July 3, 1955, “[t]he Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service were turned over to the movement by its old-timers.” The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous was about to take over the custody of A.A.’s Twelve Traditions and the guardianship of its world services.

It all seems so long ago and far away, and yet this event, this 2013 East Central Regional Forum, is a concrete example of how Alcoholics Anonymous actively fulfills its charge of custody and guardianship.

A.A. Service, our Third Legacy, is simple: it is anything that legitimately helps us reach fellow sufferers. As we have seen, the Twelfth Step call is the greatest of A.A.’s services. But how did the desperate prospect find out about us? How did he or she know to call A.A. for help? You might say, “Well, everyone knows about A.A., don’t they?” Actually, no, they don’t. So, our literature, our Fellowship’s magazines, the Grapevine and La Viña, our Conference Committees, our Trustee Committees, and, most importantly, our paid General Service Office staff members, all contribute to our ability to be able to answer that call when it comes.

Each and every one of us is called to pay attention to how all this service-focused activity is maintained and delivered in our local areas, and if it is lacking, how to take measures to improve it. Thus, we have A.A. groups who take inventory to identify needs, and seek the experience of the Fellowship to assist in attending to these needs. Our General Service Representatives (G.S.R.s), the most important service position in the Fellowship, meet with other G.S.R.s at the district level and share their experience. The G.S.R.s get ideas based on experience that they can use in their own groups. If the district feels more input and help is needed, then the District Committee Member (D.C.M.) requests the help of the Area Committee.

This request for help often becomes an agenda item at an area assembly, and the group conscience of the area is engaged to provide guidance. If the area decides that this request for help may benefit the entire Fellowship, a request can be forwarded to the General Service Conference for consideration.

The A.A. Service Manual tells us:

“The Final agenda for any Conference consists of items suggested by individual A.A. members, groups, delegates, trustees, area assemblies, area committee members, and directors and staff members of A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine. The Conference considers matters of policy for A.A. as a whole, and there are tried-and-true procedures for placing an item on the agenda in the most effective way—or, when the suggestion does *not* concern overall policy, for routing it to the most appropriate part of the service structure.

"If a G.S.R. has an idea for an agenda item, chances are that he or she will want to discuss it first with the group, then at a district or area meeting, which can then forward it to the staff member at G.S.O. currently serving as Conference coordinator. An A.A. who is not part of the general service structure can give the idea to the group's G.S.R. or write directly to the conference coordinator.

"Whatever the origin, any agenda item follows the same path to the Conference agenda: The A.A. staff studies it in light of previous Conference actions, then passes it on to the trustee's Conference Committee or the appropriate Conference committee. Usually, the trustee's committee determines the most appropriate way of programming it—as a workshop or presentation subject, a proposal, or a committee concern."

That basically describes the roadmap of how an item gets on the General Service Conference Agenda. It is admittedly an oversimplification. A roadmap does not describe the condition of the road, the path, nor does it recognize the skill of the driver, or the capabilities of the vehicle. And the road map most certainly doesn't contain any warnings about whom we may meet along the way. Bill Wilson wrote in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* about the warnings he received when trying to guide the Fellowship towards its ultimate destiny of responsibility for this life-giving message. He said our psychiatrist friends warned that "This Fellowship of alcoholics is emotional dynamite. Its neurotic content can blow it to bits."

Emotional dynamite indeed! But passionately concerned as well.

Our current structure, from group member and G.S.R. to Trustee Boards of Directors, both Class A and Class B, supports and affords all of us who claim to be members of this glorious way of life the chance to share this life-giving message of hope to the alcoholic who still suffers.

We alcoholics are suspicious by nature. We have an unquenchable desire to know what's going on with our Fellowship. We are nosy! And as a result, in some cases, we offer our opinions based on less than sufficient understanding of background issues. Today, efforts are being made to increase the transparency of what may appear to be back channel posturing. I received a document as a member of the Conference Agenda Committee entitled "Proposed Conference Agenda Items Submitted for the 2013 General Service Conference on which the Trustees' Committee or Boards Took No Action or Tabled the Item." This document contained explanations of how the Trustees' Committees or Boards reached their decisions to not include these items on the 2013 Conference Agenda. It was, for me, a true observance of humility in action.

