



## What Can I Do?

What can I do? I'm only one person out of close to two million members of AA. So I see and hear things that don't seem right sometime -at a meeting or at a conference. That's not my problem, let someone else handle it! Ever feel that way? It's called apathy.

At my home group, I can be a good member by showing up for the weekly meetings and the business meetings and by taking my turn at the different tasks necessary to keep my group going. Also, I can keep an eye open for problems and speak up when I do see one instead of looking the other way.

Also, I can get a good understanding of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelfth Concept and the General Service structure by serving as a General Service Representative for at least two years, by reading the General Service Manual and by going to some 12 & 12 Study groups. This should give me a general idea of how things should be.

When I go to a meeting and hear a lead on drugs or sex or overeating or some other addiction with barely a mention of alcohol, I can get up and walk out as I've seen some members do or better yet I can sit through it and then get up and make a comment. I can thank the speaker for sharing and then mention that I do not relate and explain that this is a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous and remind him/her of our 3rd and 5th Traditions. After the meeting, I can tell him/her of an anonymous group more suited to his/her problem. I can hand the Chairman a 12 Traditions Illustrated pamphlet.

At a business meeting, if I know a Tradition and I know that it is about to be broken, it is my responsibility to speak up. The others may not realize it or be afraid to say anything. The Tradi-

tions are the blueprint for our groups and should be followed to the best of our knowledge. There should be no interest in seeing how we can get around a tradition.

I attended a conference recently and there was a small registration fee to help cover costs. I paid the registration fee and wore my badge and ribbon with pride but a large number of attenders simply did not pay. This did not stop them from drinking coffee and losing coffee, eating snacks and taking up the best seats in the auditorium for the big meeting. 'You can't keep anyone out of an open AA meeting,' was the most often heard excuse. Or, "I'm only staying for a short time!" Maybe they don't know what it costs to put on a conference. Maybe they confuse an AA meeting at a conference with a regular AA meeting and perhaps they hear "no dues or fees" and have somehow missed the "self supporting through **our own contributions** part.

How about going to a conference and parking your vehicle on the patio or sidewalk so you can keep an eye on it? Multiply yourself by **300-400** and you can see the problem. Wow, congestion - no place to sit or walk! What can I do? I can park **my** vehicle in a parking lot and then walk over to the patio area to great old and new friends.

Ever see a tapist at an anniversary or a conference with a huge table stocked with tapes from God knows what outfit? Ever see **OUR** "BIG BOOK" or "TWELVE & TWELVE" tape cassettes for sale under a different cover? These tapists need to know that we won't put up with it.

What can we do? I can be a good example, I can speak up, I can complain to the right people, I can study the Traditions, I can write an article in the local AA newsletter . . . **and so can you.**

Joan A., Akron

## GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event:

### Cory Hope, Faith, and Love - 3rd Anniversary

Sunday (not Monday), February 10, 1991

Cory United Methodist Church • 1117 E. 105th St.

Doors Open 2:00 p.m. • Food 3:00 p.m. • Lead 4:00 p.m.

Lead: Frank S., Pittsburgh, PA

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

**MARY L. WILLETT**, 31 year member of Friday Afternoon Women, passed away November 4, 1990

**SISTER MERCIA BEEVER**, A friend of A.A. at St Thomas Hospital, died December 5, 1990.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

## — NOTE — CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Central Committee will meet on the 2nd Tuesday in January (1/8/91) because the first Tuesday is New Years Day.

See you then!

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### DEAR SECRETARY

It was suggested that we point out that the copy of the Central Bulletin sent to each group is for promotional purposes. If you are a recipient of any of these copies, please understand that it is **not your copy** but rather **your group's** copy. Please take it to your group and encourage personal subscriptions. Some groups offer it as a raffle prize. Subscriptions have been falling and we need your help to boost them. Please help us carry our message.

The Editors

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## NEWS FROM THE CAMPS

"News from the Camps" was a standing column of the first volumes of the Central *Bulletin* and was part of its reason for being. Page 1 of Vol 1, No 1 (October, 1942) states:

"We shall strive to maintain an interesting and lively contact between those absent members and us at home.

Letters from men in the services all beg for news of happenings within the various groups. We hope to meet this plea!

We particularly solicit submissions from our members who have been called overseas. Let us hope that we won't need this column for long!

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## HOLDING ONTO OLD IDEAS

A number of years ago, my livelihood took me to Southern New Jersey for a period of six months. Being away from home, family and friends, I had time on my hands in the evenings, so I attended a lot of AA meetings - perhaps six per week - maybe more. There was a club in Camden in which a meeting was held every night, and I went to two or three of these each week. This club not only had a fine facility for meetings, but it also had a rather small room equipped like a cocktail lounge. It had a bar with a brass rail, upholstered stools, spigots for carbonated beverages, a coin operated record player, pinball machines and soft lighting. In short it had everything but booze. Some members of our fellowship - usually those with a short time as members - liked to sit in there with their coffee and converse with each other. I believe that these conversations had very little to do with the principles of our program, and I feel that the atmosphere contributed to this situation. In my opinion, it was this set of circumstances that brought about an undesirable result; the people just mentioned stopped attending meetings after a time, and most of them relapsed shortly thereafter. Was this not holding on to old ideas, and did it not dilute the desire for sobriety that these people professed to have.

Another practice which I believe poses a danger is that of drinking beer from which, supposedly, all alcohol has been removed. There is also available a non-alcoholic champagne - "castrated champagne" as some people describe it - and there are other non-alcoholic substitutes for beverages that some of us used to imbibe. This, too, is "flirting with disaster" in my opinion. If we are truly embarking on a **new way of life**, then one should resolutely disassociate oneself from all reminders of the old way of life.

Then there are those who are certain that the world will come to a grinding halt if they absent themselves from their favorite bistro and continue to put in an appearance frequently to sip soft drinks instead of the hard stuff. They do not wish to sever lines of communication with their "friends" - the ones who would be happy to see them fall off the wagon and return to bacchanalian revelry.

More could be said on this subject, and other examples of dangerous behavior could be cited. But, enough is enough. If we are to truly benefit from this program of recovery so providentially made available to us, I feel that it is only prudent to shun any practices which may lead us back to the quagmire from which we came.

J. T. B., North Olmsted

### God be Thanked

A young man was studying to be a Rabbi. He encountered a statement in his books that he didn't understand, so he brought it to the attention of his teacher.

"It states here that in our prayers we are to thank God for both the good things and the bad things that happened to us today. Why do we thank God for the **bad** things that happened?"

The teacher replied, "I'm not the right person to answer that question. You must ask Rabbi Levy, who lives 100 miles away, why this is."

So curious was the lad that he soon journeyed to the distant Rabbi's home. "Home" is perhaps an overstatement. "Shack" would be more correct. What roof existed, leaked. The only furniture was a sleeping mat on the earthen floor, The Rabbi's robe was soiled and torn. His next meal was not in sight.

My teacher sent me here to ask you, "Why is it that we are to thank God for both the good and the bad things that happened to us?"

"I have no idea why he sent you here? I'm afraid I can't help you" the Rabbi shrugged, "because **nothing bad has ever happened to me!**"

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### TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

*These* questions were originally published *in the A.A. Grapevine* in conjunction *with a series on the Twelve Traditions* that began *in November 1969* and ran through *September 1971. While they were* originally intended primarily *for individual use, many A.A. groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.*

#### Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion:" plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as **compar-**

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### Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

I was one of those that came around before I stayed around.. Was my life unmanageable? You bet! Violence galore - police knocking at my door - threats of jail. I kicked out a husband, a son, even the dog and was on the verge of losing my last son. I ran down an icy street in the dead of winter (in my bare feet), chasing a man who had once again beat me up, begging him to come home. It was definitely unmanageable.

But. . . due to alcohol abuse? NO!! I didn't drink every day - I never had the 5 a.m. drink - I wasn't under the bridge in a raincoat with my brown bag to conceal my mad dog. I had my house, my job, my health. Keep coming back! I am acquiring the disease of head nodding - I am relating to so much that is said. Keep coming back. Well - I have never been able to swear off booze for more than 3 days. Keep coming back. I am impressed that people return week after week -and they're staying sober!! Keep coming back! It took almost a year of keep coming back for me to put down my bottle (and pills - I needed my tranquilizers to deal with these AA's!).

It is my responsibility to pass on what I have been given. If you don't know what you are, who you are - please - just keep coming back. **It works.**

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Just a minute here! Isn't it enough that we go to meetings and say that we are alcoholics?

Do you really expect us to admit defeat? (12/12 pg 21) You don't understand; we're different! O.K., O.K. already; (so big deal) strange things might have happened when we drank, so what (B.B. pg. 16). Why don't you give us an example of unmanageability? (b.b. pg. 21-22) Now that we read (pgs. I-43) in the Big Book and realize that we have a disease; are we now ready to work with others? (talk to your sponsor about 2-stepping) Is this why we must wave the white flag and **admit powerlessness and unmanageability?** In other words, we must **surrender** and take further **action!** By any change is **Alcoholics Anonymous Spiritual?**

Why not **stay** and **try it!**

Oh! well, here we go again!

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**IT WILL HELP YOU AND IT WILL HELP US**

(Continued from Page 3)

ing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?

5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?

6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?

7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?

8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?

9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?

10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of the fellowship?

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## THE FIRST TRADITION

Have you ever heard this remark? 'The Traditions. Who cares! So what? You diehards are something else! We do care because it's a matter of a Better Way of living vs. an Asylum, Jail or Death!

**Unity** is our **2nd Legacy**. The **Traditions** are **A.A. Unity!** For once in our lives we have principles (not personalities) to **Pass On, "One Day At A Time"**! Without **Unity** A.A. dies. (12/12 pg. 9) What a great thing A.A. might have been. (12/12 pg. 129) A strange paradox? The member finds he cannot keep this priceless gift unless he gives it away. (12/12 pg. 130) **Faith Without Works Is dead!** (12/12 pg. 131) **Singleness of Purpose Is Not Controversial. Singleness of Purpose is Essential.**

Anonymous

## A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future:

To place our common welfare first;

To keep our fellowship united.

For on A.A. unity depend our lives,

And the lives of those to come.

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## Every Triangle Has Three Sides

Have you ever taken the time to study the AA Logo? It is a triangle inside of a circle, with the points of the triangle touching the line of the circle. The three sides of the triangle represent the three different entities of AA. The circle is a circle of love which holds it all together. At the base of the triangle is recovery (fellowship). That is the foundation of the triangle and the foundation of AA. Fellowship is recovery, fellowship is where AA starts and it is the part of AA that we are most familiar with. Fellowship is our daily AA meetings, it is helping a new person, it is working the steps ourselves, it is sharing our thoughts and emotions with another person, it is the fellowships we make in AA and time spent with other AA's at activities away from meetings. Fellowship is how we got sober and stayed sober. Our Higher Power knows we can't do it alone so He gave us fellowship.

The left side of the triangle is unity, this aspect of AA is sometimes a little hard to grasp. Unity seems to say that we are all working in the same direction for the good of AA as a whole. We all have the same 12 Traditions as a guideline, but sometimes we have different interpretations of what they mean. Unity means to me that we let the majority interpretation rule, even if we as individuals or groups do not agree. We learn that our personal opinions or group opinions are only a reflection of our own personal or group personalities. We therefore must learn to let the principle of majority rule., ahead of those personalities. But how do we achieve unity when there are so many different groups all over the world? So many different people with different backgrounds and ideas?

The answer to those questions comes in the third side of the triangle, service. Only through the service structure of AA do we have the method to let all opinions be heard. The service structure lets every individuals ideas and opinions be heard at the group level. Then the majority opinions and ideas of the group are taken to the area level by the groups General Service Representative. Then the areas majority opinions and ideas are taken to the General Service Conference in New York by the area delegate. Then the information from the General Service Conference in New York is passed back to the group and individual through the same system. This brings us to the problem that we face in AA today. There are not enough AA's interested or active in service work. How can opinions, ideas and information be carried from the group level to the General Service Office and back if there is nobody to carry it? How can the majority be heard, if they are silent? The voice of **every** group is their General Service Representative. How can **we** have any unity if their is no service? Remember, the triangle with fellowship as the base and unity and service as the sides, inside a circle of love? Picture the triangle with one side missing. As you can see, with the service side missing, unity will fall and the circle of love is broken.

Let us picture that we as AA members are standing in the middle of the triangle with fellowship, unity, service and a circle of love protecting us. When part of the triangle is missing and the circle of love is broken, it leaves us unprotected from attacks from the outside. Only we can keep the triangle and circle in one piece. It cannot be broken from the outside, only from within. We have always been told that if AA could be destroyed that it would be done from within. That nothing from the outside could hurt us as long as we have fellowship, unity and service. When Bill Wilson turned over the running of AA to us, the members, he trusted that every one of us would do all we could to keep AA going.

## ARE WE DOING ALL WE CAN?

W.C.S., Perry Tuesday





**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 8, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

Your group *may* be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group *representative* Let us *take an active part* in these *important meetings* to uphold *our*—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

Mike F., Moderator

Elvira A., Secretary

Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387  
Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.

To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.

To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.

To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**December 4, 1990**

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, Mike F., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, James P. read the purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

The roll call showed that 22 members were present, representing 19 groups.

Minutes of the November meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Financial Committee:** see below.

**Action Committee:** no report.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob McK., reported that the new self-mailer style was well received. We are planning to revise the masthead. The January issue was finalized and the February ("Self-Support-Month'3 issue will contain a birthday plan envelope plus descriptions of the various service entities.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Bob McK. read a 1972 Advisory Action of the General Service Conference: "Naming an A.A. group after an individual: The suggestion was approved that an A.A. group should not be named after an A.A. member or a nonalcoholic, living or dead."

**NEW BUSINESS:** New groups announced and sanctioned:

**Pass It On**

Stella Maris Bingo Hall  
7105 Lorain Avenue  
Cleveland, OH  
Thursday 8:00 p.m.

**Lakewood Young People**

**Big Book Discussion**  
Lakewood Christian Church  
17513 Detroit Avenue  
Lakewood, OH  
Monday 8:30 p.m., Open

**Wednesday Big Book Discussion**

St. Noel Church  
35200 Chardon Road  
Willoughby Hills, OH  
Wed. 7:30 p.m., Open

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** John B., representative reported the planning meetings for the Mini-Conference began Sunday, December 9th, at 2:00 p.m., in the Holiday Inn in Middleburg Heights. (next meeting, January 13, 1991)

The first area Assembly meeting will be held January 20th, 2:00 p.m. in Mantua.

An election for Moderator and Vice Moderator was held, James P., the past Vice Moderator, was elected Moderator and Gerald P. was elected Vice Moderator for 1991.

Elvira stepped down as secretary of the Central Committee.

51 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to Non A.A. Groups for the months of January through November 1990.

There being not further business, the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**Central Committee Financial Report**

November 1990

|                                   |            |                   |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD           |            | \$2,324.79        |
| Sale of Literature-Four Absolutes | \$1,134.00 |                   |
| Rent for 11/6/90 Meeting          | \$25.00    |                   |
| Printing of 4,050 Four Absolutes  | 79242      | 81742             |
|                                   |            | 316.58            |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                |            | <b>\$2,641.37</b> |

**Central Bulletin Financial Report**

November 1990

|                                  |          |                 |
|----------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD          |          | \$307.35        |
| Total Deposits                   |          | \$178.00        |
| Printing of Nov Central Bulletin | \$201.00 |                 |
| Mailing of Nov. Central Bulletin | \$48.72  | (249.72)        |
|                                  |          | (71.72)         |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>               |          | <b>\$235.63</b> |



## February is Self-Support Month

### AA's Tradition of Self-Support ■ by Bill W.

**A** A's far-flung Twelfth Step activities, carrying the message to the next sufferer, are the **very** lifeblood of our AA adventure. Without this vital activity, we would soon be anemic; we would literally wither and die.

Now where do AA's services -worldwide, area, local ■ fit into our scheme of things? Why should we provide these functions with money? The answer is simple enough. Every single AA service is designed to make *more* and better *Twelfth Step work* possible, whether it be a *group* meeting place, a central or intergroup *office* to arrange hospitalization and sponsorship, or *the World Service Headquarters (now the General Service Office)* to maintain *unity* and effectiveness *all over the globe*.

Though not costly, these service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion -to our survival as a fellowship. Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to a recognition on our part that AA must **everywhere** function in full strength ■ and that, under our Tradition of self-support, we *are all going to foot the bill*.

We have long known that Alcoholics Anonymous has no need for charitable contributions from any source. Our Fellowship is self-supporting. Neither do AA groups try to meet the rehabilitation expenses of thousands of newcomers. Long ago we learned that that was impractical.

Instead, AA offers to the new person a spiritual way of life that can eliminate the alcohol problem. With this accomplished, the new person, in the company of his fellow sufferers, can begin the solution of his personal problems ■ including the financial one.

So AA groups themselves accept no charitable funds ■ and give none away. At first glance, this attitude may seem to be hard-nosed, even callous. An immense experience tells us otherwise. Money gifts ■ as a prerequisite of getting sober-are usually worthless when made a function of an AA group.

Of course, we see AA's primary charity in the Twelfth Step activities of tens of thousands of us as we daily carry the AA message to newcomers. We travel millions of miles; we absent ourselves from business and home. In the aggregate, we lay out very large sums. As individuals, we do not hesitate to give temporary financial aid to the newcomer, if and when he seems to want sobriety first. Here, then, is money charity aplenty, always given on a very personal, face-to-face basis. And perhaps even this cannot be called wholly charitable, since every Twelfth Step effort means more certain sobriety and added spiritual

(Continued on Page 2)

### Self-Support ■ by Michael Alexander, Class A (nonalcoholic) Trustee Chairman of the General Service Board.

"It is essential that our established groups become fiscally sound if we are to provide support for those that are struggling and yet to come. Without our AA groups and their support of services worldwide, there would be no Fellowship, no message to carry to suffering alcoholics. Yet group contributions have not kept up with the increasing costs of these services. In 1989, expenses climbed 15% while contributions held even, causing a shortfall of approximately \$750,000. The problem stems, in part, from the fact that approximately 45% of the 48,000 registered groups in the United States and Canada do not support AA's essential services.

"The trustees together with their Finance and Budgetary Committee, have pared any expense that could be safely eliminated without diminishing the services rendered by the General Service Office. But this routine procedure does not solve the problem. Like everything else in AA, responsibility for our self-support Tradition lies squarely with the groups.

"Let us ask ourselves, 'Are we observing our Seventh Tradition, which states that "Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions"'. If we are still putting 50¢ or a dollar in the meeting basket as we did 20 or 30 years ago, the answer is NO. The dollar simply doesn't buy today what it did then. Since 1960, the price of a coin box call has jumped from 10¢ to 25¢; a 10¢ cup of coffee now runs 75¢; and the minimum wage has nearly quadrupled from \$1 to \$3.85 (soon to be \$4.25).

"Recently I attended an open meeting in an affluent neighborhood. Some people arrived by taxi; and most were smartly dressed. Yet when the basket was passed, these same people tossed in a single dollar bill or a few coins. Some may have so out of fear of appearing ostentatious by contributing more; others were merely following habit; and a few perhaps didn't have the means. But let's face it, the dollar today is not the dollar we knew 30 years ago.

"It stands to reason, of course, that an appeal for support from all groups is effective only if each individual group is financially sound through *the contributions of its members*. No group can give financial support to its area, district, local intergroup (central Office) and the General Services Office if it doesn't have the means to do so. Yet these services are vital, and it's up to AA members to see that their groups are fiscally sound.

*Reprinted from Box 459 (Holiday, 1990)  
with permission*

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

**JACK BALL**, 42 year member of the Shaker Monday group, passed away Saturday, December 29, 1990

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANCE

(Continued from Page 1)

#### AA's Tradition of Self-Support

growth for the sponsor.

Both these principles we understand: that AA wants no charity; that we support our own services. We understand - but sometimes we forget.

Reprinted from *October 1967 Grapevine with permission*

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#### Why This Topic?

Why is our theme of the month self-support? Didn't we just use that same theme a couple of months ago? Well . . . almost. It was last July.

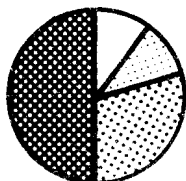
The theme is again topical because February is Self-Support Month. Also, a couple of addresses have changed since the July issue, due to General Service elections. Then, our District Office is about to start its fund drive (March) and it's none too soon for us as groups and individuals to start planning our donations. Finally, it was suggested that we didn't do it right last time - that we told you **how** to donate to other portions of AA but not **why** to donate to them. We're attempting to correct that here.

#### Why Donate?

We donate to our services because they are doing for us what we cannot conveniently do for ourselves. We can better do as "groups of groups" basic AA functions that are different or impossible for the groups to do themselves. All groups in AA, regular groups or service groups, have the same purpose: "Carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

## AS GROUPS

The primary suggested plan for group contributions has changed. Instead of the 60-30-10 plan (which last appeared in the May 1987 issue of the Central Bulletin) the primary plan (as suggested by the General Service Conference in the pamphlet "*Self-Supporting Through our own Contributions*") is now the 50-30-10-10 plan. It works like this:



- 50% to central office
- 30% to G.S.O.
- 10% to area committee
- 10% to district

"First take care of basic group expenses (rent, refreshments AA literature and a prudent reserve "emergency fund")! A group I attend figured that their worst emergency would be replacing the coffee pot and set their reserve accordingly.

A Cleveland area group could then take the remainder and send one-half (50%) to:

Cleveland District Office  
940 Rockefeller Building  
614 Superior Avenue, N.W.  
Cleveland, OH 44113

30% to:

Group Services Fund  
General Service Office  
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

10% to:

Northeast Ohio General Service  
do Debbie C., Treasurer  
6615 Cleveland Road, Lot E-4  
Ravenna, OH 44266

and the final 10% to:

your District Committee Member (DCM)  
If you don't know how to reach your DCM, Contact:  
Bob M.  
3378 Washington Boulevard  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
(216) 321-2534

#### 50% to the District Office

Our District Office

- ★ Answers 12th Step calls during the day. Employs a part-time crew to answer calls in the evening and coordinates the volunteer crews on the weelends.
- ★ Serves as a clearing house for complaints, inquiries, questions, etc. Supplies speakers to schools, churches, etc.
- ★ Publishes our meeting schedule, several other pieces of literature, and aids in publishing this newsletter.
- ★ Serves as a local literature depot (they exceeded \$250,000 in sales last year) and as a **wayfare** station for traveling AA's.
- ★ Does all services appropriate to carrying our message throughout Greater Cleveland, only.

#### 30% to G.S.O.

The General Service Office helps to create new literature, keep groups informed of new developments in AA, answers over 10,000 letters a year, serves as our centralized Public Relations Office, furnishes staff to coordinate and speak at conferences, helps new groups and **new countries** to get started, etc. Our delegate from NE Ohio wrote the following:

"If I were asked to explain in as few words as possible, and remember this is only my opinion not the opinion of Alcoholics Anonymous, why we should donate not only to those parts of the Fellowship which we are in normal contact with, (Groups and District offices) but also to those parts **we** hear of, but are rarely in contact with, i.e.: (G.S.R.'s, D.C.M.'s, the area committee and last but certainly not least G.S.O.) those words would be **Personal Responsibility**. Those of you that were so fortunate to attend our 55th Anniversary in Seattle and saw the Bloc Countries enter

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)  
 during the Flag Ceremonies - it still gives me a shiver - know of what I speak. Information needs to be passed between Groups, Districts, Areas, Regions and Countries and it takes \$'s for this to all come about. We cannot ask for outside donations because it would violate our Tradition of **Self-Support**. Now this is just a suggestion, if every **Home Group member when visiting their Home Group** would put an extra \$1.00 into a specially marked (possibly **Self-Support**) container and the **Home Group** treasurer would on a Quarterly basis distribute the proceeds as suggested in the **Self-Support** pamphlet plus the Conference and Travel needs of the **Home Group's G.S.R.** (don't everybody rush to be a G.S.R. now), we of Northeast Ohio would have for **Self-Support** distribution **\$1,144,000/yr.** Now that's only \$1.00 extra a week from **all members** of Northeast Ohio. Heck, I spend more than that on junk food (the **\$1.00/week** that is).