If you have a worthwhile concern that you feel the group conscience of the Fellowship should consider, please, by all means begin the process of finding out what others think about this concern. Consult the experience of those that have gone before you, and offer as much background of justification as you possibly can find for your concern. Pray about it a lot. And then see what happens.

You will certainly have your concern addressed. And perhaps in the process you'll experience that the Fellowship is armed with truths about itself that support our singleness of purpose and the vision of our founders. Ultimately, all we want to be is helpful. Thank you for this privilege and thank you for my life.

“Our Three Legacies—Recovery, Unity, and Service” Kenny K., Panel 62 Delegate, Area 34 Western Michigan/Eastern Upper Peninsula

Alcoholics Anonymous formed from the act of one person helping another, and it evolved out of principles borrowed from the Oxford Group. Bill W. brought forth our Twelve Steps of recovery in the midst of writing the Big Book. Recovery begins with our Twelve Steps, which have saved countless lives for over seventy-eight years. So our First Legacy, Recovery, is no doubt the foundation of Alcoholics Anonymous.

By the mid-1940s, the membership of A.A. had been increasing for several years. Some of the groups were implementing too many rules, and other problems surfaced, like anonymity breaks, quarrels over structure, purpose, and authority, as well as finances and publicity. These were threatening to A.A. as a whole. It was clear that if we continued down this path we could cause the collapse of A.A.

In July of 1945, Bill W. published an article in the Grapevine about the demise of the Washingtonians one hundred years prior. He started addressing similar issues in A.A. and thus began a series of articles published in the Grapevine. This was but the beginning of a long series of articles (called “Twelve Points of Tradition”) that became known as our Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, our Second Legacy of Unity. The Twelve Traditions were adopted unanimously by several thousand A.A.s attending the very first International Convention, celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous in Cleveland, Ohio, in July of 1950.

By that year it was clear to our founders that something (or someone) had to take their place. And eventually, after much consideration, Dr. Bob gave Bill W. his blessing to move forward with the General Service Conference idea. His last words to Bill were: “Remember, Bill, let’s not louse this thing up. Let’s keep it simple!” (*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, p. 214) The Fellowship then move forward with the Conference on a trial basis for four years, and in 1955, at the second International Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, celebrating A.A.’s twentieth anniversary. The body voted unanimously to adopt Bill W.’s offer of “A Resolution.” This “Resolution” authorizes the General Service Conference to act for Alcoholics Anonymous and to become the successor to its co-founders. And it was out of the Conference Charter that our Twelve Concepts evolved, and thus A.A.’s Third Legacy of Service. (*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, p. S99)

In Bill’s own words: “Recovery, Unity, and Service—these are the Three Legacies of our A.A. experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. God, as He may speak in our group conscience, is our sole authority. And World Service is the heart of our Third Legacy.

“Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that A.A.’s Fellowship gives; this is our principle aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics *in action*. We must carry the message, or else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth will die.

“Hence, an A.A. service is *anything whatever* that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself or a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, to A.A.’s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum total of *all* these services is our Third Legacy.” (A.A. Grapevine, July 1955, Bill W.)

I typed in the word “Recovery” in the search feature for the Grapevine Digital Archives, and it resulted in 5,180 articles. “Unity” uncovered only 648 articles, and “Service” found 3,973. But when I combined our Three Legacies—Recovery, Unity, and Service—there are a mere sixty-three articles published throughout the history of our Grapevine. I must admit that it was quite difficult writing this presentation due to the research I was doing. I kept getting sidetracked by so many interesting articles. This led to this being a few weeks behind schedule. I repeatedly edited this, not wanting to leave anything out, but I found that I had to include everything. I can never get enough of our program, and the more I read or research, the more amazed I am at the miracle of Recovery, Unity, and Service!

I wouldn’t be sitting here today if it wasn’t for the A.A. volunteer that carried the message behind the walls to me as a suffering alcoholic. He brought me hope, as well as the tools I needed to be able to rise up from a very deep and dark pit of my own hell. These tools brought me back to life through a spiritual awakening. With God’s help I was able to recover from that seemingly hopeless state of mind and body, and for that I am forever grateful!

It was through our First Legacy of Recovery that I was able to venture forward with this new freedom. Through our Second Legacy of Unity, specifically with the help of my home group, I was able to realize a true humility. And through our Third Legacy of Service, I am able to reach out and offer help to others. I know for me I have to combine all aspects of this program, which equals love and service. With this I am able to maintain a healthy, happy attitude and outlook. I need the whole program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I need to practice all of our principles in my life.

“Understanding Tradition Eleven” Ola P., Delegate Panel 63, Area 54 Northeast Ohio

Understanding Tradition Eleven and its two spiritual parts:

- a. Attraction Rather Than Promotion
- b. Maintaining Personal Anonymity

During the earlier years of my journey in this awesome Fellowship, not much of my attention was given to our Traditions. Although I read them and was often called upon to read them at meetings, I did not at that time fully comprehend their significance or their meaning. What drew my attention to the Traditions, even before coming into general service, were the frequent and sometimes heated debates (if you will) over the interpretation of this specific Tradition. In particular, the use of last names on flyers, programs, and the like, as well as taking photographs and recordings at A.A. functions. My many inquiries about this Tradition only lead to more confusion on my part.

On two separate occasions, my perplexity about this Tradition reached a peak which caused me to launch a full-scale investigation into the matter. While preparing flyers for my home group I made a spelling error, and just as I was about to drop the flyers in the trash, it occurred to me that there were last names on them and if, by chance, someone saw them, I would be

giving away their anonymity. Of course I ripped them up, then I picked up my Twelve and Twelve and began to study Tradition Eleven. The second occasion came after coming into general service. I was asked to speak on a Traditions panel and was assigned to do Traditions Ten, Eleven, and Twelve—the anonymity traditions. While preparing for this panel, I came across a statement made by Bill W. to a reporter who asked “Why do you have to be anonymous?” to which Bill replied, “Because we take no credit for our sobriety.”

This made perfect sense to me. After all, on page eighty-five of the Big Book it states, “We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. . . . our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. . . . the problem has been removed.” What really drove this home for me can be found on page 60 of the Big Book: “That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. . . . That God could and would if he were sought.”

As I continued to research this issue, everything that I had read and much of what I had heard began to fall into place. “Because we take no credit for our sobriety.” This statement made clear to me that in order to better understand Tradition Eleven, I must first come to fully comprehend the immense spiritual significance of Tradition Twelve. Further, it also became apparent that the key to understanding our spiritual principle of anonymity is sacrifice. I must be ever mindful that as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous I have sacrificed those natural desires for distinction, prestige, power, self-seeking, and personal ambition; that the temptation to scramble for these natural desires is ever present, both within and outside of the Fellowship. On page 187 in the Twelve and Twelve it states that “anonymity is real humility at work.”

It was our policy of “attraction rather than promotion” and maintaining personal anonymity with the general public that so delighted the press early on, which led to the many articles that were published about our amazing Fellowship.

As an average member of Alcoholics Anonymous, the general public for me is restricted to my family, my friends, my community, and those with whom I interact on a professional level. Experience has taught me that if I am to be an attraction to someone who may want what we have, it is personal anonymity, not grandiosity that will allow me to be of maximum service to God and to others.

As visionaries, our co-founders were careful to include all forms of public media that could prove disastrous for the Fellowship, especially press, radio, and films. In my humble opinion, this list includes the Internet, social media, and all forms of public communications. What the Internet did was to combine press, radio and film. It is written, it is visual and it is audible.