Love in the Fellowship  
 Your Trusted Servant  
 N.S. (Bert) H.  
 Area 54 Panel 41

### 10% to the Area

The Northeast Ohio Area meets to coordinate activities throughout NE Ohio, communicates to the seven (yes 7) Central/District/Intergroup Offices in NE Ohio, elects a delegate (our voice in the collective conscience of AA) and sends him or her to AA's annual General Service Conference and local conferences, elects other needed officers and sends them to local conferences, serves as a podium for "What's on your mind?" questions from groups, organizes our annual Mini-Conference, workshop and open house, published The Northeast Ohio Recorder, distributes our AA videotapes free of charge (small security deposit required, however) to any group that wants them, maintains area committees for all areas of **AA activity**, etc.

### 10% to your District

One local D.M.C. wrote this:

This supports the District's work of communicating with group's, providing District Group Conscience for the assembly, and serving as a link between the area delegates and the **G.S.R.'s**.

Through the Grace of God and the fellowship of AA, I am living a sober, joyous, happy and free life today - unlike a few years ago when my life was miserable, my family unhealthy, dad unhappy, and my relationships with others distant. I am grateful.

Being active in service helps me stay sober. Having served as a G.S.R (General Service Representative) and now as a D.C.M. (District Committee Member), I have learned a great deal about how AA works. It is exciting and adds balance to my life. As a G.S.R. I attended Area and State conferences, but without my home groups financial support I might not have been able to participate.

Using the suggested plan of contribution outlined here, the D.C.M. has the opportunity to do their job, attend conferences and communicate with the groups, the **G.S.R's** and the assembly. Some **D.C.M's** do not have the personal finances to support these activities themselves. Why should we have only those who can afford their own way participate? AA is made up of all kinds, rich and poor alike,

and we need those "all kinds" to be a part of the whole. Thanks for sharing.

Liz T., District 32

## As Individuals

### Weekly - at our Groups

Weekly we can contribute into our group's basket giving something for ourselves and - those that can afford it - giving something for those that cannot yet afford to contribute.

We can participate in our home group's conscience to urge that this AA money stay within our fellowship - that we do not "finance...related facilities or outside enterprises" with it. We can also urge that our group send a representative to General Service functions and Advisory Committee and Central Committee meetings.

### Annually - The "Birthday" and "Penny-a-Day" Plans

In 1956, AA adopted the Birthday Plan. They asked that members, on their "AA Birthday" (we call them anniversaries, hereabouts), contribute \$1 for each year of sobriety to G.S.O. In 1963 we added the "Penny-a-Day plan to this - asking each member for \$3.65 to help support AA services. A member who is five years sober and is willing to participate in both plans would thus donate **\$5.00+\$3.65**, or \$8.65 to G.S.O. An envelope for your contribution is enclosed inside here. More envelopes are available at the District Office.

### Once in a lifetime - Bequests

Both our District Office and G.S.O. will accept bequests, provided they are from AA members and on a one-time basis and not in perpetuity. The current limit on such bequests is \$1,000. General Service leaves these instructions for a bequest to G.S.O.: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous or simply Alcoholics Anonymous may be specified. Many members identify themselves in their will as members of the Fellowship since bequests cannot be accepted from non **AAs**. For example: "As a grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I bequest the maximum allowed sum but not to exceed (\$ ) dollars to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163."

Presumably, like wording, substituting The Cleveland District Office of Alcoholics Anonymous name and address would also be acceptable. Check with your attorney.

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### OOPS!

We neglected to mention that Liz T., (a different Liz T. than the Liz T. mentioned at the top of this page) May-Lee Saturday Morning was the author on the 1st Step in last months issue. While she didn't complain about the omission, we editors believe in promptly admitting when we are wrong.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"... and we shall know peace!"



# 16th Annual Northeast Ohio Mini-Conference



## March 8-10, 1991



### *Sponsorship--Gratitude in Action*

*Banquet Speaker: Helen T., General Service Office*

### Panels - Workshops - Ask-It Basket Session

Registration: Friday : 5 pm -- Saturday : 8 am

Conference opens Friday at 8 pm with our **Regional Trustee, Jan W.**

at the

#### Holiday Inn

7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130

(near the I-71 Bagley Road exit)

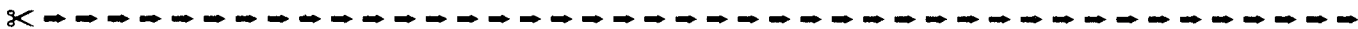
(216) 243-4040 -- call by February 22nd for reservations!

\$55.00 + tax per night for a single, double, triple or quad room

**be sure to mention that you're registering for the Mini-Conference !**

**Swimming Pool**

**Sauna Bath**



### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

WORKSHOPS:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Smoking?

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Smoking?

Registration ..... \$13.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Registration plus banquet ..... \$29.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Registration plus banquet plus Sat. lunch & Sun. breakfast - \$43.00 \_\_\_\_\_

make **checks** payable to and **mail** to: N.E. Ohio Mini-Conference, c/o Bob M., 3378 Washington Blvd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

**MAIL BY FEBRUARY 28th !** All banquet and meal registrations **MUST** be in by this date. After February 28th, register in person.



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to SERVICE. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, NW, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387

Harry D., Founder and Editor 18924968

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 5, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

Your group *may be represented by YOU* or a member assigned to be your group representative. *Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold OUR—*

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Elvira A., Secretary

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.

To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.

To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.

To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**January 8, 1991**

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

The roll call showed that 33 members were present, representing 28 groups.

Minutes of the December meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Financial Committee:** see below.

**Action Committee:** no report.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob McK., reported that the Central Bulletin Committee will meet one hour prior to the next Central Committee meeting. We will discuss the subscription price, printing and mailing costs, in light of the recent postage increase.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Cleveland V.A.:** Faye reported, the meetings were well attended, no new business.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Bob Mc. announced a new group:

**11th Step Mediation**  
Club 24, 1635 Lee Road  
Cleveland Heights, OH  
Saturday 8:00 a.m.

A question was asked of the Committee, "should we require that the primary disease be alcohol for a person to be secretary or chair an AA meeting". It was the consensus of the Committee that, it's a requirement for a person to be an alcoholic to become a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and a member of AA to be the chair or secretary of a meeting

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** John B., representative, reported the next G.S.R. Third Legacy meeting will be held January 20, 1991)

52 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to Non A.A. Groups for the months of January through December 1990. There being no further business, the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

| Central Committee Financial Report    |         |               | Central Bulletin Financial Report        |          |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------------|--|----------|---------------|
|                                       |         | December 1990 |  |          | December 1990 |
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD               |         | \$2,641.37    | BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                  |          | \$235.63      |
| Rent for 12/4/90 Meeting              | \$25.00 |               | Total Deposits                           | \$628.00 |               |
| Transfer of funds to Central Bulletin | 500.00  | (525.00)      | Printing of Dec. <i>Central Bulletin</i> | \$256.00 |               |
| NEW BALANCE                           |         | \$2,116.37    | Printing of C. B. Renewal Notices        | 54.00    |               |
|                                       |         |               | Mailing of Dec. <i>Central Bulletin</i>  | 45.78    | (355.78)      |
|                                       |         |               | NEW BALANCE                              |          | \$507.85      |



## Tradition Three by *Bill W.*

February 1948

**T**he Third Tradition is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes in a lot of territory. Some people might think it too idealistic to be practical. It tells every alcoholic in the world that he may become, and remain, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous so **long as he says so**. In short, Alcoholics Anonymous has no membership rule.

Why is this so? Our answer is simple and practical. Even in self-protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the fellow alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of Alcoholics Anonymous was once a rebel himself. Hence we cannot offer to meet him at the halfway mark. We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him that we understand. We realize that he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles. If we raise obstacles, he might stay and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity.

So when he asks, 'Are there reply, "No, not a one!" When ing, "But certainly there must believe," we quickly answer, there are no *musts*." Cynically, "What is all this going to cost say, "Nothing at all, there are

. . . **every** alcoholic  
 . . . may become, and  
**remain a member**

brief hour, is our friend disarmed of his suspicion and rebellion. His eyes begin to open on a new world of friendship and understanding. Bankrupt idealist that he has been, his ideal is no longer a dream. After years of lonely search it now stands revealed. The reality of Alcoholics Anonymous is saying, "We have something priceless to give, if only you will receive." That is all. But to our new friend, it is everything. Without more ado, he becomes one of us.

Our membership Tradition does contain, however, one vitally important qualification. That qualification relates to the use of our name, Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. Here our purpose is clear and unequivocal. For obvious reasons we wish the name Alcoholics Anonymous to be used only in connection with straight AA activities. One can think of no AA member who would like, for example, to see the formation of "dry" AA groups, "wet" AA groups, Republican AA groups, communist AA groups. Few, if any, would wish our groups to be designated by religious denominations. We cannot lend the AA name, even indirectly, to other activities, however worthy. If we do so we shall become hopelessly compromised and divided. We think that AA should offer its experience to the whole world for whatever use can be made of it. But not its name. Nothing could be more certain.

Let us of AA therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive and never exclusive, offering all we have to all, save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity be thus preserved. And may God grant us a long life - and a useful one.

from Language of the Heart, pgs 79-80, with permission from AAWS

## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 days prior to the event.

### One Day at a Time • 20th Anniversary

Sunday, April 7, 1991

Doors open 2:00 p.m.-Food 3:00 p.m.-Lead 4:00 p.m.

St. Philip Neri Church-8215 St Clair Ave.

Speaker Carolyn N. from O.D.A.T.

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

**BARNABUS VINCZ**, 4 year member of the Walton Hills and Saturday Nite Serenity groups, passed on in January.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

*Al-Anon* asked us to announce:

## 31st Annual Al-Anon Dance

Saturday, April 13, 1991

Open 7 pm/Dinner 7:30/Dance 8-12

Highland Party Center, 3030 W. 117th St.

(at the W. 117th St. exit of I-90)

Tickets (\$16.00) are available through:

West Side: Elinore G. 892-0245,  
leave message

East Side: Lula F. 736-6241,  
8 am-5 pm

Downtown: Al-Anon Office 621-1381

## NEWS FROM THE CAMPS

The Miracle group purchased a case of Big Books for shipment to Saudi Arabia. Some are going to a member that they know there. The balance are going to generic military addresses, with the assurance from the military that they will get where they are needed (per "Judy": Miracle Group).

James P. said that his spouse who's in Arabia requested some AA literature and tapes for the troops there. The District Office volunteered to set up a special fund for this purpose. Any group or individual that wishes to donate to this cause may do so as a special donation.

We particularly solicit submissions from our members who have been called overseas.

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## SUBSCRIPTION PRICE INCREASE

The post office just increased our bulk mailing rate a whopping 32% • twice the percentage increase of first-class mail. This was the proverbial straw that broke this oneday-at-a-time camel's back. Our previous subscription rate \$4.00 per year (\$0.33 per issue) was not paying enough of the cost of producing the Central Bulletin. This cost increase made the deficit intolerable.

We, the Central Committee, voted unanimously to increase the subscription rate 25% to \$5.00 per year, effective April 1, 1991. If our circulation stays the same, this will generate an additional \$550.00 towards our deficit.

We went to the new self-mailer format to reduce envelope and envelope stuffing costs while also increasing our printable size by about 25%. We purchased an electric stapler for the Central Office. They're stapling the newsletter while they attach the mailing labels instead of our printer doing it as a separate charge. We are continuing to look at ways to reduce costs.

Rate increase and cost reduction, alone, does not solve the problem. At this higher rate and lower cost we still need 2,300 subscriptions to break even • four times our current subscribers. Please encourage subscribing to the Central Bulletin in an announcement at your local group.

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## THE ONLY REQUIREMENT

When the founding fathers of AA finally agreed on the Twelve Traditions, they certainly all applied at that time. When they agreed that the only requirement for membership was a "sincere" desire to stop drinking, the sincere was eliminated later. I wonder if they could envision a society like we have today? In their day the alcoholic had to hide his problem from all the people that he could. Because being a "drunk" was thought to indicate someone of low moral character and no self control or discipline. Today, since being an alcoholic is now recognized as a disease, it is almost becoming fashionable to be a recovering alcoholic or a recovering anything else. People now tend to look at a recovering person as someone who is doing something special with their lives. When all they are really doing, if they are working a program, is doing what they should have done all their lives.

This brings me to our problem, non-alcoholics in AA saying that they are alcoholics. I suppose the first question to arise is why should someone who is not an alcoholic say that they are one? We in AA know what an open and warm reception these people will receive if they stand up at a meeting and say that they are an alcoholic. This may be the kind of acceptance that these people have been looking for all of their lives and all they have to do to get it is say they are an alcoholic. The next question might be, what was this person doing at an AA meeting in the first place? People get to AA by many methods: courts, friends, hospitals, government agencies. and so on. It seems to me that if these people have had problems in trying to live a normal life and have ever drunk, then they are sent to AA because there is no place else to send them. Are all people who can not live a normal life and drink, alcoholics? My answer would be no. The Big Book tells us what an alcoholic is and how an alcoholic thinks. I have seen many people in this program with serious emotional and stress problems. I feel that many of these people got to AA by accident, but because we accepted them when they said that they were an alcoholic, they kept on saying that they were, for our acceptance. What happens in this situation is that they try to treat a disease in this person that doesn't exist-alcoholism. The real sad part of this is

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)

that the person feels better about themselves, because we accepted them, but they never get help for their real emotional or mental problems. We are not equipped to help them with those problems, only alcoholism, which they do not have.

I have seen friends, lovers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, wives and husbands of alcoholics come to our meetings with the alcoholic. Eventually these people blend in with the rest of us AA's and no one is really sure if this person is an alcoholic or just a visitor and eventually this person starts to say they are an alcoholic, so they don't have to feel like an outsider. Don't laugh, I have seen this happen on more than one occasion. Many people are sent to **AA** through our court systems. Are all these people alcoholics? I again would have to answer no. I am sure **that** not everyone sent to AA by the court is an alcoholic. I am also sure that some of the people sent by the court but stay in AA are not alcoholics. They say they are **alcoholics** and stick around because they find a group of people they can pal around with and be friends with. The fact that they can't drink around AA's doesn't bother them because they are not alcoholics.

Then there are the people sent to AA out of treatment centers. To say that everyone who ends up in an alcoholic treatment center is a real alcoholic would be foolish. A 100% rate would be impossible. The strange thing is that I have never heard of a treatment center throwing anyone out because they were not an alcoholic. It is my opinion that they envision everyone as an alcoholic or a potential alcoholic. This brings us to another area of difficulty, potential alcoholics. Was AA founded to prevent potential alcoholics from becoming alcoholics or was it founded to help real alcoholics recover from alcoholism?

I suppose by this time you are expecting me to suggest re-writing the Third Tradition, but you are wrong. In Twelve and Twelve book it talks about the early problems they had with people making too many rules for membership in AA. This was the purpose of the Third Tradition to eliminate membership rules in AA and it has worked very well, so let's not fix it. The problems today that we face are different than the ones the early AA's had. They were concerned about alcoholics with other problems that may disturb our group structure. Our problem today is people who are not alcoholics at all. I am not suggesting that we change the Third Tradition, or throw people out of AA. I am just asking that we become aware of this new problem. I am asking each member of AA to search their own conscience in dealing with this problem. Sadly the bottom line is, what happens to the real alcoholic that comes to AA and can't find another real alcoholic to talk to. This is the one area that has made AA work, where others have failed. One real alcoholic to another!

Bill S. Perry Tuesday

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Step 2: Came to Believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

Wait a minute! Just Wait a minute! Wasn't it enough that we admitted defeat (Step 1)? Do you really expect us to

believe that none but a higher power can remove our obsession? (12/12, pg 25). Some of us always prayed for what we wanted when we needed it and God deserted us, so who needs God anyway! (12/12, pg 31) Others of us are Agnostic or Atheist. Just how do you expect us to have a spiritual experience that will conquer our illness? (B.B., chapter 4) Do you mean that Step 2 is as simple as a.b.c. (B.B., pg 60) **K.I.S.S.!** What's next, a new employer? Oh well, here we go again.

**Step 3: Made a decision to turn of will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him**

Why must we keep surrendering and take further action? We have always lived by **self-pulsion**. Do you actually expect us to change direction. Next you'll probably tell us that our troubles are of our own making (Big Book pgs. 60-62)

By any chance does Step 3 have anything to do with willingness? (12/12 pg. 34). What benefits does our new employer offer? Do you mean to tell us that **today** is the **tomorrow** that we worried about **yesterday** (Big Book pg. 63).

Are we having fun yet? Oh well here we go again.

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The longer that I'm in AA, the easier this step seems. By having truly worked Steps 1 & 2, I'm convinced that my way of running my life didn't, doesn't, and can't work, and that following my Higher Power's will for me can. This step doesn't ask me to turn my will and life over to the care of God - that's the purpose of Steps 4 through 11 - only to **decide** to do so. It's really Hobson's choice. The only alternative is to continue banging my head against the wall.

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**“God, I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy Will always!”**

## TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

These questions were originally published in the A.A. Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many A.A. groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

**Tradition Two: For our group purpose there**  
(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 3)

**is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

**Tradition Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply as naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

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## TRADITION 2

Have you ever heard this remark? "The Traditions': who cares! So what? You diehards are something else! We do care because it's a matter of a Better Way of Living vs. an Asylum, Jail or Death!

Where does AA get its direction? Who runs it? How can such an apparent impractical principle work? (12/12, pgs. 132-134) "Does AA have real leadership?" Most emphatically the answer is yes, notwithstanding the apparent lack of it! (12/12, pgs. 135-137) "So spoke the group conscience" (12/12, pg 138)

We have received **Strength, Inspiration, and Direction** from **Him** who has all **Knowledge** and **Power**. (B.B. pg 85) Can our group conscience answer yes to the six

points that make up the AA Group. (See the AA Group) Half measures avail us nothing. Why do so-called AA Groups insist on doing it their way? Ego Deflation vs. Pride. Let's all grow together from within and put **Principles** before **Personalities**.

Anonymous

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## AM I AN ALKIE?

You still feel you don't belong? You are not like these AA alkie?

It could be true. Not all alcoholics are the same. AA says "stick around and you'll eventually hear your story!"

Yes, not all alkie are the same. But the end of the road in alcoholism is the same for all of us; separation from friends and family, rejection, retreat from reality, and finally recovery, insanity or death from physical complications.

I am no passive alkie. I am intense and try to be perfect. But people do not live up to my expectations. I am OK but you are not. The world is to blame. Not me. Things just went wrong causing me to booze. I don't need you. I don't need anybody!

Do you relate? That is me and my kind of alcoholic. We need help.

AA is the answer - don't drink and go to meetings! Try to be humble - let the other AA have an opinion. Open up your soul and let the world of AA serenity and sobriety come into your heart.

Ralph W. Ann Arbor, MI

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## TOGETHER WE STAND

Why would a man choose to walk all alone  
When surrounded by others who care.

And why should he shoulder the cross on his own  
While his comrades are willing to share.

Could it be that this man isn't one to admit  
That alone he is only a man,  
Or the truth that he's found just refuses to fit -  
Singlehandedly dashing his plan.

For alone we are meek, ineffectual, weak -  
Just a part of a greater design  
But together we stand as a strength hand in hand  
Giving hope to the man next in line.

Rick M., Garfield Tuesday

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## OFF CENTER . . . .

### on the light side

Our printer said I'm two inches short of a full bulletin. That's a new one. I've often been told I'm a couple bricks short of a full load. More recently, I heard I'm a couple sandwiches short of a picnic. Or just, I'm all **stressed up** and no place to go.

Heard any one-liners you'd care to share? Write us.



CENTRAL BULLETIN

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 5, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

Your group *may* be represented by you or a member *assigned to be* your group representative. *Let* us take an active part in these *important* meetings to uphold *our*—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387  
Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

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To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.  
To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.  
To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.  
To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**February 5, 1991**

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P, read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Steps of A.A.

The roll call showed that 33 members were present, representing 29 groups.

Minutes of the January meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Financial Committee:** see below.

**Action Committee:** no report.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob McK., reported on the meeting prior to the Committee meeting. Cost of subscriptions and cost cutting ideas were discussed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mark L. was elected to be the new secretary.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**John W. reported**  
New Quincy Hope AA  
8415 Quincy  
Pentecost Experience  
7:30 p.m. Thursday

**Ralph T. reported**  
Euclid Sunday Non-smoking  
23802 Lakeshore Blvd.  
**St Roberts** 7:00 p.m. Sunday  
Euclid

**2-Gether** It Works  
4030 Washington  
Forestdale  
8:00 p.m. Wednesday  
Newburgh Heights

**Kati N.**  
Sat. Midnight K.I.S.S.  
1320 Washington  
Stella Maris  
12:00 Midnight

**William G.**  
Thought for Today  
8328 Broadway  
Holy Name Rectory  
6:30 p.m. Monday

**Ron T.**  
Southgate Big Book Discussion  
Southgate Park Boulevard  
Fellowship Room  
10:30 a.m. Friday

There was a discussion on closed meetings. Also on members having court papers being taken by dishonest members. The Public Information on sheet by the General Service office helped matters

Motion was unanimously approved to raise the cost of the Bulletin to \$5.00, effective April 1.

Current treasurer, Ed C., will be retiring. At this time the office is looking for sober replacement.

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** Next Third Legacy meeting: 2:00 p.m. Sunday March 3. The Mini-Conference is March 8-10 in Middleburgh Heights.

2 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to Non A.A. Groups for the month of January.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

| Central Committee Financial Report |                  | January 1991      |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD            |                  | \$2,116.37        |
| Sale of Literature-Who Me          | \$386.00         |                   |
| Printing of 4,825 Who Me           | \$184.12         |                   |
| Rent for 1/8/91 Meeting            | \$25.00 (209.12) | 176.88            |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                 |                  | <b>\$2 293.25</b> |

| Central Bulletin Financial Report     |                | January 1991    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD               |                | \$507.85        |
| Total Deposits                        |                | \$136.00        |
| Printing of Jan. Central Bulletin     | \$256.00       |                 |
| Printing of C. B. Subscription Blanks | 48.00          |                 |
| Mailing of Jan. Central Bulletin      | 49.81 (353.81) | (217.81)        |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                    |                | <b>\$290.04</b> |



**SECRETARIES:**  
Please share your  
Group's copy with your Group  
willing

## Forgiveness: The Key to Serenity

by Rick B..

Upon entering A.A. at the ripe old age of 35, with victim consciousness and hate being my focus for the past 20 years, losing my family, my business, and my home already gone, I knew had to resolve my conflicts or go mad. I knew would find no peace in this program unless I was willing to change. So I set out to do a Fourth Step.

I used the inventory on pages 64-65 in the Big Book with amazing results! Whenever I've been willing to be honest about my past experiences, I have been able to see that I did set the ball rolling on every one. It was hard to stay angry when I found I was about 95% responsible for the problem, and I could see this when I wrote it out and let them go, with the exception of one, my father. It is this one I would like to share.

I am the youngest of five children. My father was an active alcoholic all through my early childhood. He sobered up in A.A. when I was eleven and never drank again. My mother, also an alcoholic, but better able at this time to maintain it, divorced my father. She never got involved in either Al-Anon or A.A. Mom married another alcoholic and she committed suicide on my fifteenth birthday.

During these years I was raised mostly by my older sister. Without much discipline in my life, not only was I in trouble a great deal of the time in school, but also with the law. Back in those years most people felt sorry for me because of my family situation, and I used that fact to every advantage I could. I see now how I blamed my father for everything that happened in my family. I blamed him for my mother's death and every problem I had. He was a scapegoat for everyone in the family. I had society reinforcing this fact, so it was easy to stay angry at him. I saw him as guilty of doing something to me, and I couldn't seem to forgive him. At that time I couldn't see how I was imprisoning myself with this mindset.

Still working on my Fourth Step, with no luck resolving the issue, I decided to stop looking at my relationship with my father and to explore the anger toward my family situation. I have two children and I was angry with their mother because our relationship had failed.

As I began looking with honesty at my part in what had happened, I realized that I did exactly the same thing to my family that my father had done to his. What I did, I did with no malice or intent to harm anyone. My wife and I were fighting each other on every issue and at every level. It was impossible to function as a family unit. I was trying to clean up the financial disaster I created and continued

to create daily-and left my wife alone to raise the children. I was losing my business, my properties, my family. My home was already gone and I was losing my ability to control my emotions. Continually robbing Peter to pay Paul, I know beyond any doubt. I was doing the absolute best that I could at the time. I'm sure our families and friends must have believed that I did not care about my family. This definitely was not the case. I loved them very much. My whole life was falling apart. I felt I was doing the lesser of two evils, that at least my children had one parent. I abandoned my family, not understanding the impact at the time of what I was doing.