How Can We Make Service More Attractive? Dave C., Delegate Panel 63, Area 53 Central Southeast Ohio

My name is Dave C., and I’m an alcoholic. My home group is the After Work group in Gahanna Ohio, and I serve on the Cooperation with the Professional Community committee at the General Service Conference. My sobriety date is August 17, 1981. How can we make service more attractive?

In my opinion, the A.A. history of service is the most inspiring record of achievement ever recorded in the twentieth century. I don't think I'm being too overly chauvinistic if I say A.A. history is awesome and amazing. We would not have this weekend of love and service in beautiful Fort Wayne were it not for the awesome and amazing experiences of A.A.'s pioneers. Lest I ever forget, in November 1934, sitting on a hospital bed in New York City's Towns Hospital, one devastated drunk had a world changing revelation. William Griffith Wilson suddenly realized he was a free man.

Maybe even more miraculous for the millions to come was the vision that Bill expressed in the Big Book. Page fourteen of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* reads: "the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given to me. Perhaps I could help some of them and they in turn might work with others." Because Ebby helped Bill and Bill helped Dr. Bob and Bill and Dr. Bob helped Bill D., a movement was forged. A movement built on service and sustained by gratitude, fortitude, and perseverance.

A book emerged. Then a *Saturday Evening Post* story proclaimed a solution was found for alcoholism. Alcoholic Foundation Service workers were swamped with thousands of letters from sufferers pleading for help, praying for a solution.

More work was needed to carry the message, and more service workers came to the rescue. A World Service operation was created to print and distribute A.A. literature. The message was getting carried to health departments, prisons, medical associations, and spiritual leaders of every faith. Alcoholics working with alcoholics carried the Big Book and practiced the principles, and the growing Fellowship was kept informed and well supplied through the support of groups and the sales of literature, as well as by the dedicated servants at the foundation office and intergroups all over the United States and Canada.

And today we continue the work as individuals and service committees of A.A., all standing on the shoulders of the pioneers who stayed sober by carrying the message through love and service. The A.A. solution has been carried to over one hundred countries around the world.

Every hour of every day, because of service institutions like the General Service Office and intergroups, there are countless alcoholics reaching out to A.A.s all over the world.

When I dragged my butt to the Cross Ties group in Columbus Ohio in August 1981, I knew I had no solution. The main reason I was there was because I remembered that A.A. worked for those people, and I wanted what they had. I knew where to find A.A. because trusted servants manned the telephones at the Central Ohio Group Fellowship intergroup office. Unpaid service workers gave me the location of Cross Ties group. I thank God for the A.A. trusted servants on the phones, on corporate boards, on intergroup committees in Columbus, Fort Wayne, New York, Finland, and the world over.

Service couldn't be more attractive to me. Service embodies the ethic of Alcoholics Anonymous' Three Legacies. Maybe the most attractive service activity I perform is reaching out to shake the hand of a newcomer at my home group. How great is it when my group can carry the message with a welcoming hand, an attractive literature display, and sponsorship.

I know attractiveness carries the message of hope and recovery, because that attraction is what came suddenly to mind when I was ready. And I hope I always remember Bill's message that's found in *The A.A. Service Manual*: "A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die."

I like to think my group and my partners in service carry the message whether we are at a new meeting, my home group, or yours, whether we are at the General Service Conference, at an area committee meeting, or an eating meeting after the meeting. Like Bill wrote, I'm no longer isolated and alone in a self-constructed prison; I'm an active member of an active group.

Dr. Bob said that A.A. simmered down is love and service. I've heard past East Central Regional Trustees suggest that service is love with its work clothes on. I know I'm not alone when I say it truly is a privilege to report to work this beautiful weekend at this East Central Regional Forum.

God Bless Alcoholics Anonymous.

PAST TRUSTEES' SHARING

Linda Chezem, Class A past trustee, 1997-2003

Thank you for the invitation to be here. I served on the General Service Board ten years ago. I have since left the bench and now I am teaching at Purdue University. I'm so grateful that A.A. invited me here so that I can have the opportunity to see what you are doing. This morning the word "admiration" expresses my thoughts. You are the service nuts and bolts—without you service doesn't happen at the local level. You are the connectors. I love the fact that A.A.s get sober, I love the fact that they work one day at a time to maintain that sobriety, but the icing on the cake with A.A. is the service that you do.

There is a reason I say that. Way back in Bedford, Indiana, while I was on the bench, I told the local newspaper, "I don't know what to do with these alcoholics. They just keep coming back." And that newspaper reported my expression of ignorance about alcoholics. In Bedford, Indiana, they have a CPC, and the chair of that CPC and two other people came to the court and asked to see me. They met with me and they said, "Well, Judge, we know you don't know what to do with alcoholics. But we know what to do with them, so send them to us." After that, I would say to people, "I think you have a problem with alcohol. There is an open meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays, one block west of the courthouse, and I suggest you go there. And if you go there, you may stay sober and you will never have to come back and see me." And that's how I really started my relationship with A.A.

At Purdue, I teach public health law and policy. Within that, I teach units on alcohol and alcohol usage as a chronic and acute public health problem. I also work in the State of Indiana with the Criminal Justice Institute on the issue of underage drinking. I appreciate your friendship, and I hope that my work continues to serve the good of Alcoholics Anonymous. Quietly and anonymously, I hope that I open doors for A.A. As your friend, that is my role. Thank you for inviting me this morning.

George M., general service past trustee, 2009-2013

I grew up in Detroit, and my parents and grandparents were born and raised there. My great-grandparents immigrated to Detroit. The downtown area is thriving, and we are really going to have a great International Convention. I'm looking forward to it.

I got into service almost by accident. Basically, I took on a project and it was expanded until I was a general service trustee. We come into A.A. asking, "What can A.A. do for me?" We are asking for help. But then, in my sobriety, there came a point when there was a shift, and all of a sudden I was asking myself, "What can I do for A.A.?" To me, that is when the program becomes a spiritual program. And one of the great benefits of service, I've found, is that you meet some really interesting, dedicated people, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, who dedicate a portion of their lives to this program and to carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. I'm saying all this for those who are here, at this forum, for the first time. If you are thinking of getting involved, do it. There are no big shots in A.A. Each of us can make a very small contribution. And all the thousands of contributions make A.A. a wonderful and vital program. Thank you.

Bob M., East Central region past trustee, 2005-2009

I sobered up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I am currently serving Area 74 as a newsletter editor. So, if you want to be involved in service after you've done everything else, find something no one else wants to do and do that. I enjoy doing it, and I'm glad the area lets me stay engaged in something.

I recently retired from the US Forest Service after over thirty years. Before I ever took on a service position, I did as our literature says: I talked to family—that was easy, I'm single—and I talked to my employer. My employer has always, always, been really accommodating, and I've always gotten all the time I needed to serve A.A. I've used vacation time and personal time, but my supervisors always accommodated me. When I rotated off my position as East Central Regional trustee, I decided that I was going to give back to my employer for the time they gave to me to be gone. Of course, I talked to my sponsor, and we worked it out. By the time I retired, I had given back four years. It was tough to retire but now I'm moving back up north and I'm shopping for a new home group.

It was a good weekend at this forum. I'm glad, because I know that the first regional forum I was at was really important. Here in A.A., we are about spirituality and a new way of living that is based on spiritual principles. Although we talk a lot about business today, we are kind of having a revolution. New and old technologies exist together. For me, I like carrying around the Big Book—I have nothing on my iPad—maybe I'm a dinosaur. But as we change, we also keep all of our spiritual principles in mind and we should ask ourselves, "Why are we doing this?" There was a conversation last night about singleness of purpose, and one sentence in the Big Book was brought to mind: "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail." And I've been to open meetings where there were no other alcoholics. Many others spoke, but I wasn't getting what I needed to stay sober. There were al-anons, codependents, adult children, and then there was me. When Bill met with Dr. Bob, he wasn't thinking about helping the world, he was thinking, "I'm going to drink. I need to talk to somebody else." So this experience always comes to mind when I hear the word "help." I think (and I hope) I'm being open-minded, so let's let the Fellowship talk about it, debate it and discuss it — so we can all be part of the discussion.