When I saw this, I realized that my father's situation was no different from mine. That my perception of what I thought had occurred was not accurate. My father was an alcoholic, operating and living in insanity just as I was. When I became aware of this fact, I immediately saw him in a different light. I understood his position rather than only just mine. I went for thirty years of my life trying to get people to understand me, and here was a different formula.

I found if I could understand others, I could release myself from resentment and truly forgive what I thought occurred. Out of this new perspective I no longer saw my father as guilty of doing anything "to me." My resentment dissolved never to return.

After this experience I was able to sit down and write my father a letter from a new and clearer reality. To tell him how proud of him I was for staying sober and hoping I could follow his example of recovery.

Today I have a great relationship with this man. We go to meetings together when he's in town. A great healing has taken place in our lives. I owe all this to A.A.

There have been many healings in my recovery, but this was the big one. It was like a blanket of forgiveness spread over my life and I was able to see many other situations more clearly. I was beginning to come to peace within myself through forgiving others.

A friend asked me a couple of years ago if I had any guilt about what happened in my family. The answer is no. I was doing the best I knew how, and with what I had to work with. For me, I believe the reason is simple. When I let my father off the hook, I let myself off the hook at the same time. I believe forgiveness is always for me. It seems that the action is outward. I believe that by what measure I judge others, I judge myself. By what measure I forgive others, I forgive myself.

from Feb. 1991, *MIRUS (Minneapolis Intergroup)*



## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event.

### Our Group - 14th Anniversary

Monday, April 22 1991

8:00 p.m.

Speaker Bill F.

Please bring a covered dish

### Wednesday Night Unity - 13th Anniversary

Saturday April 13, 1991

1st United Methodist Church

3000 Euclid Avenue

Door's open 2:00 p.m.

Lead: Dot T., Pittsburgh, PA

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of this deceased member of our fellowship:

**John Thomas**, 34 year member of Garden Valley, passed away March 3, 1991

**George F. Mills**, Alcoholics Anonymous lost one of its most dedicated members on February 17, 1991 when George F. Mills passed on into immortality. He was just a few weeks short of his eighty-second birthday and had been continuously sober for about forty years. He was a delegate from Northeast Ohio in 1963-4, chaired the '64 and '68 Ohio State Conventions, and edited the Cleveland Central Bulletin from 1968 until health problems forced him to stop

About 1968 he became totally deaf, making it impossible for him to continue these active participations in A.A., however, he continued to live by our principles and communicate by correspondence. He was a widower for the last few years and was survived by his two daughters. He was a giant in our fellowship and will be truly missed.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

## " . . . except in matters affecting . . . I' The 100-0-0-0 Plan

Last month the Cleveland District Office conducted its annual fund drive. They asked for donations from individual members and from groups in the Greater

Cleveland area. They provide many of the needed services for the Cleveland area that we as individual members, or as individual groups, cannot reasonably provide ourselves. And they do these very well! They deserve our support - a kind word, a pat on the back, and a generous donation.

They do not provide **ALL** of our essential services, however, and they provide them **ONLY** for the Greater Cleveland area. Three areas of the General Service provide the rest-your District, the NE Ohio area, and the General Service Office. **A.A.'s** suggested plans of support, as evidenced by the pamphlet **Self-Supporting Through our own Contributions**. take this into account. The primary suggested plan for group donations is the 50-30-10-10 plan, so named because it recommends that groups here decide what they can donate to service and give 50% of it to the Cleveland District Office, 30% to the General Service Office, 10% to the NE Ohio Area, and the final 10% to the General Service District.

The District Office Fund Drive does not mention these other groups in any of their literature. The reason stated for this is autonomy. Each group is **AUTONOMOUS** - excepting matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. It seems to me that to ignore the other groups that require funds in any fund drive is to ignore the last half of the tradition, thereby practicing anarchy instead of autonomy, and **ANARCHY** is contrary to our Second Legacy - **UNITY**. The problem with not mentioning the other groups in the fund drive (I dubbed this the 100-0-0-0 plan) is that it fosters other self-centered plans. GSO just raised literature prices effective April 1st. Call this the 0-100-0-0 plan They faced a large deficit, partly because only 56% of A.A. Groups donated **ANYTHING AT ALL** to them - in NE Ohio, it was only 33% of groups).

I think that we need to pay more attention to Unity. Many areas cooperate better with themselves than we do. Minneapolis, for example, has formed a "cluster" of the Inter-group and General Service Districts in and around it. Reasons existed for separating our local service groups from each other at one time; however, the reasons have disappeared leaving only emotions behind.

A.A.'s policy is "cooperation but not affiliation" with related facilities. Let's cooperate with ourselves. It's no accident that Tradition I comes before Tradition 4. **OUR COMMON WELFARE MUST COME FIRST**. Let's help each other!

Bob

## From Our Friends at General Service

**Workshop:** Presenting A.A. in treatment facilities and to the professional community.

**Sponsored by:** General Services Treatment Facilities Committee.

**When:** Sat., April 6, 1991, 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Where:** St. Malachi Center, 2416 Superior Viaduct Cleveland, Ohio

**Donation:** \$3.00

**Call:** Joyce K. 221-3607 after 5:00 p.m. or Lois F. 229-3300 ext. 39, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Workshop:** A.A. into the prisons; guidelines, sponsorship; smaller groups working together.

**Sponsored by:** General Services Correctional Facilities Committee

**When:** Sat. April 20, 1991, 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Where:** Paradise Club, 1710 Front Street Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

**Call:** Joan A. 253-8181 or 864-4684

**Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

I'd decided in Step 3 to take on a **roommate**, God of my understanding, so I had to clean out the guest room. The Big Book told me about Step 3 that : "Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.

My first stab at Step 4 occurred in treatment. I knew, however, that I'd have to do it again. It was something that the counselor with whom I did the 5th Step said. She said, "You'll have to do this again!" Anything less subtle might have been missed. You see, I had resentments! I'd used the Big Book, the 12/12, 3 Hazelden Guides, and advice of others who also measured their sobriety in days. I was hopelessly confused.

The second time, a year later, I used the Big Book alone. This worked where more "help" had failed.

Anonymous

**Step 4:**

Have you taken the Fourth Step? Did you do it thoroughly, as the Big Book suggests? That's what matters: it got done the best it could at the time.

We progress. We move forward in recovery. We don't have to wait X amount of time to work the Steps. Each helps prepare us for the next Step. We can be fearless indeed as we work the Fourth.

Anonymous, Geneva, Ohio

**Step 4:**

Why must we keep surrendering and take further action? Do you really expect us to **clean house**? What's this talk about **vigorous action**? While we were **afraid** of life, death, God, and the world did we need to inventory this if there was no **resentment** connected with it? Are you telling us we also had a little problem with sex (Big Book, pg. 63-70)? Oh well, here we go again!

It has been said that working with others most definitely gets us out of self. A searching and fearless moral inventory is also needed to see the truths about ourselves.

Don't drink, go to meetings, work the steps, get active, and get busy (it's today). Benefit from the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps and relax through prayer and meditation. Today - one day at a time - is a gift from God to do His will.

This ends a full year of comments I've submitted on *the Steps* (I started *May*, 1990). Thank you for helping *me* and others to *grow*. "Faith without *works* is dead."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**TRADITIONS CHECKLIST**

*These* questions were *originally* published in the A.A. Grapevine *in* conjunction with a *series on the Twelve Traditions* that began in November 1969 and ran" through

September 1971. While they *were originally* intended primarily *for* individual *use*, many A.A. groups *have since used* them as *a* basis *for wider* discussion.

**Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups and A.A. as a whole.**

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in A.A.?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of A.A.? Of nearby groups? Of loners in Alaska? Of internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in A.A., I may to some extent represent our entire beloved fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths - his lengths, not mine - to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of A.A. tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*‘Autonomy most often .  
seems to be used  
as an argument  
to explain or defend  
why a group  
ought to do  
what a certain member  
wants it to do’*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**True Forgiveness**

by Collene S.

A number of years ago, someone knocked at my door in the middle of the night. When I opened the door, I received the news that my significant other had been killed by a drunk driver. My significant other's name was Craig, and he was the love of my life. We had been together for eight years and lived together for most of that time.

Apparently Craig had been standing between a parked car and the boat it was towing. The drunk driver smashed into the back of the boat. Craig was crushed to death instantly. It was later discovered that Craig had been in a bar twenty minutes prior to his death. While in the bar he had bought a round of drinks for several people. One of the recipients of his generosity was the unknown

(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 3)  
stranger who later killed him.

Shortly after the accident the legal system approached Craig's family and myself and questioned if we would file personal manslaughter charges against the drunk driver. We thought very hard about that. We later decided that we were in no position to pass judgement on an individual whom we had never met. After all, we had been guilty ourselves of driving while intoxicated, and that very same thing could have happened to us. We knew that the driver would have to live with his own personal turmoil. We felt strongly that he would be imprisoned by his own conscience, whether he was behind bars or not. The legal system would be making their own determination regarding justice anyway.

That night when I received the news of Craig's death was the beginning of my emotional downward spiral. Needless to say, I did not handle the news very well. Growing up in an alcoholic family myself, it was no surprise that I immediately turned to alcohol and drugs for comfort, to numb my pain and fill my emptiness. I fell apart and crumbled.

For the following five years not a day passed when I did not turn to alcohol or drugs. My life was in shambles. I became very resentful towards the drunk driver and the situation. I was filled with bitterness. The anger I carried around with me was literally eating me up. I lived the illusion that if that accident had not occurred, my life would have been perfect, right?

That type of thinking brought me to my "bottom" six years ago when I landed in treatment and Alcoholic Anonymous. It was apparent that I had a great deal of hard work ahead of me. I was told I would need to work through my grief issues once I was sober.

In the past couple of years something changed within me. I became aware of my strength as a survivor and no longer felt like a victim of circumstances. I welcomed the return of my compassion, sense of humor, and interests in matters other than my painful past. I began to feel compassion and empathy towards the driver of that car. I was quite certain that the accident must have some profound effect on the driver's life one way or another. My thoughts and prayers were with him in hopes that maybe he found the doors of A.A. I no longer saw him as being any different than my self. After all, we both suffered from the same disease of alcoholism.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that I am glad about what happened; I cannot change that. I am saying that if it weren't for that situation and what transpired afterwards, I honestly do not know if I would have found A.A. Through that situation I was given a great opportunity to grow. I had no choice because I was so desperate to get out of all that pain. My painful experience took things away from me, but now I see that it gave me things as well.

It has been a long, interesting healing process. The driver of that car will never know what a profound impact he had on my life. Through A.A. and acceptance,

ironically I am grateful about that situation and what has taken place since that time. It was not until I could truly forgive that I was able to find joy, serenity and peace of mind. I believe that forgiveness is an internal process, a feeling of freedom and acceptance.

I no longer blame the driver for my past unhappiness. My unhappiness was much more deeply rooted than that. I am an alcoholic. The driver of that car is not a bad human being. He is just a human being with a serious disease. Although I miss Craig very deeply, today I wish that driver well.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### ... "Came to Believe"

Due to the abuse of alcohol:  
I lost my faith. . .  
I lost my hope. . .  
I lost my beliefs. . .  
First I rejected my God. . .  
Then I rejected my responsibility to my family. . .  
Followed by rejecting my friends. . .  
Who, in turn, rejected me. . .  
Thereafter I rejected myself. . .  
And fell into the pit of despair and rejection. . .  
But I was one of the lucky ones. . .  
I was brought into Alcoholic Anonymous. . .  
Here my hope was restored. . .  
I regained my faith. . .  
My belief in my fellow man was restored. . .  
My understanding of God returned to me. . .  
My self-esteem was strengthened. . .  
So that I am now a sober man. . .  
Who is gaining serenity!!

Ralph W., Ann Arbor, MI

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Secretaries

When a desperate alcoholic calls seeking help, the staff member or volunteer picks up a secretaries list sorted by zip code to find a group in the caller's area to handle this Twelfth Step call. I'm told that all too often the response is "I'm not secretary of that group anymore": or worse, "the number you have reached is not a working number."

Logically, it's the retiring secretaries **LAST** job to get the newcomer qualified - **NOT** the newcomers first job. You receive their mail and already have their address and phone number. If you are receiving this, and you're neither a subscriber nor a **CURRENT** secretary, please get the last job done! **Thanks,**

Bob



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387  
**Harry D., Founder and Editor 18924968**

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
 ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

Your group *may* be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us *take an active part* in these important meetings to *uphold our—*

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
 Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
 Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.  
 To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.  
 To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.  
 To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**March 5, 1991**

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, Gerard P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Moderator, James P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Steps of A.A.

The roll call showed that 28 members were present, representing 24 groups.

Minutes of the February meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Financial Committee:** see below.

**Action Committee:** no report.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob McK., reported that the next planning meeting for the Central Bulletin will be 7:00 p.m. May 7th before the regular meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Announcements of leads, activities, and meetings are being left on announcement boards during the period between meetings. This is being done in a place where public is in and out daily. This was referred to the Action Committee.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

New Groups Announced

Joe T. Thursday 3:00 p.m.

**Westshore Oldtimers**

Senior Center, 16022 Madison Ave.  
 Lakewood

David B. Monday 7:30 p.m.

**Southgate Monday Mens Disc.**

Southgate Fellowship Room  
 20571 Southgate Blvd.

Pete H. Friday 8:00 p.m.

**Brunswick Friday Disc.**

12th Step Recovery Club, 1480 Pearl Rd.  
 Brunswick

Skip W. Wednesday 12 p.m.

**Twelve to One**

Federated Church  
 76 Bell Street, Chagrin Falls

When starting new groups, contact the area assembly to have groups registered. The Central Bulletin is sent to groups to inform the group what happened at meetings. There will be discussion on the cost of sending the minutes to groups individually versus via the Central Bulletin, at the next *Central Bulletin* meeting.

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** John B., representative, mentioned the Mini-Conference March 8-10. The area delegate goes to New York in April. The next Legacy Meeting will be May 19th, 2:00 p.m., St Joseph's Church in Mantua. Workshops announced:

Correctional Facilities, March 23rd.

Cooperation with Public Community/Treatment Facilities, April 6th.

Public Information, May 4th.

10 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to Non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru February.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

| Central Committee Financial Report |          | February 1991 | Central Bulletin Financial Report |          | February 1991 |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD            |          | \$2,293.25    | BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD           |          | \$290.04      |
| Rent for 2-5-91 Meeting            | \$25.00  |               | Total Deposits                    | \$742.00 |               |
| Purchase of Tape Recorder          | \$20.15  |               | Printing of Feb. Central Bulletin | \$240.00 |               |
| Transfer of Funds Central Bulletin | \$500.00 | (545.15)      | Mailing of Feb. Central Bulletin  | 49.22    | (289.22)      |
| NEW BALANCE                        |          | \$1,748.10    | NEW BALANCE                       |          | \$742.82      |



## “The Need For Identification”

by a member of Narcotics Anonymous, Ypsilanti, Michigan

There are many men and women in my area who are literally drinking themselves to death. Some will never get to their first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Some of those who do attend will not find the identification needed to stick around,

I talk to still-suffering alcoholics five days a week. I am not an alcoholic, but my job involves interviewing individuals charged with drinking/driving offenses. Recently I spoke to a client who told me he had a desire to stop drinking and had been attending AA meetings, but was having difficulty identifying with members of the local Fellowship. He could not relate to the sharing he heard about their drug use.

He brought an important issue into focus. In Alcoholics Anonymous the Fifth Tradition reads, “Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” The still-suffering must first identify with the members of the group in order to receive that message. I could understand the difficulty he was having, because I too have experienced problems with identification.

I had my first contact with AA in 1974. I was going through a difficult time and I made a call to the local AA hotline. Two members came out on a Twelfth Step call and I shared with them that I thought I had a problem with alcohol. They asked me how much I drank and I told them. I remember them saying that there was no way I could have a problem if that was all I drank. The quantities were so small by their standards that they could not identify with me. Eventually I got to my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. I sat at a table and listened to stories of alcohol consumption that I could hardly conceive of. I could not identify with those members who shared their drinking experience.

A few years later, a friend of mine got involved with AA. This man could drink. He lost jobs. He wrecked cars. He got arrested. He was out of control. He was my best friend. I don't recall what motivated him to attend AA but he began going to meetings. I went along to a few and I would tell him after the meeting that I didn't feel that I belonged. I didn't feel I was in the right place.

Of course I wasn't in the right place. I was unable to relate to the drinking behavior of those at the meetings, but perhaps more importantly, I could not relate to the focus on alcohol. Alcohol had not been the drug of my choice; alcohol was the drug I used to enhance the effect of drugs I really liked. Since my early teens, I used a variety of hallucinogens, depressants, and stimulants. I smoked

marijuana almost every day and all day for fifteen years. My friend suggested that I might want to try Narcotics Anonymous. I laughed it off and continued using for several more years.

Four years ago last August I finally hit my bottom. I was suicidal and my life was a mess. I realized I was going to die if I didn't do something soon: I did not want to die. I remembered my friend's suggestion and attended my first NA meeting. I knew I was in the right place. I was able to identify. I stopped using, went to meetings every day, and gradually built a recovery. Today I have a life worth living and four years clean. I still attend meetings and I am involved in Narcotics Anonymous service work. I want to help offer the still-suffering addict what I was so freely given.

The still-suffering alcoholic I spoke to the other day is drinking himself to death. I want for him what I finally found - identification. I want him to feel that he has finally come home when he attends an AA meeting, to feel that he is among men and women who can identify with what he has experienced, and with whom he can identify. There is something fundamentally wrong when a man like this cannot identify with the members of an AA group. The problem is clear, but the solution is elusive because the solution lies with each individual member of the group. Ignoring the Fifth Tradition results in people dying.

To talk about shooting heroin in the groin or smoking cocaine, when sharing at an AA meeting, is like saying to the newcomer, “Why don't you go away and die.” To introduce yourself as a “dope fiend” or “addict” at an AA meeting is like saying to the alcoholic attending his or her first meeting, “You are in the wrong place.”

There is an assumption made these days that there is no one left who can be described as on/y having a problem with alcohol, and not a variety of drugs. From my experience interviewing drunk drivers I can say with confidence that there are a lot of people who fit that description. These people do exist in large numbers. They would not know cocaine from butane and a lot of them tell me they are afraid of needles when I ask about heroin use. These are the people that Alcoholics Anonymous exists to serve. They are certainly still-suffering alcoholics.

I know there is an ongoing debate about who should be allowed to attend closed AA meetings. In my work I refer only those who express a desire to stop drinking to closed meetings of AA and I refer those with other drug

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problems to NA or another fellowship. I try to refer people to the fellowship in which they are most likely to find identification with others and least likely to interfere with the identification of others attending. Of course, where they choose to build their recovery is ultimately their choice, not mine.

I believe that wherever you find identification is where you should work on building your recovery. We owe it to the still-suffering to avoid robbing them of an opportunity to identify.

The ability of both the AA and NA Fellowships to help the newcomer isn't served when members choose to identify themselves as someone unique, discuss topics inappropriate to the setting, quote from outside literature, or use language inconsistent with our individual programs. Every anonymous fellowship is a unique fellowship, existing to serve a particular group of still-suffering individuals. It is my hope that each of us who have received the gift of recovery will open our eyes to ways we can better serve the newcomer.

We are familiar with the importance of sharing our experience. Sharing honestly is critically important to the recovery process. But there are words better left unsaid and stories better left untold, if we are intent on truly serving the still-suffering. There are many who will not find recovery. Many will die. But each member can help assure that when newcomers arrive at their first meeting, they will know they are in the right place.

Reprinted from Grapevine, May '90 with permission



"No, I've never tried AA. But if it's got alcohol in it, I'm sure I'd like it."

## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event.

### Tobin Group - 50th Anniversary

Tuesday, June 18 1991

St Charles Hall

Charles Avenue (Corner Ridge & Charles Ave.)

Speaker, Bill F. of Lorain

Buffet Dinner: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Speaker 8:00 p.m.

Donation \$7.00

**Food, Fellowship & Prizes**

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of this deceased member of our fellowship:

**Tom Gorman**, a 50 year member. His home group was West Park Men.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

## Youngstown Area Intergroup Banquet

Friday, May 31, 1991

Dinner 7:00 p.m.-Speaker 8:00 p.m.-Dance 10:00 p.m.

Mahoning Country Club

710 E. Liberty Street, Girard, Ohio

Speaker, Hal M. of Washington, D.C.

Tickets (advance only) \$11.00

783-5000 or 652-9998

## Traditions Took Persuasion

by Bill W.

The first reception of the Twelve Traditions was interesting and amusing. The reaction was mixed, to say the least. Only groups in dire trouble took them seriously. From some quarters there was a violent reaction, especially from groups that had long lists of "protective" rules and regulations. There was much indifference. Several of our "intellectual" members cried loudly that the Traditions reflected nothing more than the sum of my hopes and fears for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Therefore I began to travel and talk a lot about the new Traditions. People were at first politely attentive, though it must be confessed that some did go to sleep during my early harangues. But after a while I got letters containing sentiments like this: "Bill, we'd love to have you come and speak. Do tell us where you used to hide your bottles and all about that big, hot flash spiritual experience of yours. But for heaven's sake, please don't talk any more about those blasted Traditions!"

Time presently changed all that. Only five years later, several thousand A.A. members, meeting at the 1950 Cleveland Convention, declared that A.A.'s Twelve Traditions constituted a platform upon which our Fellowship could best function and hold together in unity for all time to come.

from A.A.'s Legacy of Service, AAWS, Inc.

**Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves  
and to another human being the exact  
nature of our wrongs.**

**“The Fifth Step”**

When taking the Fifth Step, I made a mistake. I would like to explain so others will not make the same mistake. I chose not to listen to my sponsor or other people in the program. Doing it my way caused a breakup of a good fellowship.

I chose my second-oldest daughter (who was my best friend) to tell the exact nature of my wrongs. We always had a good relationship and good communication. I figured that since she lived with me and saw everything, she would understand. Much to my dismay she did not. Today our motherdaughter relationship has faltered. She is still trying to cope, understand, forgive and accept me as her mother and friend again.

Don't make the same mistake. I say to each and everyone, listen to your sponsor and others in the program. Go to a priest, other clergyman or someone in AA you can trust. Pour soul out, forget and forgive. "Let go and let God."

Mary B., Cleveland, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**TRADITIONS CHECKLIST**

*These questions were originally published in the A.A. Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1977. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many A.A. groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.*

**Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try to both help them and to learn from them?

**The Group**

Alcoholics in AA achieve and maintain their sobriety through the group - beginning with the 12th step call made on them by members of the group and continuing through group meetings. In such meetings we share our experience, and grow in understanding of the nature of our problem and how to use the program to lead the kind of life we longed for in the days-or years-of our compulsive drinking.

The group, thus, is the core of Alcoholics Anonymous. It should be remembered, as the 5th Tradition puts it, that "each group has but one primary purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers!"

This purpose cannot be overstressed, for it is a corollary and a reaffirmation of one of the wonders of AA - that we keep our sobriety by "giving it away" - by helping others to stay sober.

Experience bears out the practical wisdom of this Tradition; some groups have been formed, composed of members of a given profession, or persons with similar interests; these, and other groups, for other reasons, have tended to become ingrown and fail to seek or add new members. Often they run into trouble.

In keeping with the stated purpose of the group, ideally, everyone in the group will regard himself as sponsoring the newcomer - and gladly take on all the aspects of 12th step work that this implies: seeing that the new member gets to the meeting . . . bearing with him through the first difficult weeks - or months - as the cobwebs clear from his brain and as he comes to view his problems through the eyes of AA . . . of trying to explain to the newcomer's wife or parents or other relatives the nature of alcoholism, and suggesting how they can help him to set out on the road to a happy, useful sobriety.

Until such time as the sponsor is suggested, or chosen by the newcomer, the group, by collectively acting as his sponsor, can help him immeasurably by providing a thorough grounding in the basics of AA. This help will take many forms - group meetings, kaffee klatsches, phone calls, making sure he reads the Big Book.

One apparently insignificant way to help the newcomer feel he belongs is to see that he or she participates actively in group affairs as quickly as possible (remember when just being able to pick up a coffee cup, or set it down without a clatter, was a triumph?).

Even the person who has asked for help to get sober will sometimes misconstrue the proffers of help by members. It is assumed that group discussions will take care to point out that AA is not a lending agency, employment service, or marriage counsellor.

*Reprinted from Here's How,  
Chicago Service Office, Feb/Mar. 1990*

## “A History of The Central Bulletin”

The first issue of The Central Bulletin appeared in the Cleveland area October 19, 1942. It was the brain child of a member named Harry D. who had been sober about 1½ years at that time. Harry owned a printing business, and he published the paper and edited it as well. He was a tireless and dedicated member of the fellowship, although he was regarded by some members as a self-serving, recognition seeker. In truth, he was simply grateful for the precious gift of sobriety. Present day members could do well to follow his example.

At an early time, a member named Spencer T., an editor of The Plain Dealer, collaborated as co-editor. He wrote a column for every issue until his sudden death in the late 1950's. After that, another talented individual, Lloyd H., succeeded Spencer until about 1967. Harry D. passed away in 1968 after 25 years of dedication to this program, and he deserves our gratitude and admiration for this accomplishment. It should be noted that The Central Bulletin is presently the oldest continuous periodical published in AA.

*John B., North Olmsted*

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I'm told that some people were upset by my last editorial. That was **not** my intent. I didn't mean to imply that anyone is doing anything "wrong": but rather that, in my opinion, we could do some things "more right".

I feel very strongly tht if we don't work together that we'll work apart. It was suggested that my article had the exact opposite effect of what I'd like to see achieved. I'm sorry.

*Bob*

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## Sponsor

They said it would be best,  
a sponsor is a special person in your life unlike the rest.  
Someone you can tell your innermost problems to,  
someone who can understand,  
because it's something they've been through when their  
life was out of hand.

I thought they were crazy,  
I thought they were lying,  
for deep down inside a part of me was dying.

I found they weren't crazy,  
I found they weren't lying,  
for when I found you, deep down inside I was crying.

You're showing me how to live again  
one day at a time.

Thank you for helping me on my road to recovery,  
a never ending climb.

I know you'll be around for me through thick and thin.  
Thank God I opened up my heart to you  
and willingly let you in. . .

*Melinda R., Maple Heights, OH*

## letters to the Editor

I don't agree with one of the statements on page one of the March, 1991 (Central) Bulletin • 'What is all this going to cost? Nothing at all!'

AA does have costs! It is a business! A non-profit business but we have rents - \$26 dollars a night at the "Y", 50 cents a head at the Ann Arbor Club, \$100.00 per month at Calvary Church.

These kids are trained in treatment centers that 'AA is free! Give us your \$\$\$ for outpatient care, etc!'

**AA is not free!!!**

AA (here) is growing but getting younger and younger with less and less money collected for AA. We have real problems keeping Intergroup OPEN.

*Ralph. W., Ann Arbor, MI*

As you all know it takes two people to have a meeting and to start a new group. One of the problems in starting new groups is that people don't check the schedule book to see that they don't start a new group on the same day and time as another group in that area. Also, they should be careful not to name their new group the same as another. Everyone should be careful not to cause any conflict with other groups. Be sure there is a need for your meeting in that area, also, and that the Central Office gives you the go-ahead for the new meeting.

The most important thing is that we all help the alcoholics and their families.

*Joe. T*

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## Anonymity

'Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions" and is crucial to so many of us. Our individual anonymity is our own and it is up to each of us to decide where and when we want to be anonymous (except, of course, at the level of press, radio, flm, and television).

I choose **not** to be anonymous at meetings and other AA gatherings just in case there is someone there who might need to contact me for help or any other reason, especially someone new in the group. On the other hand, I did not appreciate an AA friend discussing our alcoholism and our Fellowship in a voice loud enough for all to hear as we had dinner in a local restaurant.

Let's all be more sensitive to each other and respect each other's anonymity. That's good AA!

*Anna O.*

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'We need to collectively seek knowledge of God's will for us. That means we have to put aside a lot of aspects of our nature, because we can be very aggressive and competitive. We need to set aside the notion that we have to win and that we have to be right.'

*George D., 1990 San Diego G.S. Forum*



CENTRAL



BULLETIN

## CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING ST. MALACHI CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 7, 1991

PLEASE ATTEND

Your **group** may be represented by you **or** a member assigned to be your group representative. **Let us** take an active **part** in these **important meetings** to uphold **our—**

UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387  
Harry D., Founder and Editor 18924968

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

#### PURPOSE

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

#### The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.

To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.

To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.

To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

#### MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

March 5, 1991

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions.

The roll call showed that 30 members were present, representing 26 groups.

Minutes of the March meeting were read and approved.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Central Committee Financial report:** see below.

**Central Bulletin Account:** see below

**Action Committee:** John C. reported that action was taken to notify groups that announcements of leads should not be left where the public can see. As individuals we can notify groups of anonymity breaks.

**Central Bulletin:** Robert V., reported that there will be a meeting for the Central *Bulletin* at 7:00 p.m. prior to the May 7th Central Committee meeting. There will be a discussion on cost, editorial content and articles in the *Bulletin*. Price increase effective April 1st, now \$5.00 for yearly subscription.

**Treatment Facilities:** No reports. There is a need for members attending treatment facilities to report on policies, visitation changes, and meeting progress.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Covered in Action Committee report.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Past Forums have passed motions leaving no written guidelines; there is action taken without new motions voted to become policy of committee.

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** John B., reported the Mini-Conference a success and good time for those who attended. Area delegate will take area ideas with him to G.S.O. in April. Next Third Legacy meeting will be May 19th, 2:00 p.m.

46 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru March 1991.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

#### Central Committee Financial Report

March 1991

|                         |         |            |
|-------------------------|---------|------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD |         | \$1,748.10 |
| Rent for 3-5-91 Meeting | \$25.00 |            |
| Bank Service Charge     | \$3.24  | 28.24      |
| NEW BALANCE             |         | \$1,719.86 |

#### Central Bulletin Financial Report

March 1991

|  |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                  |          |          | \$742.82 |
| Total Deposits                           |          | \$187.00 |          |
| Printing of Mar. Central <i>Bulletin</i> | \$240.00 |          |          |
| Mailing of Mar. Central Bulletin         | 66.38    | (306.38) | 119.38   |
| NEW BALANCE                              |          |          | \$623.44 |



**Step Six**  
**Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character**  
**Ready, Set, Let go!**



I remember when I first tried to understand the words of the Sixth Step and how they applied to my early attempts at a complete inventory, "What's the difficulty here," I said; "this Step seems simple; of course I'm ready and willing to have God remove any defects of character I might have!" I thought I might just as well skip directly to the Fourth and Fifth inventory Steps to Step Seven and go right ahead and ask God to remove my shortcomings. Why dally with Step Six which only requires readiness to have the defects removed? "I'm a/ways ready to have any such defects removed.

But these were the thoughts of an AA member with only a month or two on the program. The truth is that I had never been ready or willing to have any of my defects removed; in fact I rather liked some of them! It had not yet dawned on me that AA was a lifetime program, which suggested a constant readiness to have defects removed that might endanger my sobriety and interfere with my spiritual growth.

My story, though typically I thought it unique, is a familiar one. I discovered drinking in my late teens as a wonderful "cure" for whatever ailed me, whatever tape of self pity I was listening to at the time. And drinking "worked," or so I thought, for many years - well into my thirties. I listened to that quiet **carbonated-effervescence-over-ice-cubes** voice that always assured me that I was the sensitive one, the one "wronged" by that "uncaring" world out there. I was not at fault, I reasoned; the world was guilty for treating me unfairly. And so I thought of sobriety only when drinking failed to "work," when I was told in no uncertain terms that jaundice and cirrhosis were life-threatening. I finally paused in my headlong plunge toward oblivion, certain of one thought: I didn't want to die. I reached for the phone and dialed AA, although my twisted thinking wouldn't allow me to even imagine sobriety as "enjoyable" or productive; AA seemed simply a welcome and easily available way of avoiding death.

My habitual pattern of rationalization so that I was always the "winner" went right on. I was from a wonderful family (my brother was a Catholic Priest, so I surely had an edge here!); I had earned both a Bachelor's and Master's degree, and was well on the way toward completing my Ph.D. True, I had not written a word of my dissertation for four years, but this, of course, had nothing to do with my drinking. My problems had to do with my

"sensitivity" and the fact that "nothing had gone my way"! My "bottom line" summation of myself still suggested that I was a pretty wonderful fellow, talented and extra sensitive, who had been treated capriciously, perhaps even cruelly, by life.

There was a fascination in AA because - despite my rationalizations - the program was clearly affecting people in positive ways. At these early meetings, I could see joy and happiness in the eyes of so many, and the constant melody of laughter was a kind of musical proof to me that the program was somehow working. So I plunged into the Steps, under the tutelage of Paul, my ever present and able sponsor. I learned that though I was truly porerless over alcohol, I could be restored to sanity through belief in a Higher Power. It was suggested to me that I make a decision to turn my life and will over to this concept of a Higher Power, and make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself. I began to understand the necessity of admitting to God, to myself and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs.

An incredibly big order, I felt, but I pushed onward, aided by the fruitful example of Paul's life, which seemed to me remarkably successful. He was an excellent teacher, an exemplary husband and devoted father. I would listen to his horror tales of past drinking days, and compare them with his present life. The difference to me seemed awesome, and Paul always gave the Fellowship credit for generating these vital changes I had immediately noted. His example paved the way for my acceptance and full involvement in the Steps and the program.

The concepts of being powerless over alcohol and believing in a Power greater than myself seemed not too difficult to understand and accept, particularly when I realized that it was to be my personal and individual definition of that Power. And the turning of my will over to that Power also seemed quite reasonable and appropriate. But the inventory suggestions in Steps Four and Five proved to be much more of a personal challenge. I laboriously tried to write down my entire life and find whatever shortcomings existed; I talked with Paul endlessly, driving him, I'm sure, to despair at times! I examined my upbringing, my career, my marriage, trying to avoid those two corruptors of straight thinking: rationalization and self-pity. Slowly - quite slowly in my case over the course of weeks and months, I began to see that my "real" self was not so much (as I thought) my potential or what I wanted to be, but

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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was rather, up to this point in life at least, what I had done. This bitter pill took a while to go down; it was difficult to admit that my previous definitions of self were all associated with my grandiose dreams of what I was going to do rather than what I had actually accomplished. And the truth of the matter was that I had truly accomplished little in life - and that clearly a *major* shortcoming in my personality and character had to do with my demonstrated inability to see myself as I really was, and my constant failure in life to recognize accurately my capacities and limitations.

When I felt sufficiently clear about these inventory conclusions, I went through the Fifth Step, "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." with Paul, and found it a tremendous relief to finally put down the pretensions which had for so long formed the central core of my being. Now it was time for Step Six.

But why, I thought again, is there a separate Step solely concerned with being "...entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character"? And the answer, hidden at first by my pride, began slowly to take shape, as it inevitably does to those who have found the courage to plunge completely and without fear into the inventory Steps. The clear answer has to do with the realization of the necessity of readiness, based on careful and thorough inventory preparation. Without this preparation, how could I know which shortcomings are central, which defects of character most injurious to my sober growth? I realized that any effective action was based on knowledge of self and readiness, and that delay would be dangerous and rebellion at this point perhaps fatal. Here is the precise moment in the program where we turn away from partial solutions and move directly toward full acceptance of God's will for us.

How fascinating - and inspiring - that the separate Step Six exists. How many hundreds of times before I found AA had I implored God, or any other "Power" I was thinking of at the time, to "remove" all pain in my life. But in those drinking years, it never occurred to me that I was asking God to do all the inventory work for me, and that then he should operate in some "carte blanche" fashion to either (1) make my personality and character "perfect so that I could enjoy the life I so richly deserved, or (2) "take care" of all those people and forces "out there" who were clearly inimical to *my* concept of how the universe should be structured!

No, the sober universe doesn't operate this way. Instead we must take the necessary time to examine fully and honestly our characters in action, and then admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. How important is the word *exact* here! We are not sidestepping or evading any longer our personal responsibility to see ourselves as we really are; we specifically declare the exact nature of our wrongs and defects of character. These individual defects, we state to God as we understand him, have moved us blindly toward self-destruction, and we are now prepared and ready to have them removed. Thus Step Six is the passage

between the inventory Steps and our earnest request in Step Seven which enables us to sail from the stormy waters of alcoholic thinking into the calm harbor of AA in action

Anonymous, Spokane, WA  
from June 1989 Grapevine, with permission

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event.

**No Anniversaries Reported**

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## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of this deceased member of our fellowship:

**No Deaths Reported**

## THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Goosebumps, Guests & the Gate House

When I was newly sober, I didn't know anything about Founders' Day here in Akron, Ohio. I had heard about it vaguely, but did not connect it in any way with my personal recovery and sobriety. All I knew when I started attending AA meetings was that the people there seemed to have a solution to my drinking problem, and they kept telling me to come back. I didn't understand why at the time, but I sure did keep coming back.

When I reflect on those early days in AA, I am in awe at how little I was able to comprehend beyond "don't drink today - this minute, or this hour." God was truly doing for me what I couldn't do myself.

Living here in Akron, I had always just taken for granted that this was where AA got its miraculous start. It was not a big deal that Dr. Bob lived right down the street from where I used to drink and party. It was not a big deal that the first AA meeting between Dr. Bob and Bill W. was right over at the Stan Hywet Gate House. So what! The Mayflower Hotel? I went right by that old hotel every time I went downtown. We had our high school prom there. It was like a museum full of marble and balconies.

Today, however, I get goosebumps thinking about the Stan Hywet Gate House - the first meeting of two drunks doing something, anything, to keep from taking that first drink, sharing each other's experience, strength, and hope. The Mayflower Hotel is still standing. I can cry just thinking about Dr. Bob's house. As a matter of fact, I usually do when I am there. I can feel something in the atmosphere at Dr. Bob's Right in the kitchen, over a cup of coffee, or sitting on the porch, I can feel love. I would feel the same, I am sure, inside of Bill W.'s old home too.

When I first started attending Founders' Day, I was blown away by the distances people were traveling. My mind was opened to something bigger than anything I had ever

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)  
experienced.

If you are new and live in Akron, Ohio, be prepared to be loved just because you know where the Gate House is, or how to get to King School or to Dr. Bob's old home. If you have a vehicle, pile some folks in there and show them some of the special places here. Share in our guests' goosebumps.

By staying sober, I am able to experience again and again the awe and gratitude first shared by Bill W. and Dr. Bob.

Cindy B., Akron, Ohio  
from the June 7991 Grapevine, with permission

# Founders Day

June 7-9, 1991

at Akron University

Our own John T. (*The "T" stands for "Trouble"*) B. is part of the Old Timers' Panel on Friday at 7 pm.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Responsibility of Secretary and Treasurer of A.A. Groups

So many people are not aware there is a pamphlet called the A.A. Group, (where it all begins). It tells how to start new groups and their functions. Each month we will talk about chairpersons, also general service representatives and other subjects. This month I will talk to you about your secretary and treasurer and what they do.

**Secretaries** need to be all-around group servants and perform such tasks that are associated with that position: such as, keep records of members anniversaries (if your group wants this) and to maintain and update a confidential file of names, addresses, and phone numbers of its group members.

You are also to announce or mail information about important A.A. activities and events. You may have a bulletin board to post all events. Also, keep the Central Office and General Service informed in writing of any change of address, meeting place or group officers as this is very important.

Also, you are to accept and assign calls for Twelfth Step help, plus many other tasks as this is only a pan of being secretary.


The **Treasurer's** job is very important as you pass the basket at meetings that usually covers the groups monetary needs. You pay the rent and buy A.A. literature, coffee and refreshments, also the support of all A.A. service entities on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Your Treasurer generally maintains clear records, a ledger book is very helpful. They also keep their groups informed about how much money is taken in and how it is spent. Many groups use the "50-30-10-10" regular contribution plan which is 50% for intergroup, 30% to G.S.O., 10% to District and 10% to the area committee. Some members celebrate their A.A. anniversaries by sending a gift to G.S.O.-usually a dollar for each year of sobriety.

Hopefully this information on your trusted servants (officers) will be of help to all of you. There is a lot of work, but it is worth it all. Next month we will have another topic from the A.A. Group Handbook.


Joe T.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



## Sobriety Insurance

"...nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics."



We need **A.A.'s** to volunteer to be "temporary contacts" (not sponsors) to help people getting out of treatment to "bridge the gap" into the A.A. community.

Working within our traditions, temporary contacts may do such things as:

- ☆ Pick up or meet alcoholics at meetings in your neighborhood (especially the day that they get out of treatment).
- ☆ Introduce them to as many A.A.'s as possible.
- ☆ Guide them to possible sponsors and home groups.
- ☆ Visit the alcoholic before they leave the facility.

The Temporary Contact Program is exactly that--a temporary arrangement until the new member feels at home in A.A. It is not sponsorship. This program is working successfully in many other U.S. cities. C'mon Northeast Ohio!

Please call Joyce K. at 431-7800 X216 or Steve H. at 932-8195, if you are interested in getting active.

P.S.: Please tell your friends!

sponsored by: Northeast Ohio General Service Treatment Facilities Committee

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# Found !

One roll of exposed 35 mm. camera film was left on table #106 at the Intergroup Dinner-Dance on 5/4/91. Call the Central Office to claim it.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Bob,

I have been an interested reader of the Central Bulletin for four years or so now, for the most part enjoying the material it contains. Over the last several months, however, I have noticed a distinct change in the tone of some of the pieces published. If I thought them to be of a positive nature, I probably would not have bothered to write. I am going to specifically address some things in the April 1991 issue, and generally comment on some things I have perceived over the last half year.

I am not sure it is truly the responsibility of the District office Fund Drive Committee or its hard-working volunteers to include in their appeal for donations a "plug" if you will for General Service, either at the local or international level. I also am not sure it is your responsibility to act as a watchdog in these matters. The District Office Fund Drive is a very well-organized, efficient effort to raise the operating expenses of the Office. The fact that it succeeds so well from a grass-roots, meeting to meeting contact with the donors is nothing short of amazing, considering all involved are alcoholics! The fund drive effort deserves much more praise than the scant "pat on the back" you provide it in the first paragraph of your commentary. You go on to infer in subsequent paragraphs that the fund drive somehow runs contrary to the Traditions, AA Unity, and is (in bold type) **ANARCHISTIC**.

The Cleveland District Office has a very high visibility in our area. Many of our members are familiar with existence and operation. Many of our members are not familiar with the Central Committee, N.E. Ohio, or New York. I think your piece could have better served your readers by informing them that their groups are responsible to these and other necessary arms of our fellowship, rather than try to blame the low contributions on some subterfuge by the Central Office Fund Drive. Using the tack you chose to address the issue casts a shadow on the fine efforts and contributions of thousands of people, and you failed to demonstrate anything but sour grapes.

Is the quote in the blue box on Page three supposed to relate to anything else in the issue? Is it good journalistic practice to not name the quoted? This quote looks like something Saddam Hussein might have said. Or George Bush about Saddam Hussein. I heard a gentleman say years ago how much credibility he found in things written that **he agreed with!** While I'm not sure why this particular quote was included in the issue, I can use it for my own observation of the paternalistic, moralistic, "**we-better-do-it-this-way-or-the-fellowship-is-doomed**" attitude that the Bulletin has shown of late. I think the community would be much better served by an organ that stresses information exchange and suggestions based on our individual and collective experience, much the same way that the best of our Twelfth Step work succeeds. The Bulletin should not adopt the tone of one ramming pamphlets or the 12 and 12 down anyone's throat. Many fine issues (that insure the fellowship will survive) have been addressed by you and some of your writers of late. Too often they are not backed up with facts or history, just some paranoid fear and spineless accusations, directed at some "bad element" in AA. Most

of the people in the fellowship do not read the Bulletin, and certainly not many or any of the "bad elements"!

Let's be more informative (that's what a newsletter is supposed to be, regardless of the seriousness of our disease) and less didactic.

Sincerely,  
B. Z., Macedonia

Ed. note: The mentioned "blue box quote (on Page 4)" came from another A.A. newsletter where it also appeared anonymously. It was in reference to the Tradition 4 item immediately above it.

Bob,

The Central Bulletin I received this month contained a notice that this was my last issue and a subscription blank. I was going to fill it out and send it in but decided to read it first. I'm glad I did, because I already receive the General Service Box 459 and the Bulletin is just another form of General Service news, plus soliciting funds through sending out envelopes. When you get the Bulletin back to where it was before dealing with the everyday news of the recovery part of our Program (like it was under George, Dick, Imogene and Terry) I will again subscribe to it. Don't look for this article to be printed in the Bulletin.

Thanks much.  
G. M., Brunswick

P.S. On second thought, who are you to tell the District Office how to distribute their funds like you tried to do in the last issue?

Bob,

Enjoyed your article in the April Central Bulletin 100-100-100-100!

B. A., Brunswick

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Acceptance

When I sobered up over ten years ago, I admitted I was an alcoholic. But now I realize I did not accept that fact! "I am an alcoholic."

I realize I was in the fog as I did not believe. I didn't believe in anything especially the simplicity of AA. "Just don't drink and go to AA meetings!" I sought answers. Why? Why was I an alcoholic and how could I drink socially again? (I never did drink socially just a few drinks.) I thought my hospital therapist who was in AA was only telling me what he wanted me to know about alcoholism. All he kept telling me was the AA slogans like: "One Day at a Time." But I wanted the cure. So I studied every book in the Public Library looking for answers. I sought out Psychiatrists who just listened and told me to attend AA meetings.

I realize now I was not accepting the fact I was an alcoholic. I was not accepting myself. I was looking for others to give me the answers when the only answers were within myself.

The oldtimer AA's had the only answer: Don't ask why! Don't think! Don't analyze! Just don't drink and go to AA meetings. AA works if you let it!

Regards, Ralph W.

## CENTRAL BULLETIN



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387  
 Harv D.. Founder and Editor 18924968

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 4, 1991

## PLEASE ATTEND

Your group may be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold *our*—

## UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

## CENTRAL COMMITTEE

## PURPOSE

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
 Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
 Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.

To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.

To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.

To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

## MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

May 7, 1991

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions.

The roll call showed that 41 members were present, representing 39 groups.

Minutes of the May meeting were read and approved.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Central Committee Financial report:** not available.

**Central Bulletin Account:** not available.

**Action Committee:** John C. reported no further actions to be reported.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob McK. reported on meeting before the Central Committee meeting. There will be a meeting at 7:00 p.m. , June 4th for alcoholics interested in helping edit the Central Bulletin.

**Treatment Facilities:** Bob McK. reported that St. Johns of Westlake has 24 beds for men, also 5 for women. Visiting hours are unlimited at this time, though we should be reasonable.

**OLD BUSINESS:** No business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS:** New meetings announced:

**A Vision For You A.A.**

Sunday 7:30 p.m.  
 St Vitus Church, 6104 Glass  
 Cleveland

**Give It Away**

Wednesday 8:00 p.m.  
 Fellowship Room, 20571 Southgate Park  
 Maple Heights

**New Hope**

Monday 2:00 p.m., Wednesday 5:00 p.m.  
 Second New Hope Baptist Church  
 2917 E. 117th, Cleveland

**Steppin To Serenity**

Saturday 7:00 p.m.  
 Bethany United Church of Christ  
 41st and Storer (basement)  
 Cleveland

**Mayfield Friday Non-smoking**

Friday 8:30 p.m.  
 Mayfield United Methodist, 810 SOM Center  
 Mayfield Village

**Expect A Miracle**

Wednesday 8:00 p.m.  
 Love Center Church (downstairs) 3296 E. 93rd  
 Cleveland

**Name Unknown**

Monday 8:00 p.m.  
 United Way Building  
 9285 Progress Pkwy., Mentor

**Wednesday Beginners Discussion**

Wednesday 8:00 p.m.  
 Church of the Savior  
 2537 Lee Road  
 Cleveland Heights

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** It was reported that information from New York Conference will be given May 19th. There will be an Open House June 16th.

62 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru April 1991. There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.



## Lost-and Found-at Sea

The entire trip was turning into a disaster. Not only had the atmosphere between my husband and me been tense in the hotel room, but now we were arguing in public and in front of the children; I saw the fear in their eyes.

Swallowing the despair in my throat, I scooted for the stairway to the deck of the ferryboat we were on, trying to get away from the looks people were giving me - and from him. Once on top, the crisp wind dried those tears and I took a deep breath and began trying to ignore the situation.

"Look, kids," I said briskly, "look at the gulls following the boat. Did you bring the bread we saved?"

Just then I felt my husband's hand on my elbow. "Let's talk," he said. A rush of hatred poured through me and I jerked my arm away angrily and began to stride down the deck.

"NO," I spit back at him. "I'm going to meditate."

I went to the rear of the boat and sat on a bench where not too many people were passing by. I knew I had to shut off the clamor of voices in my head. Every voice had something bitter to say, and most of them were telling me what I should have said back to him.

I began the two-part process I had come to understand as meditation: first, shutting off my own mind, then relaxing to allow the message in intuitions or healing which I had been told would come.

Half an hour later, I found myself coming out of the meditation burbling with laughter. "None of that is important," was the thought in my mind; "none of that is important at all." I chuckled to myself and shook my head with amusement at how caught up in it I had been. "But none of that is important," I repeated once again.

When I rejoined my family, I was full of good humor. As the weekend wore on, the mood lasted, and as we drove back across two states to our home, I glanced at my husband, amused.

"I'll bet you're wondering what's going on," I queried, patting his knee affectionately; he admitted that he hadn't

wanted to disturb the calm by questioning me.

"I didn't know what happened during that meditation," I said, because I can't remember most of the twenty minutes. All I know is that something must have healed inside me." My husband just shook his head in grateful amazement.

At the time this occurred, despite quite a few years of recovery in the Fellowship, I was still a miserable person, driven by unhappiness and an unsatisfactory relationship. I felt I had worked the program tirelessly but depression was eroding my hard-won sense of well-being. A sponsor's question prompted me to realize that I had never consistently done the Eleventh Step. I was awkward about using these spiritual tools, but a willingness to change must have made up for my inexperience.

The event was surely a tiny miracle and once demonstrated, I could never forget the possibility of such healing. In these past years, I have grown slowly into the belief that life is good, and so are all the things that happen in it.

The relationship did finally resolve itself, but more important was my newly learned ability to live contented and free from my own negative feelings during the time of working it through.

I thought it was the marriage that needed to be fixed in order to make me happy; I learned instead to be happy regardless of the situation around me. The primary tool which made that freedom possible was meditation.

I have learned that meditation is not praying or reading, and that it is more than just listening - it's receiving. It was hard to learn because my mind wanted to be in charge, but I trained it to turn off and the effort has been well worth it. Meditation has become a reprieve from all the necessary mental activity which keeps out the quieter source with which I need to keep in touch. My life contains so many little joys these days; meditating has become one of them, and its regular practice helps keep me present with all the others.

D.T. Billings, Mont.

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## GROUP ANNIVERSARIES

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event:

### Tuesday Night Young People • 9th Anniversary

Tuesday, July 9, 1991 • 7:30 p.m.

Laurelwood Hospital • Community Room

35900 Euclid Avenue

Willoughby, Ohio

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

**A. DALE COREY**, Burton, Ohio passed on in May

**SANDEE PARKER**, attended groups in North Olmsted and Westlake, passed on in May.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

## On The Road Again

The story on the front page mentions one thing the lady did to stay sober while traveling. Traveling itself is stressful, particularly because it's often combined with **H.A.L.T.** - becoming too hungry, too angry, too lonely, and too tired. Combine these with some disappointment (like Bill W. faced on his trip to AKRON in May 1935), and you have a Class A "sobriety threatening issue". The first article that I wrote for the Central Bulletin (March 1988) was about this very subject and was titled 'Who's To Know?! I started thinking that maybe I could "get away" with a brief bender. Fortunately I stopped such thinking before I started such drinking. Folks I've known, and even folks I've sponsored, have found such benders neither brief nor secret, but rather the start of a long relapse.

I claim no "expertise" on staying serene and sober on the road. Indeed, on the last trip I took, both my wife and I were strongly suggesting to each other that we each "needed a meeting". Nonetheless, I did stay sober, even when not serene. I take "vacations from **A.A.**" only as often as I used to take a vacation without drinking - that is to say **NEVER**. I'd like to share with you what I do to take **A.A.** along.

**1. Bring a telephone list.** It's easy for me to bring my telephone list. I have it in small print in my wallet. I also carry a telephone credit card. The phone company issues these free of charge. This makes it a lot easier to place a long-distance call from a pay phone. I might call my sponsor late at night, if I felt that I needed to, but I won't have to call him collect.

**2. Carry a directory.** **A.A.** has four directories: Eastern States, Western States, Canadian, and International. They list names and phone numbers of the General Service Representative and Alternate GSR (or additional contact) of each group in the U.S.A. and Canada and each International Group (English-speaking) world wide. Contrary to popular belief, not all phone books have a listing for **A.A.** Or, if they do, it might be spelled Anonyme *Alkoholiker* and the person answering the phone may not speak much English.

Each GSR here is sent the directory for their regions each year. These thin, lightweight, paperback directories are also available for \$1.25 each at the District Office. You may go there and **xerox** a page from them, if you wish. They will also read you a few names and numbers over the phone.

Since we go camping on vacation, we're many miles away from the nearest central office. (if one even exists) and I've found that I can usually get more exact directions to a meeting from a local **A.A.** listed in the directory. In small towns, the police department can often help you. I asked a Whitney, Ontario Provincial Policeman about **A.A.** meetings and he pointed to a stack of meeting schedules kept at their window.

**3. Take literature/tapes.** The Big Book and the **12&12** are both available in paperback and Daily Reflections comes no other way. When driving, I take a few tapes of leads that I purchased at conferences I attended. I also have most of the Grapevine tapes. These can be bought through them directly or from the Grapevine table at the General Service meetings.

**4. Practice prayer/meditation.** "When I started, they stressed morning quiet time, daily reading, and daily contact (instead of meetings). They also told me I had to do something about my alcoholism every day! Duke (Duke P., a Toledo, Ohio **A.A.** pioneer) remembered taking a poll of "slippers" in the 1940's and finding that they had all stopped having their morning quiet time." Dr. **Bob and the Good** Oldtimes, pg. 150-151. I don't spend a lot of time in meditation, but I try to do some each day - even if that means getting up 15 minutes earlier.

**5. Bumper Sticker.** I have a "One Day at a Time" bumper sticker on my car. Is this an anonymity violation? I don't think so, nor did **A.A.** in this area when asked about this at a Mini-Conference prior to the 1989 General Service Conference.. If it said "I am an **A.A.** member"; that would be different. As it is, it suggests that my car's owner belongs to one of the dozens of fellowships that have that as a slogan. Before I joined **A.A.**, I thought that these referred to the TV show by that name, or to some pop philosophical or religious group.

Instead, the sticker has helped me maintain contact with area **A.A.**'s. The last time was a week ago. We were trapped in a Allegany, NY cemetery by 20 carloads of people attending a graveside service. One of the funeral directors, came up to me, introduced himself as "**Johnnie**", pointed to my bumper sticker, and asked if we had something in common. It turned out that he has 19 years in our Fellowship. This event turned a minor annoyance - before **A.A.**, it would have been a **major** annoyance - into a pleasurable opportunity for daily contact. It wouldn't have occurred if I didn't have a bumper sticker.

**6. Don't speed.** A few years ago, I was driving my sponsor back from Pittsburgh after we'd helped a member move. He asked how fast I was going. I said that the speedometer read 56. He said, "Slow down." I protested that speedometers are always initially set to read high. He said, "we'll take the speedometer's word for it. Slow down!" I did.

(Continued on Page 3)



I began to learn that speeding is a form of impatience. Speeding means that I'm trying to leave the place I'm in faster than the people there want me to. It's a failure to live "One Day at a Time." When I don't speed, I don't have to be on a constant guard about speed traps, so I can relax and enjoy the ride.

I remember a beginner's meeting at my home group. One of the guys, attending church that day, had heard the minister speak about traveling. He said that when he arrived and the host asked him "how was the trip?"; he'd say, "I made good time." The minister then said that at the end of his journey through life he expects to meet St. Peter at the gates of heaven. "If he asks me 'how was your trip?' I don't want to say 'I made good time!'"

**7. Whatever** else. This list is by no means comprehensive. Take whatever YOU think can help you practice A.A.'s principles in these affairs. Go with God!

Bob

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Seeking, A New Direction (Is It Possible)

When checking into a hotel or motel, I always look for the church directory and try to imagine, that now famous day in May 1935, when our co-founder did the same thing in desperation trying to locate another drunk to talk with so that he could offset his own desires for a drink. I need not say anymore since all of us sober through the results of that first meeting know very well that our lives as they are today might have been much less picturesque had not that small church directory been available

Each time I look at one of the directories which in most instances give the name, location and sometimes the phone number of the churches. I visualize another brass plate along with a phone number, the number of the local central office of A.A.

I of course then think of the 11th Tradition; Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and film.

Would such a move be promoting the program of A.A. or would it be reaching out to the sick, suffering alcoholics who in many cases might be thinking of picking up that first drink or worst still those poor souls who are either in the midst of, or coming off of a bender who might just be at the very bottom? Those are the times when someone or something often brings us into contact with the things that we normally wouldn't see or give a second thought. I once heard a person say that after noticing the two A's on an American Airlines plane while returning home from a trip - or I should say an unscheduled drinking trip - that he decided to call Alcoholics Anonymous.

The church directories are in truth, public service directories, and many include other services. I heard someone say that groups shouldn't be too anonymous even though anonymity is a must if we are to survive.

It is the hope of this writer that my suggestion only be treated as such without controversy because I, for one, try my best to avoid such activities even though I've often been involved unknowingly. My program does not include such

trivial actions and such luxuries though often felt are smothered in the same way that a few shovels of soil smother the camp fire.

The next time that you visit a place of lodging, take a look at the public service board and share my dream  
Fred S., Baltimore, MD

### Our CONFIDENTIAL Directories

On Monday my wife came home appearing upset. She waved a stapled list in my face. It was our Secretaries list - a list of secretaries names and addresses for all groups in Greater Cleveland. She had purloined it from the "to be filed" stack of the pamphlets files in the library where she works. My name's on it. Since several of her coworkers know me, my anonymity may have been compromised - and my wife's anonymity also.

On Tuesday I got a call from a member, asking if there was still time to get an article into the June issue. There wasn't. A commercial venture was presumably using our Eastern States Directory as a source to publicize a seminar that they're holding in June.

**Our A.A. directories are to be used by A.A.'s and for A.A. ONLY!** The secretaries list asks us to "respect the anonymity of your fellow secretaries" and also exhorts us to "keep our information up to date and useful to the people who use it daily for 12-step work!" The Eastern States Directory states "The A.A. Directories are considered confidential publications and ought to be used for A.A. purposes only. They are not to be used as a mailing list or for any form of solicitation or commercial venture!"

I have used both documents personally for 12th Step Work, carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The Directory used to list the General Service Representative's address for each group. This was discontinued primarily because it was abused by outside enterprises. I would be disappointed if our directories had to be further restricted or discontinued in order for us to maintain anonymity.

Al-Anon, in its 11th Tradition, states "We need guard with special care the anonymity of all A.A. members." Perhaps we can take a lesson from them!

Bob

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### New literature

The District Office has copies of the new A.A. booklet • A.A. in Prison: *Inmate to Inmate* - in stock. The price is \$2.95 a copy. This 127-page paperback contains 32 stories by inmates as originally printed in the A.A. *Grapevine*.

### Please Note! ! !

Starting last April, *Central Bulletin*  
subscription rate rose to

**\$5.00**

### Wanted: Some Open Minds

During the Nineteenth Century, a noted British philosopher named Herbert Spencer made an observation which was true then, is true today and will remain true tomorrow. He said:

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance -that principle is **contempt prior to investigation.**”

The late Clarence S. once said: “Alcoholics do not think; they only feel!” This is true, unfortunately, of many of our fellowship. It is detrimental to our common welfare, and impedes our efforts to serve the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are talking about the blind, unreasoning opposition to the General Service Structure, the General Service Office and the General Service Conference which is exhibited by many of our members. Often we hear people bleating like sheep: “Doctor Bob said to keep it simple.” This remark is taken out of context from some entirely different statements which were made by this wise, beloved co-founder of A.A. If the history of the General Service is studied, one finds that Bob was a co-author of the plan. True, he had some doubts about the feasibility of alcoholics handling their own affairs: he had legitimate concerns about the pitfalls which might make their presence felt. Fortunately, his fears proved groundless, and our service structure has stood the test of time. When our Second International Convention was held in St. Louis in 1955 after the Fifth Annual General Service Conference had been held, the members attending were asked to approve or disapprove making the Conference a permanent institution. The approval was overwhelming. After this demonstration of support Bill was heard to remark; ‘At last, A.A. is safe, even from me.’

John T. B.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Gossip

This month there has been a request that I write about the age old problem of gossip.

Some people who come to our meetings don't take part in the Fellowship, but are the first to complain, create problems, and spread gossip.

Gossip shows its ugly head during coffee time at meetings or with friends or business associates in life. These people who gossip and lie, I feel, don't realize how they can hurt people. It is high time that everyone of us, as well as those guilty of gossip, get down to the basics of A.A. and turn our will and our lives over to our God and don't worry about other people but worry about our own behavior.

Everyone should take part in their groups, serving as chairman, secretary, and members of various committees. If you can't say anything good about someone then keep your **mouth shut** and work the Four Absolutes. Your slogans such as “Easy Does It”, or sayings such as “Keep It Simple Stupid?”

In closing I need to remind myself that God is the bless-

ing of my being and God who crosses my path in life's wonderful journey. I promise to leave judgement of others to my final judge - God.

I hope this article has helped someone as really this is my opinion only and no **one** else's.

Next month I'll write an article on your Central Committee and the responsibility of your officers and various committees.

Joe T.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Letters To The Editor

*Valerie O. from CSO wrote:*

“Would it be possible to include a copy of the enclosed Corrections Correspondence Service Application Form in your next newsletter?”

At the present time approximately 100 male inmates have written to this office to ask for A.A. sharing and we have no “outside” A.A. members to answer these requests. As the need for this service grows on the “inside”: we will continue to need “outside” A.A. members who are willing to carry the message of A.A. to those who are confined.

We would appreciate your local support for so many “inside” A.A. members who count on all of us to be responsible members of the Fellowship.

Thank you.”

### Here's the form:

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

If you would like to share your experience, strength and hope with A.A.'s who are confined, please mail this form to the Correctional Facilities Secretary at the mail address indicated. The name of an inmate will be sent to you from your General Service Office, and you may make the initial contact through the mail.

Those who have participated in this service have found sharing with inmates a very gratifying form of 12th Step work. We are happy to know there are A.A. members like you willing to help make it possible for the A.A. message to be carried to those on the “inside”.

Yours in fellowship

I would like to participate in the Corrections Correspondence Service on an individual basis.

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle:      Male              Female

My address is: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

CI I would be willing to exchange tapes if requested.  
Send to: Valerie O., Trustees' and Conference Committees on Correctional Facilities, G.S.O., PO. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163



**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 2, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

Your group may be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold our—

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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

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Mark L., Secretary

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

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**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**June 4, 1991**

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James I?, leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions.

The roll call showed that 39 members were present, representing 34 groups.

Minutes of the May meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Central Committee Financial Report:** see below.

**Central Bulletin Account:** see below.

**Action Committee:** John C. reported no actions taken in May.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob McK. reported there won't be any real changes in the format of the bulletin. There will be an article asking groups to donate cost of subscription to help keep the deficit down. There will be articles about traveling and a couple articles about clergymen who influenced A.A. in issues to come. The Bulletin's 50th year of publication is coming. There will be a meeting at 7:00 before the **August 6th** meeting.

**Treatment Facilities:** Joe T. reported Serenity Hall can no longer take walk-ins. Patients must have insurance and have an assessment for treatment.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None to report.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Groups sanctioned to be added to the meeting schedule were:

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| (Name under consideration    | <b>Alcoholics with emotional and mental disorders</b> |
| Friday 7:30 p.m.             | Monday 7:30 p.m.                                      |
| St. Lukes Church, 8601 Sauer | Laurelwood Hospital (Community Room)                  |
| Cleveland                    | 35900 Euclid Ave., Willoughby                         |

**Reflections Discussion**

Thursday 6:00 p.m., Club 24, 1635 Lee Rd.  
Cleveland Heights

Glenda R. was elected Treasurer of the Central Committee.

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** There will be an open house June 23rd at St. Joseph's Church at 2:00 p.m. 66 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru May 1991. There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

| <b>Central Committee Financial Report</b>     |                         | <b>Central Bulletin Financial Report</b> |                             |
|---|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| April & May 1991                              |                         | April & May 1991                         |                             |
| <b>BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD</b>                | \$1,719.86              | <b>BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD</b>           | \$623.44                    |
| Sale of Literature • Four Absolutes & Who Me? | \$1,681.12              | Total Deposits-April                     | \$184.00                    |
| Rent for 4-2-91 Meeting                       | \$25.00                 | Total Deposits-May                       | \$179.00                    |
| Rent for 5-7-91 Meeting                       | \$25.00                 | Printing-April Central Bulletin          | \$240.00                    |
| Bank Service Charge-4/91                      | \$1.97                  | Printing • May Central Bulletin          | \$240.00                    |
| Bank Service Charge-5/91                      | \$3.75                  | Mailing-April Central Bulletin           | \$64.94                     |
| Printing Four Absolutes & Who Me              | \$1,075.18 (\$1,130.9Q) | Mailing • May Central Bulletin           | \$59.72 (604.66) (\$241.66) |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                            | \$2,270.08              | <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                       | \$381.78                    |



## Mr. X and Alcoholics Anonymous

by Dilworth Lupton

*Religious leaders have helped A.A. throughout its history. One local minister was Rev. Dilworth Lupton who had "a great deal to do with the rapid growth of A.A. in Cleveland," He told Dorothy (Clarence S's wife) that "inasmuch as A.A. was mixed up with the Oxford Group, it was bound to fail; that any organization as tremendous as this should never be mixed up with a Religious Organization." In November, 1939 Rev Lupton preached a sermon titled "Mr X and Alcoholics Anonymous" (Mr. X was Clarence S.) that was later turned into a pamphlet that "served the Cleveland area for many years" - per "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers."*

*I attempted to get a copy of this locally, but I couldn't find anyone who had it. Frank M., archivist for our General Service Office in N.Y., made me a copy - thanks Frank. I was going to synopsise it, but the Bulletin Committee asked that I print it in total, even if it took more than one issue to do so. Here it is!*

My friend, Mr. X, is a young man with a family. For five years, to use his own words, Mr. X did not "draw a sober breath." His over-patient wife was about to sue him for divorce. Now for over two years, he has not had a single drink. He maintains that his "cure" is due to the efforts of a group of "exdrunks" (their own term) who call themselves Alcoholics Anonymous.

I have had several opportunities to meet members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Not long ago I accepted an invitation from Mr. X to attend one of their meetings, held in a private home. They are simple affairs: First a brief prayer, then four or five give public testimony to their experiences, refreshments are served, and there is general fellowship. They call themselves religious, but I find no sign of excessive piety, sensationalism, of fanaticism. Furthermore they have a sense of humor, somewhat of a rarity in religious circles. They are not trying to make other people or the country into "drys!" They merely say, "We are the type that can't take it, and we have found a way of leaving it alone:"

In my own home recently nine members of this group submitted themselves to questions for four hours from a prominent physician and a psychiatrist. Both were impressed by the trim appearance, sincerity, manliness of the ex-victims, and by the seeming efficacy of their methods. As the physician said to me privately, "These boys have got something!"

Thank God someone is throwing the light on the pro-

blem of the chronic alcoholic, a problem that has perplexed men for centuries. There may be a million victims in the United States. Chronic alcoholism is not a vice but a disease. Its victims know that the habit is exceedingly harmful - as one of them graphically expressed to me, "I was staring into a pine box" - but they are driven toward drink by an uncontrollable desire, by what psychologists call a compulsive psychosis.

Complete abstinence appears the only way out, but except in rare cases that has been impossible of attainment. Religion, psychiatry, and medicine have been tried, but with only sporadic success. The members of Alcoholics Anonymous, however, appear to have found an answer, for they claim that at least fifty per cent of those they interest have stopped drinking completely.

From conversations with my friend, Mr. X, and with members of the Cleveland group, I am convinced that this success comes through the application of four religious principles that are as old as the Ten Commandments.

1. The principle of spiritual dependence.

Mr. X, who had been drinking excessively for years, found that he couldn't summon enough will power to stop even for a single day. Finally in desperation he consented to a week of hospital treatment. During this time he received frequent visits from members of Alcoholics  
(Continued)



Reverend Dilworth Lupton  
photo courtesy of  
The Unitarian Society of Cleveland

Anonymous. They told him that he must stop trying to use his will and trust in a Power greater than himself. Such trust had saved them from the abyss and could save him. Believe or perish! Mr. X chose to believe. Within a few days he lost all desire for alcohol.

Trust in God seems to be the heart of the whole movement. Religion must be more than a mere set of beliefs; it must be a profound inner experience, faith in a Presence to which one may go for strength in time of weakness.

This fact is made quite clear in the book *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*, which gives the philosophy behind the movement and also the testimony of thirty of those who have benefited. Although written by laymen it contains more psychological and religious common sense than one often reads in volumes by religious professionals. The book is free from cant, from archaic phraseology. It gives with skill and intelligence an inside view of the alcohol problem and the technique through which these men have found their freedom.

I will let "Bill," one of the contributors to *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*, describe his own experience. He had been drinking in his kitchen • there was enough gin in the house to carry him through the night and the next day. An old friend came to see him. They had often been drunk together, but now he refused to drink! He had "got religion!" He talked for hours . . . it all seemed impossible, and yet there he was, sober. But let me quote from the book:

"God had done for him what he could not do for himself. His human will had failed. Doctors had pronounced him incurable. Society was about to lock him up. Like myself, he had admitted complete defeat. Then he had, in effect, been raised from the dead, suddenly taken from the scrap heap to a level of life better than the best he had ever known!"

"Had this power originated in him? Obviously it had not. There had been no more power in him than there was in me at the moment, and this was none at all!"

"That floored me. It began to look as though religious people were right after all. Here was something at work in the human heart which had done the impossible. My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table. He shouted great tidings!"

How hard it is for us moderns to concede • much less express it as our deep conviction -that our inner lives ultimately are dependent upon a power-not-ourselves. Such an act seems weak and cowardly. But we go even further; we suspect that faith in a spiritual Presence outside ourselves is absurd.

Why absurd? Our bodies are dependent ultimately upon the physical cosmos, upon air and sunlight, and upon this **strange planet** that bears us up. Why is it absurd, then, to think of our spiritual selves • our souls, **psyches**, call them what you will • as being dependent upon a spiritual

cosmos? Is it not absurd, rather, to conceive that the material side of us is part of a material universe, but that our spiritual nature is isolated, alone, independent? Is not such an attitude a kind of megalomania?

At any rate these ex-alcoholics declare that only when they recognized their spiritual dependence was their obsession broken.

## 2. The principle of universality.

In our great museums one usually finds paintings covering several ages of art, often brought together from widely separated localities -the primitive, medieval and modern periods.; products of French, American, English, and Dutch masters; treasurers from China, Japan, and India. Yet as one looks at these productions he instinctively feels that a universal beauty runs through them all. Beauty knows no particular age or school. Beauty is never exclusive and provincial; it is inclusive and universal.

So, too, in the field of religion. We are beginning to recognize the substantial unity of all religious faiths. Back of all religions is religion itself. Religion appears in the differing types, but they are all expressions of one great impulse to live nobly and to adore the highest.

This universality of religion is recognized by the Alcoholics Anonymous. Their meetings are attended by Catholics, Protestants, Jews, near-agnostics, and near-atheists. There is the utmost tolerance. It seems of no concern to the group with what religious bodies non-church-going members eventually identify themselves; indeed there is no pressure to join any church whatever. What particularly impresses me is the fact that each individual can conceive of the Power-not-himself in whatever terms he pleases.

"Bill" • the writer already quoted in *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS* -makes this tolerance clear when he further narrates his conversion with his ex-alcoholic friend:

"My friend suggested what then seemed like a novel idea. He said, 'Why don't you choose your own conception of God?' "

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

"It was on/y a matter of being willing to believe in a power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness I might build what I saw in my friend. Would I have it? Of course I would."

Perhaps these laymen in Alcoholics Anonymous are laying foundations for a new universal movement in religion. Surely the conventional conceptions of religion have been too narrow. Religion, itself, is far bigger and broader than we thought. It is something we can no more capture through rigid dogmas than we can squeeze all the sunshine in the world through one window.

Continued

### 3. The principle of mutual aid.

Consider again the case of Mr. X. When he was being hospitalized eighteen laymen visitors called upon him within the space of five days. These men were willing to give their valuable time in trying to help a man they had never seen before. To Mr. X they related their own dramatic experiences in being saved from slavery to alcohol, and offering their assistance. Upon leaving the hospital Mr. X attended the weekly meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Before long he was following the example of the men who had so generously given him of their help. From what I know of the practices of these members of Alcoholics Anonymous, I feel quite confident that Mr. X this very day is using virtually every hour of his spare time to assist other victims in getting on their feet,

As he said to me recently. "Only an alcoholic can help an alcoholic. If a victim of chronic alcoholism goes to a doctor, psychiatrist, or a minister, he feels the listener cannot possibly understand what it means to be afflicted with a compulsion psychosis. But when he talks to an ex-alcoholic, who has probably been in a worse fix than himself and has found the way out, he immediately gains a confidence in himself that he hasn't had in years. He says to himself in substance, 'If this fellow has been saved from disaster I can be too!'

The weekly meetings of the Alcoholics Anonymous operate on this same principal of mutual aid. The ex-victims bolster up each other's morale through comradeship. Like shipwrecked sailors on a raft headed for the shore, the bond that holds them together is the sense that they have escaped from a common peril. Upon each newcomer is impressed the necessity of helping other alcoholics obtain the freedom he has attained. They believe they gain strength from expenditure - not expenditure of money, of which most of them have but little, but of themselves. Said one of them to me, "What I have is no good unless I give it away!" There are no dues, no fees, just the sheer pleasure and, in this case, moral profit, that comes from helping the other fellow. This mutual aid acts as a sort of endless chain. Mr. A, Mr. B, and Mr. C help Mr. X out of the frightful mess he is in; then Mr. X turns around and helps Mr. Y and Mr. Z. These in turn help other victims.

As "Bill" writes in *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*:

"My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems. It was fortunate, for my old business associates remained skeptical for a year and a half, during which I found little work. I was not too well at the time, and was plagued by waves of self-pity and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink. I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day. Many times I have gone to my old hospital in despair. On talking to a man there, I would be amazingly uplifted and set on my feet. It is a desire for living that works in rough going."

### 4. The principle of transformation.

During the last half century many able psychologists have turned the searchlight of their investigations on "religious experience!" It seems quite clear from these studies that religion consists not primarily in the intellectual acceptance of certain beliefs. It involves even more the transformation of human character. Such transformations have taken place not only in the lives of saints and religious leaders, but in the souls of multitudes of common folk as well. It is a scientific fact that through religious faith people are sometimes suddenly, and gradually aroused to a new set of interests, are raised from lower to higher levels of existence. Life and its duties take on a new meaning, and selfishness (half conscious often) is displaced by the conscious desire to help people.

If any human being needs such a transformation, it is the chronic alcoholic. He may not be at the point where he is willing to admit that, but his family and friends are! Alcoholism is a sickness, to be sure, but it is unlike any other malady in certain fundamental aspects. Compare for example, the case of the alcoholic with that of a tubercular patient. Everybody is sorry for the "T.B!" and wants to help. He is surrounded by friendliness and love. But in all likelihood the alcoholic has made a perfect hell of his home and has destroyed his friendships one by one. He has drawn to himself not compassion and love, but misunderstanding, resentment, and hate.

There seems to be every evidence that the Alcoholics Anonymous group has been amazingly successful in bringing about religious transformation. Note how the doctor describes the effect of this technique on one of his patients:

"He had lost everything worthwhile in life and was only living, one might say, to drink. He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope. Following the elimination of alcohol, there was found to be no permanent brain injury. He accepted the plan outlined in this book (*ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*). One year later he called to see me, and I experienced a very strange sensation. I knew the man by name, and partly recognized his features, but there all resemblance ended. From a trembling, despairing, nervous wreck, had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment. I talked with him for some time, but was not able to feel that I had known him before. To me he was a stranger, and so he left me. More than three years have passed with no return to alcohol!"

Every member of this movement declares that since he has come to believe in a Power-greater-than-himself a revolutionary change has taken place in his life; even his acquaintances note a marked change. He has radically altered his attitudes and outlooks, his habits of thought. In the face of despair and impending collapse, he has gained a new sense of direction, new power.

I have seen these things with my own eyes. They are convincing, dramatic, moving.

Continued

One final word to the members of Alcoholics Anonymous: Go back to your synagogues and churches; they need you and you need them. Preserve your principle of Universality, your faith that all religion is one. Never allow yourself to be absorbed by any single church or sect. Keep your movement what you call it now, a "layman's outfit!" Avoid over-organization, for religious organizations always tend to follow the letter rather than the spirit. Remember that early Christianity was promoted not by highly involved organization, but by the contagion of souls fired with enthusiasm for their cause. And keep your sense of humor! So far you do not seem afflicted with the curse of over-seriousness.

To doctors and psychiatrists I would say: Be skeptical, investigate this movement with an open mind. If you become convinced of their sincerity and the efficacy of their methods, give these men your approval and open support.

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS** ought to have a wide reading by the general public. For one thing the public ought to learn first hand that the chronic alcoholic is suffering not from a vice, but from a disease; that it is impossible for him to "drink like a gentleman." Moderation for him is out of the question. For him there is no such thing as the single drink. It is one taste, and then the deluge.

Certainly every victim of alcoholism and every friend of victims ought to buy or borrow and read this book, then seek to get in touch with some member of the movement. The writer of this article will be glad to furnish addresses of the Cleveland leaders. Or communicate with Alcoholics Anonymous, Box 658, Church Street Annex, New York City (address is now Box 459, Grand Central Station).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## In My Opinion

We share our experience, strength, and hope here. That which doesn't come from our General Service Conference - Approved Literature, such as the Big Book, is our opinion. Joe T. asked that I point out that it is only our opinion - yours may differ - and that we will publish articles with differing opinions.

If you have an opinion that you'd like to see expressed here, write it and submit it. We want to "edit" the Central Bulletin- not write it. Here's an article that's been making the rounds of other newsletters:

### The Editors Dilemma

Getting out a journal is no picnic! If we print jokes, people say we are silly. If we don't, they say we are too serious. If we clip things from other magazines, we are too lazy to write them ourselves; if we don't, we are stuck with our own stuff. If we make a change in the other fellow's article, we are too critical. If we don't, we are blamed for poor editing. Now as like as not, someone will say we swiped THIS from some other source-We did!

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## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event.

### Strongsville Tuesday - 43rd Anniversary

Tuesday, August 13 1991 - 8:00 p.m.

McGraw Hall

St. Joseph's Church

12700 Pearl Road

Strongsville, Ohio

Lead, George H. from Elyria

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## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of this deceased member of our fellowship:

No deaths reported

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

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## How To Ruin A Group

If you're a member:

1. Don't come to meetings; otherwise, come late or irregularly.
2. If you do come, find fault with everything.
3. Gossip. Spread unverified rumors. Condemn. Assassinate the characters of others.
4. Never accept any responsibility. It is easier to criticize others who do.
5. Nevertheless, get sore if you are not asked to accept a duty, an obligation or an appointment. Then, if you are asked, welsch or fail to deliver.
6. When an important matter is being discussed during a meeting, keep silent - even if asked for an opinion. After the meeting, tell everyone how you think the matter should have been handled.
7. Don't comment. You wouldn't want to help the lead or anyone else, would you?
8. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary. But if others roll up their sleeves and pitch in, howl that the group is being run by a clique.
9. Ignore new members and visitors. We don't need them; they need us.
10. If asked to be secretary or chairman, refuse.
11. Don't put any money in the collection basket, it helps support the group.
12. If you are chairman, get drug leads, don't get alcoholics to lead Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.
13. Talk to someone else while the lead is speaking and show people how ignorant you really are.
14. Make plenty of noise during the comments.
15. If you comment, talk about yourself and your problems; don't thank the lead for his message.
16. If you do any or all of these things, you will be the jackass you always wanted to be in everyone's eyes.

John T.B. & Earl J.

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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 6, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

Your *group* may be represented by you *or* a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold *OUR*—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.

To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.

To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.

To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

July 2, 1991

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions.

The roll call showed that 51 members were present, representing 42 groups.

Minutes of the June meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Central Committee Financial Report:** see below.

**Central Bulletin Account:** see below.

**Action Committee:** John C. announced there was nothing to report.

**Central Bulletin:** Bob MCK, reported on difficulties of publishing the bulletin on time last month. There will be a planning meeting at 7:00 p.m. before the **August 6th** regular meeting.

**Treatment Facilities:** Joe T. reported Serenity Hall has full beds and a waiting list at this time.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None to report.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Groups sanctioned to be added to the meeting schedule were:

**There Is Hope Group**

Thursday 7:30 p.m. - Rosary Hall  
St. Vincents Charity Hospital  
Cleveland

**Alcoholics With Mental and Emotional Disorders**

Monday 8: p.m.  
Windsor Hospital  
115 E. Summit, Chagrin Falls

**Upstairs Utopia**

Sunday 6:00 p.m.  
2219 Payne Avenue  
Cleveland

Motion was approved to denote meetings for alcoholics with mental and emotional disorders with (AMED) in the meeting schedule.

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** August 18, 1991 at 2:00 p.m., there will be a workshop on GSR's Role in A.A., St. Joseph's Church, Mantua

67 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru May 1991. There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**Central Committee Financial Report**

June 1991

|                         |         |                   |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD |         | \$2,270.08        |
| Rent for 6-5-91 Meeting | \$25.00 |                   |
| Bank Service Charge     | \$2.50  | (27.50)           |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>      |         | <b>\$2 242.58</b> |

**Central Bulletin Financial Report**

June 1991

|                                 |          |          |                 |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD         |          |          | \$381.78        |
| Total Deposits                  |          | \$115.00 |                 |
| Printing-June Central Bulletin  | \$233.03 |          |                 |
| Mailing • June Central Bulletin | \$59.32  | (292.35) | (177.35)        |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>              |          |          | <b>\$204.43</b> |





## Fr. ED & AA's Bill W.

by Robert Fitzgerald, SJ

**B**ill Wilson, cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, was down. His feet were hanging over the end of the bed that nearly filled the small room he and his wife, Lois, had rented above the 24th Street AA Club in New York. It was a cold, damp November, 1940. Two orange crates with curtains served as a dresser. Hooks on the walls held their clothes. Lois supported them both with a job at a department store. She was out somewhere. Rain and sleet were beating on the tin roof. Bill was wondering whether the stomach pain he was feeling was an ulcer.

The walls were closing in on him. Thousands of copies of the Big Book in Blackwell's warehouse were waiting, unsold. A few men were sober, but Bill was frustrated. How could he reach all who wanted help? Nine months earlier, the Rockefeller meal with its gathering of the rich New Yorkers interested in AA had come and gone with applause for the young movement, but no money. Hank P., an early member, after complaining for half a year, finally got drunk in April. Rollie H., a nationally famous ball player sobered up with the Cleveland AA group but broke AA's policy of anonymity for its members by calling the press for a full name-and photograph story that became front page news across the country. Bill fell into the same trap as Rollie; he began calling on reporters too wherever he gave talks. Soon he found his story and pictures on page one. Now he was becoming the center of attention. An old timer in his New York group even accused him of being on a "dry drunk" like Hank P. He had just returned from Baltimore, where a minister had asked him to face the self-pity in his own talk. He was depressed. What was the use? What if he • five years sober • were to drink?

It was 10 p.m. The doorbell rang through the empty club: Tom, the maintenance man, said there was "some bum from St. Louis" to see him.

Reluctantly, Bill said "Send him up." His regrets increased as he heard the stomp, thud, stomp up the stairs and down the long hall to his bedroom. Bill muttered, "Not another drunk!"

Bill welcomed the stranger into the room, noticing his severe limp and his cane. The visitor shuffled over to a wooden chair opposite the bed and sat down. His black raincoat fell open, revealing his roman collar. "I'm Fr. Ed Dowling from St Louis. A Jesuit friend and I have been struck by the similarity of the AA 12 steps and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius."

"Never heard of them."

Fr. Ed laughed and seemed delighted. This endeared him to Bill, who found himself looking into the most remarkably clear blue eyes he'd ever seen, peering out from beneath a soaking lock of pure white hair. Robert Thomsen tells the story this way in *Bill W.*

Then the curious little man went on and on, and as he did, Bill could feel his body relaxing, his

spirits rising. Gradually he realized that this man sitting across from him was radiating a kind of grace that was filling the room with a strange, indefinable sense of presence. Primarily, Fr. Ed wanted to talk about the paradox of AA, the "regeneration," he called it, the strength arising out of total defeat and weakness, the loss of one's old life as a condition for achieving a new one. And Bill nodded, agreed with everything he said and soon found . . . but Bill never really had any words for what he found that night. (p. 308)

Soon Bill was talking about all the steps and taking his 5th step (telling the exact nature of his wrongs) with this priest who had limped in from a storm. He told Fr. Ed about his anger, his impatience, his mounting dissatisfactions: his demands on the world. Fr. Ed said, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst!"

When Bill asked whether there was ever to be any satisfaction, the priest snapped back, "Never. Never any!" Bill would be a person who kept on reaching. His reaching would find God's goals, hidden in his own heart, Thomsen continues:

Bill had made a decision, Fr. Ed reminded him, to turn  
(Continued)



Father Edward Dowling, SJ  
from "A.A. Comes of Age":  
with permission of A.A.W.S.

his life and his will over to the care of God . . . he was not now to sit in judgement of how he or the world was proceeding. He had only to keep the channels open . . . it was not up to him to decide how fast or how slowly AA developed . . . For whether the two of them liked it or not, the world was undoubtedly proceeding as it should, in God's good time. (p. 309)

Soon they were speaking of conversion and faith, and Fr. Ed was again quoting Bill's words back to him. No one among them had been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. . . they were not saints . . . The point was they were willing to grow spiritually . . . They claimed spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.

Before Fr. Ed left, he pulled his crippled body up, and leaning on his cane he thrust his head forward and looked straight into Bill's eyes. He said there was a force in Bill that was all his own, that had never been on this earth before, and if Bill did anything to mar it or block it, it would never exist anywhere again.

That night, for the first time in months, Bill Wilson slept soundly.

Thus began a twenty-year friendship nourished by visits, phone calls, and letters. Both men spoke the language of the heart, learned through suffering: Bill from alcoholism, Fr. Ed from arthritis that was turning his back to stone and his own crisis of faith, a crisis he referred to in a 1944 talk to AAs. Bill turned to Fr. Ed as a spiritual sponsor, a friend. Fr. Ed in a letter to his provincial considering Bill's offer to him to come an AA trustee, saw his own gift for AA as a "very free use of the Ignatian Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the second week of the Spiritual Exercises." He saw his special gift to AA: to be with AA people making healthy recovery choices.

Fr. Ed was the one who endorsed AA to the American Catholic world with his appendix in the Big Book and his Queen's Work (a Jesuit publisher) pamphlet of 1947. He was the first to see wider applications of the 12 steps to other addictions and compulsions, and wrote about that in *Grapevine* (AAs magazine) in the Spring 1960 issue. Bill added a last line to that *Grapevine* article: "Fr. Ed, an early and wonderful friend of AA, died as this last message went to press. He was the greatest and most gentle soul to walk this planet. I was closer to him than any other human being on earth."

For his part, Fr. Ed counted many gifts from Bill. He told his sister, Anna, that the graces he got from that first meeting with Bill were equivalent to those received at his own ordination. He thanked Bill for letting him "hitchhike" on the 12 steps. In 1942 he wrote to Bill that he has started a national movement for married couples to help each other through the 12 steps: **CANA** (Couples Are Not Alone). He used the 12 steps to help people who smoked and ate too much, people with mental difficulties, scruples, and sexual compulsions. When chided by an AA member about his smoking, Fr. Ed stopped by using the 12 steps and wrote to Bill that as a result he was becoming "fat as a hog."

He tried to use the steps with his own compulsive eating. There are stories of him eating all the strawberries for the whole Jesuit community one night. He became so sick he had to receive the last rites. He went from 242 to 167 pounds and up again like a yo-yo. He asked Bill to start an OO "obese obvious" group.

Often Fr. Ed spoke of being helped by attending an open AA meeting. After a trip to Europe, he wrote to Bill that AA is his "lonely hearts club!" In his last twenty years his ministry changed radically due to AA and his friendship with Lois and Bill. He gave **CANA** conferences for families, using the 12 steps, once a month from 1942 to 1960. He cheered Lois on as she started and continued with **AI-Anon**. Fr. Ed rejoiced that in "moving therapy from the expensive clinical couch to the low-cost coffee bar, from the inexperienced professional to the amateur expert, AA has democratized sanity." He wrote his superior to free up another Jesuit, Fr. John Higgins, himself recovering from mental illness, to work with Recovery Inc., a group Dr. Abraham Low had started for those with mental problems. Those groups for mental illness were especially close to Fr. Ed's heart as there was a history of depression in his own family. He called people to be "wounded healers" for each other.

**Bill Wilson (1895-1971), a private in WWI, a Vermont Yankee, fought semipro baseball catcher and learned to drink in South Dakota, and a WWI. He worked as a reporter for the St. Louis stockbroker until the Globe Democrat before market and his drinking entering the Jesuits in 1919. caught up with him in After his ordination he 1930. With Dr. Bob Smith worked at the old Queen's of Akron, Ohio, he found- Work in St Louis with Fr. ed AA in 1935, which since Dan Lord, SJ, until his has spread to seventeen death. One of his newspaper friends claimed this Fr. Edward Dowling, SJ was a front for his true job, (1898-1960), grew up in the being God's ambassador to Baden area of St Louis, was humanity.**

Each man supported and complimented the other. Was there anything from the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius in Fr. Ed's gift to Bill? Fr. Ed pointed out parallels between themes of the Spiritual Exercises and the 12 steps in a 1947 pamphlet and in a 1953 talk he gave at the Fifth National Clergy Conference on Alcoholism, but Bill had written the 12 steps before he even heard of the Spiritual Exercises.

Fr. Ed did offer suggestions for the Twelve Steps *and* Twelve *Traditions*. He gave Bill a copy of the Spiritual Exercises in 1958, underlining the "Two Standards" meditation in the Exercises. In Fr. Ed's first meeting with Bill he called him to the place where bottomed out and surrendered to his higher power. Fr. Ed would continually say that this is the place "where humiliations lead to humility and then to all other blessings," paraphrasing Ignatius's prayer that closes the "Two Standards" meditation. Fr. Ed said that this place of humiliation is the heart of AA and the point where the Exercises are most like AA. He went

(Continued)

a step further and asked Bill to make choices based on poverty and humiliation rather than on money, power, or fame.

An example of the Ignatian way of making decisions is Bill's turning down an honorary degree from Yale for his AA work. On the packet of letters dealing with this decision, he wrote: "to Fr. Ed, with gratitude." In the letter to Yale he states his reasons for declining the honor:

My own life story gathered for years around an implacable pursuit of money, fame, and power, antedated by my near sinking in a sea of alcohol. Though I survived that grim misadventure, I well understand that the dread neurotic germ of the power contagion has survived in me also. It is only dormant and it can again multiply and rend me - and AA too. Tens of thousands of my fellow AAs are temperamentally just like me. Fortunately, they know it, and I know it. Hence our tradition of anonymity and hence my clear obligation to decline this signal honor with all the immediate satisfaction and benefit it could have yielded.

This is the place where Fr. Ed met Bill that first rainy night, the small room where bottoming out opens up to life, where humiliations lead to humility and all other blessings.

Reprinted with permission of Company,  
a magazine of the American Jesuits, Winter, 1990

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#### From the District Office

**TRADITION NINE:** AA as such, ought never to be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

The object and purpose of the District office shall be to maintain and operate a service organization in Northeastern Ohio for the joint benefit of Alcoholics Anonymous and the groups located therein in their quest to carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer and to promote the general welfare of the fellowship through a centrally located office.

This sounds very efficient and well thought out except for one minor detail . . . we are only as efficient and carry the message as well as the individual groups . . . in other words, we are only as good as you allow us to be. For example, if we need a contact in Zaneyville and the group in Zaneyville has never informed us that they are indeed a bonafide group, then we can't get a 12 step call taken care of in that area, we can't mail information to them, and for that matter, the central office probably doesn't know they even exist. No message carried under these circumstances! **The A.A. CROUP is where it all begins!** So you see we are only as informed, effective, and efficient as you allow us to be. In general, most groups are conscientious and keep us well informed, which allows us to communicate better, help the suffering alcoholic. . . whether recovering or still practicing, and that is our primary purpose. So service begets service. We are here to serve you and, when you serve the Central Office, your group and another suffering alcoholic, it

becomes contagious and fruitful which allows us to fulfill our singleness of purpose.

There is a pamphlet "THE AA CROUP" that outlines a description of what an AA Group is, how it functions, its relationship with others in the community, how the group relates to AA as a whole, what AA does and does not do, and finally it touches on "principles before personalities" in a group setting. Please contact the Central office if you do not have this pamphlet and need these guidelines to better serve your group and the AA fellowship. It would be a great idea for each secretary to keep a copy with the group roster.

To further explain service boards, the Central Office is staffed by four full-time employees and two part-time employees. We also have eleven people on our Operating Committee who make the business decisions concerning this office. They are all volunteers and devote a considerable amount of time keeping the business affairs running smoothly. You elect these committee members at the March Advisory Meeting. We will elect three next March, so if you are in one of the areas and are asked to serve on this committee, it is an excellent opportunity to be of service to the AA Fellowship in Northeastern Ohio.

We will be holding the October Advisory Meeting at the Old Stone Church on October 24, 1991. This is another way to serve your group, become a group representative to the Advisory Meeting and help keep your group informed about the Central Office Activities. The Advisory Committee is made up of a representative from each group and they vote on the business activities that the Operating Committee presents. In reality, the Advisory Committee should be over 840 members if each group sent a representative.

One of the newest ways we have utilized our member services has been to have groups sign up for weekend answering service since August of 1989. We have completed two full years with unending individual gratification through this sharing and caring experience. The group conscience decides whether or not they wish to participate, then signs up for a weekend (through the Central Office) and "mans" the phones from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday of that particular weekend. We have openings from October through December. August was covered by several groups from the Berea, Strongsville, and Brook Park areas, there will be other groups volunteering from those areas in September. We have a myriad of information on how this is done, so please contact the Central Office if your group would like to participate.

One of the long standing opportunities to be of service is to be a Central Committee Representative. This group discusses policy, practices, guards against exploitation or commercialization and insures our humility as groups and individuals.

Another service to the AA community, not only in Northeast Ohio but across the country, is to contribute to the Central Bulletin. The Central Bulletin is the oldest AA newspaper in existence and will begin its 50th year in October. There are a number of ways to contribute, one is to share your experience, strength and hope through an

(Continued)

article, or to edit the newspaper. At present, we are looking for someone to be the editor. This newspaper enjoys a broad circulation and is "swapped" with other Central Off ices.

If you prefer a "one on one" type of service, a temporary contact is often needed for "bridging the gap" between treatment centers and Alcoholic Anonymous, or between Correctional Facilities and Alcoholics Anonymous. We have two new pamphlets dealing with both of these areas. We get many letters requesting contacts in the Cleveland area through correspondence, visitation or sponsorship.

Of course the finale for service to this office has been the extremely successful fund drive. This could not have happened if The Fund Drive Committee, Captains and Collectors had not devoted their service to the financial cause of the Central Office. I would be remiss if I did not thank the AA Community as a whole and each member and group who participated. You really do make a great difference. Thanks to each and every person who gave their time, energy and funds to make this year **successful**. Together, we can do for ourselves what we could not do alone.

I have the opportunity to read and hear about other intergroup offices, and cannot be grateful enough for the fellowship here in Northeast Ohio. The Cleveland District Office is indeed one of the most fortunate and best served Intergroups in the AA Fellowship.

Shirley H.

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#### letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Many A.A. members who attend the meetings in my area object to a person introducing themselves as an "alcoholic/addict." These same persons often claim that "we are not supposed to talk about drugs at an A.A. meeting? More often than not I refrain from talking about my other drug use in an effort to minimize controversy. There are times however, that I need to talk about these issues. I believe they are simply part of my alcoholism and appropriate to discuss at meetings. We talk about many things at meetings that are a part of our alcoholism but people don't generally attack these other issues and say "Please limit your comments to alcohol!" I have at times felt rejected at meetings and have seen other very respectable members of A.A. "bad-mouthed" for mentioning other drugs.

I am very grateful for the people who do not take this view and continue to be supportive.

My purpose for writing is not just to complain, but also to ask a question. Our Big Book contains a story titled "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict!" This personal story contains possibly the most graphic material related to other drug abuse that I have ever heard or read in A.A. I wonder if I were to read this story at a meeting and commented on it relating my own experiences, would I be told "you can't talk about drugs in A.A.?"

My question is how can a person say to not talk about

drugs in A.A. when even our very first A.A. members shared their other drug addictions? I continue to be amazed at how we selectively decide what we will and will not use out of the Big Book.

I would appreciate any constructive input readers have on this issue.

Sincerely,

Denny N. Cleveland, OH

Rather than replying to this ourselves, we thought that we'd let our readers respond. Any thoughts about this? We await your letters.

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## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event.

### Cleveland Wednesday V. A. Discussion 7th Anniversary

Saturday, September 14 1991

Doors open 2:00 p.m., Food 3:00 p.m.

Lead 4:00 p.m.

Speaker, Bob B.

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## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of this deceased member of our fellowship:

**Sharon Rivers**, 1 year member of the First Step Recovery Group, died of cancer on July 17th

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

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## Making Amends to Those Who Are Deceased

Occasionally, people that I sponsor, when they are ready for the Eighth and Ninth Steps, say to me, "How do you make amends to people who are dead? How I wish I was able to do that while they were still living!" This is the suggestion that I offer to them:

Take a pencil and a piece of paper. Find a quiet place where you can be alone. Begin writing to that person with the feeling that they, somehow, know that you are writing to them. In writing, ask that person to forgive you, that you forgive them. Also that you love them **NOW**. (Never mind the past resentments or hatred) Write down anything that's on your mind - things that you, for years, cast aside - feelings that you kept to yourself. Write down what you are trying to do in the program to change yourself. When you have finished, sign your name to the letter. Then, throw the letter away with the idea that you are "mailing" it.

Now you are free of guilt and shame! Thank God that you now Him better. This is a spiritual act of love.

Chuck B., Euclid Friday Group

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**Harry D.** Founder and Editor 18924968

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
 ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 3, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

your group may be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold our—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P. Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
 Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
 Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.  
 To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.  
 To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.  
 To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE.**

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**August 6, 1991**

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions.

The roll call showed that 57 members were present, representing 41 groups.

Minutes of the July meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Central Committee Financial Report:** see below.

**Central Bulletin Account:** see below.

**Action Committee:** Nothing to report.

**Central Bulletin:** There will be a letter in a future issue asking for contributions from groups to cover the cost of free issues currently sent to groups. The **Central Bulletin** begins its 50th year of publishing in October. It is the oldest publication in the A.A. fellowship.

**Treatment Facilities:** St. John's Westshore-Serenity Hall: does not have a waiting list-assessment necessary only if a person is unsure whether they have a problem. St. Alexis: now has a Detox Program; requires attendance at meetings held at St Alexis while in Detox; Looking for A.A. members to help patients get to meetings outside of the unit; will accept indigents as long as funds are available

**OLD BUSINESS:** None to report.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Groups sanctioned to be added to the meeting schedule were:

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Keep It Simple Thursday</b><br>Thursday 7:30 p.m.<br>900 Worden Road<br>Wickliffe Civic Center (WO) | <b>Burton Responsible</b><br>Tuesday 8:30 p.m.<br>14458 West Park<br>Burton Congregational Church                         | <b>Courage To Change (AMED)</b><br>Tuesday 5:30 p.m.<br>1635 Lee Road<br>Club 24, Cleveland Heights  |
| <b>Westside Group</b><br>Monday 7:30 p.m.<br>Westside YMCA<br>3200 Franklin<br>Cleveland               | <b>Beachwood Noon 12 &amp; 12</b><br>Friday 12:00 noon<br>22111 Chagrin Blvd.<br>Trinity Presbyterian Church<br>Beachwood | <b>Richmond Friday</b><br>Friday 8:00 p.m.<br>140 Richmond Road<br>St. Felicitas<br>Richmond Heights |
|  |   | <b>Celebrate Sobriety</b><br>Monday 8:30 p.m.<br>1635 Lee Road<br>Club 24<br>Cleveland Heights       |

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** There will be a 3rd legacy meeting September 15th at 2:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church, Mantua 68 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru July 1991.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

|   |                          |  |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Central Committee Financial Report</b>         | July 1991                | <b>Central Bulletin Financial Report</b> | July 1991                |
| <b>BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD</b>                    | \$2,242.58               | <b>BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD</b>           | \$20443                  |
| Sale of Literature - <b>WHOME &amp; 15 POINTS</b> | 650.40                   | Total Deposits                           | \$704.00                 |
| Rent for 7-2-91 Meeting                           | \$25.00                  | Printing-July Central Bulletin           | \$233.03                 |
| Bank Service Charge                               | \$1.72                   | Mailing -July Central Bulletin           | \$58.16 (291.19) (41281) |
| Printing- WHO ME & 15 POINTS                      | 391.54                   | <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                       | \$617.24                 |
| Transfer of Funds - Central Bulletin              | 500.00 (918.26) (267.86) |  |                          |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                                | \$1,974.72               |  |                          |



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY CENTRAL BULLETIN BEGINNING ITS 50TH YEAR

*Service gladly rendered, obligations  
squarely met, troubles well accepted or  
solved with God's help, the  
knowledge that at home or in the world  
outside we are partners in a common  
effort, the fact that in God's sight all  
human beings are important, the proof  
that love freely given brings a full  
return, the certainty that we are no longer  
isolated and alone in self-constructed  
prisons, the surety that we can fit and  
belong in God's scheme of things — these  
are the satisfactions of right living  
for ~~wititc nwpompan&~~circumstance, no  
heap of material possessions, could  
possibly be substitutes.*

*Bill W.*

## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 **days** prior to the event.

### Chrysler Twinsburg - 28th Anniversary

Thursday, October 3 1991

Chrysler Union Hall

8650 Chamberlain Rd., Twinsburg

Open 6:30 - Food 7:00 - Lead 8:30 p.m.

Lead: Caz P., Lodi Sunday Big Book Study

Covered dishes are welcome - Bring table service

### Calvary - 24th Anniversary

Sunday, October 6, 1991

St. Philip Neri Church

8215 St Clair Ave.

Open 2:00 - Food 3:00 - Lead 4:00 p.m.

Lead: Sandy D., Columbus, Ohio

Covered dishes are welcome

### Windermere Sunday - 9th Anniversary

Sunday, October 20, 1991

Windermere United Methodist Church

14035 Euclid Avenue, East Cleveland

Open 5:00 - Food 6:00 - Lead 7:00 p.m.

Lead: Al H.

Covered dishes are welcome

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of this deceased member of our fellowship:

**James H. Frey**, 12 year member, passed away August 21st.

**THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE**

## We've Gone to "L"

Look at our cover page. We're now on Volume L-No. 1, the first issue of our 50th year of publication. We also have a new look on our masthead. The old one had degraded (gotten fuzzy) plus we needed to add the registered mark to our circle-triangle trademark. We got a high resolution copy of the trademark thanks to Susan U. at our General Service Office in New York.

The Central Bulletin is the oldest publication in A.A. It's more than a year older than the A.A. Grapevine. It was started in October 1942 by a printer named Harry D. as a way to keep in touch with the "boys" in the camps during World War II.

The Central Bulletin wants and needs your support: your personal subscriptions, your group subscription, your gift subscriptions, and your submissions (articles, anniversaries, letters, etc.). We can only print that which is fed to us. We are what we "eat"!

Our current editorial policy is that we don't have much policy. We print any thing pertinent to Alcoholics Anonymous, not just recovery items, but unity and service items as well. We'll even print an *occasional* poem. We welcome your input.

## HELP WANTED - EDITOR

Work with the Central Committee and the District Office in publishing the Central Bulletin. (The oldest publication in the program of A.A.). Takes only a few hours each month. Must supply own suit of armor & pencil. No money, but the payback is great.

Come to the Central Bulletin meeting - one hour before the next Central Committee meeting at the same location.

## Sobriety Works

I had not seen my son Danny for over 26 years. After he had had a terrible car accident, his doctor told him to go see his father. The last time he saw me I was a lousy drunk and a lousy parent and had been divorced from his mother.

He came here and I met with him. He told me of his fear of seeing me, but he had come anyway. He met his half brother, Marty, for the first time. It was great!

A.A. works if you work at it.

Joe T.

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***You are invited to your  
Regional Forum***

**E. Central Regional Forum  
(Ohio, Ind., ILL., Mich., Wisc.)**

**October 11-13, 1991**

**Holiday Inn Columbus East I-70  
4650 Hilton Corporate Drive  
Columbus, OH**

**reg. (no fee) begins 2 pm Friday**

Representatives of the General Service Office will share experiences, respond to questions, and hear suggestions. It will be a participation weekend for all concerned.

## It's Your Turn

As I sit back and I think to when I was a newcomer in the hands of a group of strangers. These strangers took me under their wings as if they had known me all their lives. Not only did they listen to my perils but they genuinely cared about my well being. They listened to me for some time without interruption, I felt good that they were there but still I felt as if nobody could possibly know how I had felt. These strangers welcomed me into their homes and called me on the phone just to talk. They started showing

(Continued)

up at my house in the evenings and would take me all over the area for different meetings. I wasn't sure how to feel about all this but they just told me that they are only doing for me what was done for them. The more I opened up, the more I realized that these people had something that I wanted. I thought for a while (probably 3 months) and decided that I should try and do something in return for them. I called up one of the gentlemen that had been running me around and offered to pick him up for a meeting that evening. He told me that he had to pick up another fellow and would swing by to pick me up also.

After the meeting this night, I offered to give this man money for gas for picking me up all these months. He looked at me and said "you have helped me more than I have helped you and by just riding with me is payment enough." The next night came around and I called him up and offered to pick him up again. Once more he declined and came around with this other guy and picked me up and took us to a meeting. This went on for several months and finally I asked please could I do something for him.

This time he told me something that seemed to put this whole program in its place, and make sense. He told me to pick this man up and start taking him to meetings with me, you see now it was my turn to do for someone what had been so patiently done for me. I started to pick this young man up for meetings and calling him on the telephone. He started to tell me about his problems and that he felt as though nobody could understand him. I invited him into my home and told him my story, he felt like I understood him, he felt like I did when. I realized I didn't have to go through this thing alone.

Now he wants to pick me up for meetings and give me money for gas. I just smiled and said "don't worry you help me more than I help you, and your turn will come if you just leave it to GOD!"

Marc L., LaGrange, OH

P.S. Thank GOD for homegroups!

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## The Good is the Greatest Enemy of the Best (an example)

During the first fifteen years of my sobriety the symptom of my illness (alcoholism) was successfully treated. But the root of my trouble, self-centeredness, often ran riot.

I would generally depart for a two-hour speaker meeting with more enthusiasm than I had for reading what the founder's wrote about our program. I hardly had any time for that.

For years I read a "religious" book from Hazelton assuming that it presented the A.A. program of recovery. I read it thirty times more often than anything bearing a triangle surrounded by a circle (the symbol for conference approved literature). It may have been enriching, but it did not treat my self-centeredness with a step-by-step program of action.

I coasted, resting on my laurels, and chattered in the fellowship becoming living proof that the good is often the greatest enemy of the best-for I had been two-stepping.

Years passed gleefully, and when temptation won, I violated my marriage vows for two years. Its disclosure to my wife developed in her such a powerful resentment, from which she sought a sense of ease and comfort, that she came to A.A. a year later.

I did not want to redouble my spiritual efforts, and we pursued it together with beginner's enthusiasm. We got sponsors, met with them, read some and attended meetings daily. We had started to do what I had always done and so we were getting what I had always gotten--watered down A.A.--which is mainly good for two-stepping.

Eventually some tapes, seminars and new study groups which brought the unique message of the triangle and circle challenged our lives. We dropped the speaker meetings and joined study groups learning the contents of the *Big Book*, *Twelve/Twelve*, *AA Comes of Age*, *Language of the Heart*, *As Bill Sees It*, and *Daily Reflections*. As a result we have undertaken what "the process requires" and now work the steps. One hour spent at home in the morning on the tenth and eleventh steps, rather than attending a speaker meeting that night, better prepares us to practice the twelfth step at two weekly study meetings and in our other affairs.

The main difference in my recovery between the first fifteen years and the last three years was to get me to intensely learn and do the steps rather than lightly chatter about them. Thus, the "main purpose" of the book resulted, which is to develop a new attitude and relationship with my creator and place me where I can be of maximum helpfulness to others.

That is what has made me ready for and brought me back to the "religious" encouragement to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and my neighbor as myself. Although I have been slow to see where religious people are right, I am starting to make use of what they offer

Anonymous, Cleveland

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## A Potpourri Of Opinions

(In September of 1990, 82 representatives of A.A. Central Offices, Intergroups, Area General Service, the A.A.W.S. and the General Service Board and Office met in Newark, NJ for the 5th A.A.W.S./Intergroups/Central Offices seminar. The following are excerpts from minutes of that seminar.)

"We have a body of experience to share. . . the spirit and cooperation with General Services and Intergroups is long overdue." Harols Greene, Chairman A.A.W.S.

"I believe the Fellowship has become mature enough and responsible enough to realize that Intergroups and Central Offices are an essential part of A.A.; that General Service is an essential part of A.A.; and that each individual and individual group is an essential part of A.A.. . . The best way to maintain our unity (is) open and honest communication!" Carol C., delegate, Northern NJ

"(Re:) the Central Service Conference Committee on In-  
(Continued)



tergroups. . . we have to stop talking about 'them' and 'us'. Maybe we don't have one answer; there may be a combination of answers; let's put suggestions together and try to solve the problem."

Harold S., manager, Central Florida Intergroup Services

"I am concerned about the singleness of purpose. The problem I see is that we have G.S.O., Intergroups, A.A. groups and young people all in segments, and we seem to be going in different directions. . . Area assemblies, business meetings and the home group is where you go to get the job done. . . Each of us is a part of the problem:"

Jimmy G., delegate, North Florida

"Money matters a lot when you are running a business. Like all small businesses, we have obligations. . . to the A.A. groups. . . to run our office in a business like fashion-to our employees. To meet the obligations we need a **stable** source of income."

Joe L., director, New York Intergroup Association,  
New York City

"In the early days of A.A. in Hawaii there were very few Hawaiian, Oriental or Black members. When I began in A.A. in 1958, alcoholism was considered a "haole" (white) man's disease. . . Now there are Hawaiian and Pacific Island members, etc."

Al W., manager, Honolulu Central Office

"Maryland's experience since 1978 with court slips has run from early euphoria to concern, frustration, **dissen**-tion, and finally, to general realization our survival was threatened. . . bitter debate about whether signing court slips violated Traditions 6 and 10. . . Problems groups were experiencing (due to the influx of court slip carriers) included severe crowding, fire laws, violations, disruptive noise, meeting purpose lost, little or no regard for anonymity, ministers distressed by chaos, damage, theft of church property, group evictions reported in newspapers, an exodus of oldtimers, disintegration of A.A. unity, et al. . . The pain and chaos has brought broader awareness of how groups, districts and areas function. . . deeper appreciation of the group conscience process and greater awareness of the purpose and meaning of the Twelve Concepts."

Susan K., executive secretary, Baltimore Intergroup

"From experience in our Central Office, I've noticed we seem not yet ready to exhibit a sense of unity between Intergroup and Area Central Service. There actually seems to be an attitude of competition rather than cooperation. . . Could cooperation through loving communication be helpful?"

Gene K., office manager, Tucson Area Intergroup

"I think we, at all levels, are overly concerned with what 'outsiders' think of us and spend too little time and energy explaining things to others **inside** the Fellowship. . . Carl Sandburg wrote: 'Whenever a society or civilization perishes, there is always one condition present. They forgot where they came from.' Our job is to remember our history and its relevancy to our lives today, and to express this relevancy in terms of our Traditions as principles for A.A. unity and survival. . . The Washington movement of the mid-1800s grew to a reported 600,000

in a decade. . . The Oxford Group, to which both Bill and Bob were drawn in the early '30s, filled the Hollywood Bowl (27,000) with 10,000 standing outside, in 1933! Whoever hears about them today except perhaps A.A. members and readers of A.A. Comes of Age? Our Traditions are the best assurance against our extinction."

Frank M., archivist, General Service Office, NYC.  
from *Hello* Central, Los Angeles

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Congratulations, ICYPAA Bid Committee !

A group of young (at heart) Clevelanders attended the International Conference of Young People in A.A. (ICYPAA) in San Francisco last month and presented a successful bid to bring this conference to Cleveland next year. It will convene downtown on August 28-30, 1992.

☆

Now the work begins. The first planning meeting for this conference will be held Sunday, October 6th, 5:00 pm at Stella Maris Detox Center, 1320 Washington Avenue. All A.A. members that are willing to help with this conference are invited to attend--regardless of age.

We particularly need folks with prior experience setting up conferences. See you there!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Freedom To Choose

Looking back we see that our freedom to choose badly was not, after all, a very real freedom.

When we choose because we "must," this was not a free choice either. But it got us started in the right direction.

When we chose because we "ought to:" we were really doing better. This time we were earning some freedom, making ourselves ready for more.

But when, now and then, we could gladly make right choices without rebellion, hold-out, or conflict, then we had our first view of what perfect freedom under God's will could be like.

from *As Bill Sees It*



Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387  
 Harry D., Founder and Editor 18924968

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
 ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 1, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

your group may be *represented* by you or a member assigned to *be* your group representative. Let us take an *active* part in these *important* meetings to *uphold* our—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
 Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
 Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.

To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.

To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.

To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**September 3, 1991**

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened by Moderator, James P., leading members present in the Serenity Prayer. Vice Moderator, Gerard P. read the Purpose of the Central Committee and the Twelve Traditions.

The roll call showed that 46 members were present, representing 35 groups.

Minutes of the August meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Central Committee Financial Report:** see below.

**Central Bulletin Account:** see below.

**Action Committee:** Nothing to report.

**Central Bulletin:** There will be an editors' meeting at 7:00 p.m. October 1st, prior to the regular meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The Gay/Lesbian group (Celebrate Sobriety), blessed in August, came to have the word bisexual added after the meeting name.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Groups sanctioned to be added to the meeting schedule were:

|                              |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Friday Alternative</b>    | <b>Spanish Women's Group</b> | <b>Outhwaite Saturday</b> |
| Friday 8:00 p.m. Non-smoking | Friday 1:30 p.m. C.W.        | Saturday 2:00 p.m.        |
| Christ Redeemer Lutheran     | San Juan Bautista            | Lonnie Burton Center      |
| 9201 Brecksville Road        | 1948 W. 32nd St.             | 2511 E. 46th St.          |

The 35th ICYPAA will be held at the Cleveland Sheraton/Marriot Hotels the weekend of August 27-30, 1992. There will be meetings for elections of Committee members and planning • starting Sunday, October 6 at 5:00 p.m. Thereafter meetings will be the 1st and 3rd Sunday at Stella Maris.

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** The East Central Regional Forum will be held October 11-13 in Columbus. There is a 3rd Legacy meeting October 20th at 2:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church, Mantua

69 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru August 1991.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

|   |         |                    |  |                  |                    |
|---|---------|--------------------|--|------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Central Committee Financial Report</b> |         | <b>August 1991</b> | <b>Central Bulletin Financial Report</b> |                  | <b>August 1991</b> |
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                   |         | \$1,974.72         | BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                  |                  | \$617.24           |
| Rent for 8-6-91 Meeting                   | \$25.00 |                    | Total Deposits                           | \$125.00         |                    |
| Bank Service Charge                       | \$4.67  | (29.67)            | Printing-August <i>Central Bulletin</i>  | \$236.02         |                    |
| NEW BALANCE                               |         | \$1,945.05         | Mailing • August <i>Central Bulletin</i> | \$56.94 (292.96) | (167.96)           |
|   |         |                    | NEW BALANCE                              |                  | \$449.28           |



## The Power of Prayer

A few weeks ago, I heard a friend speak at a meeting. One of the things he said was that the reason he got sober and found AA was that someone's prayers were answered. He said it might have been his parents' prayers, his wife's prayers, or the prayers of AA members praying for the still suffering alcoholic, but when he got sober it was because someone had prayed for him.

You know, I've heard it suggested many times, that we pray for the still suffering alcoholic, but I never thought about the fact that some drunk somewhere that I don't even know and may never see, might get sober as a result of that prayer.

Somewhere I saw a sticker on the dashboard of a car that said "Prayer Changes Things": Lately, I have come to believe more than ever that this is true. Prayer started changing things in my life before I came to believe there was a God out there listening to my prayers. AA members told me to pray even though I didn't believe in God. That if I faked it maybe something would happen. I didn't believe anything would happen but I wanted to stay sober so I tried it and after awhile something happened.

Since those early days in my sobriety, I have seen the results of prayer many times. I have come to realize that people's prayers, both those who are praying specifically for me and those who were just praying for any alcoholic who was still suffering, worked to change my life.

I realize that God worked in my life without my permission and even without my knowledge and without that help I would not have lived long enough to find my way into AA. I say that God worked in my life without my permission because when I was drinking if I had known God was there I wouldn't have wanted His help.

I have seen many wonderful things happen since then. I have seen people come through doors so sick I wouldn't have thought they could be saved if I didn't have faith in the

power of prayer. AA has taught me that anyone can be helped who has the problem of alcoholism if they have the capacity to be honest with themselves. Many who don't appear to have that capacity develop it as the fog lifts and they realize there is no other way. I believe that our prayers can carry them until they can stand on their own.

For me prayer takes many forms. It can vary from specific prayer such as the

Serenity Prayer or the Lord's Prayer, to just trying to find a way into the presence of God. Sometimes I ask God for help for certain people or for myself and sometimes I just take those people or those problems into God's presence and let Him do what He thinks is best.

My friend also said in that AA talk that God always gives one of three answers: "Yes", "No": or "Later"! Sometimes the hardest part can be accepting the answer.

*Rob W., Akron Intergroup News, August, 1991*

*"Ask Him in your  
morning meditation  
what you can do  
each day for the  
man who is still  
sick"*

*Alcoholics Anonymous, pg. 164*

## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 days prior to the event.

### No Anniversary's Reported

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

**Larry Linnert**, Secretary, Auburn Sobriety, passed away September 7, 1991.

**John Pancost**, 40 year member Bedford Wednesday, passed away September 26, 1991.

**Joseph Roth**, 13 year member of Brookpark 1250, passed away on October 7, 1991.

**Bob Westropp**, long-time member of several westside groups, passed away September 14, 1991.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

## Central Office Report

I attended a seminar/workshop for all Central Office District Secretaries or Office Managers in Memphis, TN on September 27, 28 and 29. I am pleased to report that the Cleveland District Office is one of the most well established, well run, and fiscally responsible offices compared to those attending from all over the United States and Canada. I was so grateful to have been a member from this area.

These Central Office seminars are to be held on an annual basis to foster through an exchange of ideas and experiences greater unity among AA members, groups, areas regions and service boards; and to provide an opportunity for Central Office Managers to discuss relevant AA and office operation issues. This is the 6th Central Office workshop, however, it was the first time Cleveland had been represented. It was originally set up by AA World Services and the General Service Office, but now the management and responsibility for its continuation has been turned over to a committee of eight Central Office Managers. There is one Central Office Manager from each of the eight GSO regions, our representative is Paul from the Detroit office. The Ad Hoc Committee that suggested this managing body presented a set of guidelines for consideration, which they will study and make recommendations to present to the next seminar for approval.

I would like to thank the founders of the Cleveland District Office for their wisdom and responsibility to themselves and the fellowship. I would like to thank all the Operating Committees throughout the years and most of all, the fellowship groups for electing responsible people to represent them. I discovered that many of the Central Offices had very inadequate guidance; they had popularity factions that put people in charge of finances, management and other areas who did not have the background or expertise to be making those decisions. Then it became a matter of self-will run riot, and that allowed egos to run rampant, and all sound business practices

were put aside. It appeared that when the self-will run riot approach was sown in the daily office procedures, that's exactly what it reaped. Those offices, such as ours, that applied the AA principles to the daily office activities and relied upon the program and each other to make these types of decisions seemed to be the healthiest and most prosperous. It also helped to have those people who were members of the business community too. We still have room to grow and need some improvement, so this weekend allowed me to find out how other groups handle some of the unpleasant situations that we occasionally encounter. I have asked them to send me information and ideas they use on the situation of signing court slips and how to handle those kinds of meetings so that everyone can get the most out of it. Again, thanks to all in the Cleveland area for making our AA one of the greatest services to the suffering alcoholic.

Shirley H.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Gratitude Sunday

November 17, 1991 2:00-4:30 pm

Geneva Civic Center

72 W. Main St..(Rt. 20), Geneva, OH

park in back

(Program: to be announced)

Please bring a covered dish to share!

*Sponsored by Northeast Ohio General Service*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Editorial – What's the Harm?

A while ago I made an announcement of an upcoming A.A. conference at a meeting. Another member announced a clam bake to be held by a treatment facility. A third member announced a dance at a club. Finally, the secretary announced an event by the Regional Council on Alcoholism. An oldtimer, sitting next to me, asked me how I felt about this final announcement. I told him that I felt the same way about it as I did about the two preceding it.

Our delegate, Bert, recently told a small group of us this story. He was at a meeting where a man announced that this was his first A.A. meeting. Bert went up to him to offer his phone number and a few words of encouragement. He had to wait, however, while the guy in front of him tried to sell this newcomer a raffle ticket to help buy uniforms for his "A.A." softball league.

Members attending our last Central Committee learned that a couple members needed financial support for  
(Continued)

training classes in the codependent organization they also attend. They threw a dance as a fund raiser. Their friends announced this at many west side A.A. meetings. Some group members protested, but they did it anyway. The week after the dance the Central Office got a call from the manager of the apartment across the street complaining about this "A.A. dance." It seems that there was inadequate parking at the dance hall; therefore, many attenders parked in the apartment lot across the street. Some of those folks sat in their cars drinking beer. Of course if your problem is codependence, drinking beer is okay.

Since November is traditions month, let's look at Tradition 5: "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise. . . ." We draw no distinction between related facilities and outside enterprises. Clubs, treatment facilities, softball leagues, etc. are all fine things that some of us care about. Many of us have recovered with and without them.

What's the harm? The harm is that, at the very least, we are diluting our program. I found it hard to get drunk on 3.2% beer. I find it hard to get sober on 3.2% A.A. At worst, we're confusing and alienating newcomers and outsiders. One newcomer thinks we sponsor softball. Everyone who lives in that apartment building now thinks that A.A. members steal other peoples parking places and drink beer in cars.

Enough of my words! Here's Bill W.:

" . . . we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity. An A.A. group, as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world."

"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."

The full text of this article, titled "Problems other than Alcohol!! will appear in the November issue of The **AA Grapevine**, our international monthly journal. Don't get the 'vine? Can't afford the \$12.00 for a years subscription? Maybe you ought to skip a dance?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

This is in response to the letter from Denny N., who describes himself as an alcoholic/addict.

The drug issue is a controversial one in our fellowship. On one end there are those who loudly decry any mention of drugs; on the other, those that think drugs **should** be discussed and then there are those in the middle who either have mixed feelings or are indifferent

Personnaly, I think there is room for talk of drugs in A.A. as long as it doesn't become the main focus.

I came of age in the late sixties when drugs proliferated. Though my drug of choice was alcohol, I experimented,

sometimes heavily, with other mind-altering substances. I mention this in my lead, stressing that alcohol was my primary addiction and that anyone wishing to discuss drugs should see me after the meeting. I **say** this so that anyone at the meeting who has had experiences with drugs might better relate to my story.

Then there are people in the fellowship who are dually addicted, definitely alcoholic but addicted to another substance besides. When they lead they may say that they are also addicted to cocaine or heroin, whatever. Their stories would be incomplete without at least mentioning their other addiction. More importantly, they will be reaching some listeners in the audience who are in the same boat and need to know they aren't alone.

We certainly don't want Alcoholics Anonymous to become a drug forum but neither should any reference to drugs be considered taboo. The subject should be treated with tolerance and discretion on both sides.

*lack P.*

## The Best Kept Secret in Northeast Ohio

*shouldn't be Alcoholics Anonymous*

Send a group representative (or be your group's representative) to:

Northeast Ohio General Service

Public Information Committee

Saturday, December 7, 1991 3:00 pm

**12** Step Recovery Club

Brunswick Plaza, 1480 Pearl Road

(Rt. 42, 1/4 mile South of Rt. 303)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Life Beyond A.A. As It Relates to A.A.

I have been in A.A. for a few 24 hours now. Notice I did not say I had been around A.A. What seems to bother me more and more is that relapse/slip has become a household word. My first reaction is that there have been too many people trying to get sober too soon. The amount of slips in this day makes me believe that many many individuals are not hitting their bottom when they enter A.A. I sure don't want to kick someone out of A.A. I also want to keep in mind and adhere to the principles of: the only requirement for membership is the desire to stay sober! I love and **support** and am all for the lack of **anonymity** that seems to be running rampant throughout the

*(Continued)*

Cleveland and even Ohio area. But it is causing it to **appear** to be chic to be sober. Young people getting sober is great. I have some beautiful friends that got sober at a very young age and now have 8-10 years. I personally think that I was too young when I entered Alcoholics Anonymous. I was fast approaching 23 years or a pine box. I am happy to be sober. The Twelve Steps just are wonderful. I have this disease of Alcoholism and I know what's out there for me if I think for a moment that I can pick up a drink, **JUST ONE!**

I stand before you today a defeated social drinker.

Getting back to the subject, I would be willing to bet that the relapse rate in the 70's & 80's is double that of the rate of the **50's & 60's**. That's probably blatenly obvious but it is still sad. I was around A.A. for 3 months and thats all I was **AROUND** A.A. not in it. When I got here the second time, I still did not want to be here. I thought A.A. was like chemotherapy. You came for 6 months or 2 years and then you could drink. I remember saying to myself that I was going to get more involved (scared stiff to but I was willing). God must have wanted me here because he kept me here. This next statement is not intended to offend people, but it is food for thought. Relapse/slip is NOT OK, but acceptable, at 5 years, 8 years or 15 plus years of sobriety. There are people who have been around A.A. for 5 plus years and can't stay sober for 6 months. **THIS IS BOGUS**. There are some people just starting into A.A. and will end up in "CANT GET SOBER/CAN'T GET **DRUNK**"club. Something must be done! It is up to us! Don't drink Go to meetings!

*Glenn D., Lakewood Mens*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### The Twelfth Tradition - It Works

Once upon a time, in an isolated location in the United States, there existed a group of Alcoholics Anonymous known as the "YESTERDAY'S **SKIDS CROUP!**" For ten years, it had conducted meetings every Wednesday evening in the utility annex of the Aching Arms Hotel in the village of Grimy Gulch. Most of the members had five years or less of continuous sobriety; however two members, Jack S. and Pat U., had much more. Because of their "seniority": their opinions were accepted by everyone with little opposition. This, then, was the status quo until a crisis almost caused dissolution of the group.

One Wednesday evening, a few minutes before the meeting was called to order, a message from the management of the hotel was brought to the attention of the secretary. The group was notified that this meeting space would no longer be available; however, the space could be used on Monday or Tuesday evenings, whichever the group chose. Immediately Jack S. announced that political activities to which he was committed would prevent his **attendance** on Mondays. On the other hand, Pat U. let it be known that she was a volunteer counselor on Tuesdays, and did not feel that she should give up this obligation. All other members docilely lined up with

the long-timer of their choice, and now an impasse was created.

Suddenly, one of the newer members proposed a seemingly brilliant, yet astonishingly simple solution: Let the members vote on the matter by secret ballot to decide the issue. After all present had recovered from **intellectual** shock, the proposal was accepted. The result was that the evening chosen just happened (?) to serve the best interests of the group.

What occurred here was: a **principle** had guided the group's decision, not a popularity contest between two personalities. Because no one person influenced the outcome more than any other person, no names became a part of the discussion, therefore anonymity had prevailed. The final outcome served the greatest good for the greatest number. As the late Howard **Benhoff** was fond of saying; "It does not matter **who is right**: what does matter is **what is right**."

*John T. B., North Olmsted*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Traditions . . Or . . Don't Ask Why

Traditions are the teachings and experiences of a culture . . of people who have come before us and have learned a way of life that was more fulfilling to them from the Hebrew culture of over five thousand years ago. We were given the Ten Commandments as a way to life in harmony with our fellow man. They gave us the concept of one God. That a Higher Power was necessary in our lives to have mental health and thou shalt not steal!! . . AA changed the language to: **GET HONEST**

From Christianity of several thousand years ago we were taught that to have a joyous and free life, we must share. We must care. We must love one another. We are to give and not expect in return if we are to gain serenity. Our AA founders borrowed on these traditions of the past to give us the Twelve Steps and the **Big Book**. And, of course, we **AAs** have our own book of traditions which teaches us how those who came before us dealt with alcoholic problems. I am told that we borrowed from Buddhism with the concept of balance in one's life expressed in the Serenity Prayer. And the belief of living: One Day At A Time...

We do not know why!! . . why these concepts have worked over the years we only know when a person takes the fourth and fifth step, an inventory based on moral principles and telling one other person the nature of our moral wrongs that "we dump our guilt"! Christianity calls it confession or being born again. Whatever! We don't know why!! We just know it works!!

In Alcoholics Anonymous we use mainly oral **traditions**..The passing on of truths by word of **mouth**..Passing on the message from experienced AA to the newcomer. One would think the truths would get lost. But they don't..Don't ask why! AA works.

*Ralph W., Nite and Day, Ann Arbor "Y" Groups*



**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 5, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

your group may be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold our—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

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Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

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To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

October 1, 1991

ST MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The roll call showed that 42 members were present, representing 33 groups.  
Minutes of the September meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Central Bulletin:** There will be an editors' meeting before the December 3rd meeting. At this time we're looking for prospective editors. Contact the office if you have an interest in editing the Bulletin.

**Treatment Facilities:** St Alexis and Marymount hospitals have open beds at their DETOX centers.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Having had a non-member of A.A. appear to have a group blessed, our moderator talked with the Central Office about policies for A.A. groups to get confirmed.

**NEW BUSINESS:** When flyers for activities not sponsored by A.A. groups are at meetings, there are tradition breaks. Consult your group as to what your group conscience will allow.

**New groups:** Groups sanctioned to be added to the meeting schedule were:

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>The Best Is Yet To Come</b><br>Wednesday 2:00 p.m.<br>Forest Hills Nursing Home<br>Cleveland | <b>Fulton Road</b><br>Wednesday 7:30 p.m.<br>Bethel Freewill Baptist Church<br>3354 Fulton Road | <b>Top Of The Hill Group</b><br>Tuesday 2:00 p.m.<br>20571 Southgate Park Blvd.<br>Maple Heights |
| <b>Back To Reality</b><br>Thursday 8:30 p.m.<br>Marymount Hospital<br>Garfield Heights          | <b>Beeper Bunch</b><br>Tuesday 12:00 p.m.<br>University Hospital<br>2074 Abington Road          | <b>Good Orderly Direction</b><br>Sunday 7:00 p.m. CW<br>St. Mary Seminar<br>1227 Ansel Road      |
|   |   | <b>Nothing like It</b><br>Saturday 11:00 a.m.<br>Drop-In Center<br>2219 Payne                    |

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** There will be a gratitude Sunday meeting on November 17th, at 2:00 p.m., to be held at the Geneva Civic Center. Would like to wish you Happy Holidays.

71 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru September 1991.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

|   |          |                   |  |          |                 |
|---|----------|-------------------|--|----------|-----------------|
| <b>Central Committee Financial Report</b> |          | September 1991    | <b>Central Bulletin Financial Report</b> |          | September 1991  |
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                   |          | \$1,945.05        | BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                  |          | \$449.28        |
| Sale of Literature • Four Absolutes       | 1,155.56 |                   | Total Deposits                           | \$243.00 |                 |
| Printing • Four Absolutes                 | 807.45   |                   | Printing • September Central Bulletin    | \$233.03 |                 |
| Rent for 9-3-91 Meeting                   | \$25.00  |                   | Mailing • September Central Bulletin     | \$55.61  | (288.64)        |
| Bank Service Charge                       | \$2.48   | (834.93)          | <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                       |          | <b>(45.64)</b>  |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                        |          | <b>\$2,265.68</b> |  |          | <b>\$403.64</b> |



When I was a practicing alcoholic, the time from Thanksgiving to Christmas was always ripe with reasons for extra drinking. There was a sense of gaiety, real or pretended, that seemed to need some festive drinking to make it complete. There are more cocktail parties, office parties, and other seasonal gatherings that give rise

to toasts, days off from work, and other camouflage for us problem drinkers. The other people in my life never seemed as surprised that I had gotten drunk on these special occasions as they did on a Tuesday in May. Naturally, I used every opportunity to its fullest, including episodes of passing out at parties, sleeping in religious ceremonies, and running up even larger than usual bar tabs.

Now, after some years of sobriety in AA, the season still has special meaning for me, but the message has changed. I am excited about the reality of the two messages of these two holidays. First, there is much for which I am thankful, and second, there is a loving Higher Power who has gone to some trouble to give me a way out of my dilemma. In the middle of my alcoholic life, I would have told you that I would be thankful for a series of happy drinking occasions to celebrate my material successes. The only message of Christmas was that those that needed it could have a belief system to comfort them.

I believe that the difference between my driven frenzy then and my quiet, bubbling joy of today is that the source of my feelings has changed. Then it came from the outside, and now it comes from the inside. I remember all those times when in the midst of a big party, I would have that empty feeling - "Is this all there is?" Now I can participate in such functions and know that what I am doing is real and it is enough, because the result is peace and quiet on the inside.

I don't want to give the impression that life doesn't still have its ups and downs. But the important difference is that the daily problems have shrunk to life size, and I no longer experience the sense of impending doom described in so many AA talks. This way of life really does work; even others can see its effects. One of these effects showed clearly when I asked my fourteen-year old daughter, who was born during my sobriety, to write down her feelings about AA. She wrote that she appreciated AA for saving her dad's life, for showing him that he couldn't manage his life, and for helping so many other people. I found out that, she prays for AA. With evidence like that, why shouldn't we find a quiet peace instead of a frantic search for something we couldn't even have described?



DC., Parker, CO, Reprinted, with permission,  
from the December, 1986 *AA Grapevine*



## GROUP ANNIVERSARY

To share your group's celebration with other members of our fellowship, send a note with time, date and special instructions 60 days prior to the event.

### Willoughby Monday N/S Group - 50th Anniversary

(Oldest Group in Lake County)  
 Monday, December 2, 1991  
 First Presbyterian Church  
 4785 Shankland Road, Willoughby, OH  
 Dinner 7:00 p.m. • Lead 8:30 p.m.

#### Totally non-smoking

Lead: Bob McC, PA - 44 years sobriety  
 Must buy tickets in advance - Cost \$5.00  
 Call Cathy R. - 944-0304

**No ticket sale at door • Limited seating**

### VA Saturday • 28th Anniversary

Saturday, December 7, 1991  
 VA Hospital -Wade Park  
 Doors open 2:00, Food 3:00, Speaker 4:00  
 Speaker: Dennis N., Charleston, NC  
 Call Donna, 541-2027

### New Way Of Life • 18th Anniversary

Sunday, December 8, 1991  
 St. Henry's Hall  
 Feiner Drive  
 Doors open 3:00 p.m.

## IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these deceased members of our fellowship:

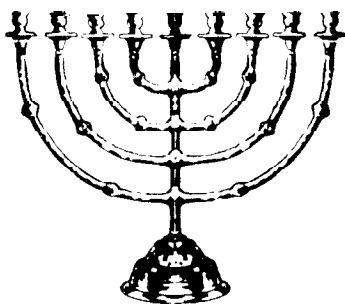
**Gil Kappelman**, 25 year member, founder of Shalom and Community Sunday groups, passed away November 7, 1991. in Palm Springs, CA

**Frank Martin**, 25 year member of Garfield Tuesday, passed away October 10, 1991.

**Edward L. Schwertner**, 20 year member of the Marshall Group, passed away October 25, 1991.

### THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

## Editorial - Participation



Hanukkah comes early this year. It's an 8-day secular (non-religious) holiday celebrating the freedom from bondage of the Jews starting 167 B.C. During Hanukkah they, per Rosten's *Joy's of Yiddish*, "light candles for

eight days - one the first evening, adding one light each night on the nine-branched menorah. A special ninth candle called the *shammes* (servant), stands taller than the rest in the menorah and is used to light the others. This is interpreted to show that one can give love and light to

others without losing any part of one's own radiance."

This reminds me of our Twelfth Step where we try "to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs." A.A. isn't a spectator sport, it's a participation activity. Indeed our Fourth Concept endows us with a "Right of Participation." Sure, at first we need "Don't Drink, go to meetings." That's where we heard "If you want what we have . . ." and started working the steps, building our foundation, so that we could begin to participate.

Our leaders are truly "trusted servants" who "do not govern." They want, need, and deserve our help.

Bob

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Editorial - Prudent Financial Management

I've been asked, "Who are you to take the inventory of the Operating Committee or the Central Office?" Let me tell you who I am! I'm a member of the Advisory Committee and, as such, that's my job. Never heard of it? Its function, as I explained at the back of our meeting schedules, is to "review the policies of the district office." Each A.A. group is entitled to send a representative (member) and is invited to do so, in writing, prior to each meeting.

Only 20 of our 800+ groups did so last October 24th. Those there learned of upcoming events and proposed changes to our meeting schedules. We also reviewed the Statement of Receipts and Expenditures.

I questioned one item on the statement - Workers' Compensation. This normally large expense had parentheses around it. This means that it was negative - that they paid us instead of us paying them. I asked what caused this. I learned that Shirley H., our Central Office Secretary/Treasurer, felt that we should be entitled to a lower risk category than that assigned to us. She appealed it. It took the State of Ohio several years to review it, but they agreed. The negative amount was a rebate of several years of the difference.

Those many of us who frequently deal with the Central Office already know that they're good stewards of the funds donated to them by our groups and us. Most often this prudence takes the form of monies not spent. Positive examples of actions taken to reduce expenses occur less frequently. I felt that more than twenty people would want to know about this one.

Bob

## I.C.Y.P.A.A.

(Int'l Conference of Young People in AA.)

Saturday, December 14, 1991

St. Christine's Church, 840 E. 222nd Street, Euclid, Ohio ( 1/4 mile North of I-90 ).

7:00 P.M. Gratitude Meeting followed by a Silent Auction and Dance.

live music provided by "East Side Blues".

## An Excerpt from *Bert's Bits*

(Our delegate's column in *The Northeast Ohio Recorder*)

There is something that has been troubling quite a few of us in the Northeast Ohio Area (and also some other Areas are troubled, or maybe concerned, about Northeast Ohio). Yep, you guessed it, our never-ending bottom slot when it comes to contributions to Central, District or Intergroup offices, G.S.O., Area and District Committees. "Gawd" you say "here we go again talking about money". No not really. Let's talk about participation. Those who are donating are doing one fine job. In one District I checked, the average that was donated just to G.S.O., and I repeat again **AVERAGE**, was \$5.00 per member per year. So this means they are carrying the load for some other Districts who have no representation or are not participating in the Fellowship. Is this fair, you say? Some people would call it freeloading and others would say that is a mild word. How can we solve this age old problem when all we hear is the portion of "there are no dues or fees for A.A. membership" and skipping the part about "we are self supporting"? I don't know. All I can share is what I have done, and that is become a "card carrying Member" and give my group credit for my donation. I inform my "Home Group" of it's responsibilities, and if I go to another Group that I know has not been participating I make some (sometimes not too subtle) hints, or question why or where the money that is being collected (in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous) is or is not going. If the Group is unaware of its' responsibilities I just happen to have some information handy to clear up any questions. When you are right you don't have to back down, but make sure you are right first; otherwise have a "tenth step" prepared. It is my hope that each member of a now participating Group or District would go to a non-participating Group or District and get them interested in participating.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## What Does A Member of AA Do?

Sounds like a silly question doesn't it? Well, I thought so too, until I looked back on what it took to stay sober after I decided I had the desire to stop drinking, which was not an overnight decision.

After quite a few false starts it became apparent that I was doing something wrong. This in itself was a spiritual awakening. Following is a list of some of the things I had to do to make me a member of AA. This is strictly my opinion and so far I am glad to say no one has told me opinions are a character defect. I thank my Higher Power because I am working on too many of them right now.

1. **Get a sponsor (Now!)**
2. **Find a "home group"**
3. **Make coffee, empty ashtrays, fold chairs**
4. **Use the telephone**
5. **Become an Intergroup Rep.**
6. **Become a (home group) treasurer**
7. **Take Institution assignments**

## 8. Sign up for Twelve Step calls

### 9. Be a General Service Rep.

### 10. Get active in your program

When I'm active I'm not thinking about a drink. Also, it is great to be able to give back some of the things that were given to me, and in this way the chain is never broken. There will always be someone there to help the new person.

After I wrote this "Call to Action:" I happened to pick up the January '87 issue of the Grapevine (I'm catching up on my reading). On page 21 were all the things I have been trying to say in the First Tradition. Look it up and see how you come out on these ten questions. (Ed. from the Traditions Checklist) If you are like me, there is still much work to be done (on me) and I am looking forward to it.

Remember, look for a Home group and get active, that's a great beginning.

Reprinted with permission from  
News from Trolley Square, May '87  
(We got it from the Akron Intergroup News, Sept. '91)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Synthesis

### THE PROBLEM

My self-centered pursuits for satisfying my instincts for Status, security and sex to the maximum  
Developed defects in my character which  
Caused me to isolate myself from God by  
Conducting myself in an unloving manner toward others which  
Stood in the way of my usefulness to God and my fellows  
This is what results from "the bondage of self."

### THE SOLUTION

Deciding to turn my shattered life and riotous will over to the  
Care of God by doing the next six steps permitted me to  
Uncover my past motives and actions in step 4, to  
Discover my past patterns of selfish behavior in Step 5, to  
Discard my old ideas as invalid guides for living in steps  
**6&7**, to  
Repair my past harms of others in steps **8&9**, which has  
made me  
Able to Love God with my spirit and Love my neighbor  
as myself.  
Anonymous, Cleveland

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## An Open Letter on Spirituality:

### I BELIEVE

After a little more than twenty years of uninterrupted sobriety, I became acquainted with the pressing need of finding my spiritual self. How does one satisfy the need for faith, such a quest appeared to be over my horizon.

When I came to Alcoholics Anonymous, I just generally accepted the Program's principles without question and  
(Continued)

was able to work the 12 Steps because I had not tried to figure them out. I've heard it said and it applies to me, "my best thinking got me here."

Early in my sobriety I settled upon the Golden Rule as a spiritual pathway of living. As recent as three years ago I began thinking that I should look further into the formally organized teachings (religion) which are freely available to anyone who would want to use them. I was brought up in a good Christian home, but my faith was one of the fatalities of my alcoholism.

I have found that in order for me to believe in something I had to have faith; I came to the realization through Step 11 that I had neither. Now I was puzzled since the Step says that we seek to **IMPROVE** our conscience contract, it meant that I had to re-establish a line of communication. God apparently likes to hear from strangers too.

My only request (prayer) was for a little amount of faith which I could build upon in order to gain a belief in self-worth and self-esteem. Along these thoughts I remembered an old Christmas Classic the Miracle on 34th Street, the analogy of the little girl saying "I believe, I believe . . ." fits me like a glove in my learning process. A small light has begun to brighten an otherwise dark room.

During my daily 'quiet time' I have learned to close the door of my room to shut out outside interferences which lets me meditate (listen) to my inner self and occasional answer and insights provided by my Higher Power.

As it says in