Don W., East Central region past trustee, 1993-1997

I was so happy to see Linda Chezem at this forum; it is fantastic that we have Class A trustees who continue to serve the Fellowship even when they rotate off.

I came to A.A. in 1970 and there were coffee cups to wash—we didn't have Styrofoam cups. And there were ashtrays to empty—we don't have that today. So what does the new person do when he comes to A.A.? How do you get him involved in service work? I suppose you find jobs that don't require much, like setting up chairs, making coffee, shaking hands. I served on the Grapevine Board, and it was my pleasure to introduce La Viña. Thank God we have that magazine—I have seen the light in their eyes of Spanish speakers. La Viña is looking for some way to have a celebration in a few more years because they are going to be twenty years old!

It was twenty years ago that I started my term as an East Central Regional trustee. I am still around, I am glad people still want me around to help. And what do I do? I go to meetings and I stand at the door and I shake the hands of the people who come to my meetings. I shake the hands of every one of those inmates that I go to visit on Thursday night with my friend and some others from Battle Creek. When we come out of that building we always say, "That's the best meeting I've been to this week." Last Thursday night, this gentleman was going on and on, but he was going on and on because he was scared. "I'm scared," he said. "I can stay sober and clean when I am in here, because I have these guys watching me. But what happens when I get out? What do I and where do I go?"

In Michigan we have a pre-release contact program that covers all three areas in the whole state. We use a Post Office box. One person that takes it out of the box and then forwards the mail to each area that inmate might be released in. We ask them to do it six months ahead of time. The last time we went to a meeting the man who was scared about staying sober on the outside had an envelope in his hand and he said, "I got it, I got it!"

"Got what?" we said. "I got an answer from your answering service," he said. "I got a message from the people who take care of your pre-release contacts. I got someone I can write to. I'm not scared." Do you think we do something useful when we go to prisons? It's up to us to carry the message, and always be patient, kind, and courteous to your neighbor. Thank you.

“CLOSING REMARKS”

Terry Bedient, Class A (nonalcoholic) Trustee, General Service Board chairperson:

18 million people in the U.S. and Canada suffer from a life-threatening problem. Not drinking is not the solution. The solution is spiritual growth and application of the Twelve Steps in all areas of our lives. Former Class A trustee, George Valliant, said that service is linked to survival and spirituality. It is not just a lonely guru on a mountaintop. Spirituality includes service. Your presence here this weekend demonstrates your commitment to service and to growth along spiritual lines. As Dr. Bob said, it all comes down to love and service. I have always loved the fact that he put “love” first.

This weekend there has been a lot of discussion about the Seventh Tradition. At its core, the Seventh Tradition is about service — service in all its various forms. This weekend, despite many opportunities to the contrary, we have all placed personalities above principles. It seems we have also carefully observed Rule 62 — to not take ourselves too seriously. Look around; in this room you’ll see our future Concept Nine leaders. I hope each of you looks at your leadership with a sense of wonder and delight and joy.

I sense a great enthusiasm with our electronic media initiatives for Grapevine and A.A.W.S. At the same time, I am also reminded that fighting isolation is a key to ongoing sobriety. In today’s world it is easy to buddy up with a laptop or a smart phone or a television instead of a real person. And that can be a challenge for all of us. This weekend, the spirit of gratitude has been alive and well and within our discussions; I sense serenity. Today, every mutual help group in the world is modeled after your Twelve Steps. No other group in the world comes close to providing your kind of support to others suffering from a common problem. But at the same time, remember that A.A. is Alcoholics Anonymous, not Alcoholics Invisible. For those who are restless, irritable, and discontented, drinking is not the solution. And not drinking is not the solution. The solution, as you know, is spiritual growth through application of the Twelve Steps in all aspects of our lives. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.
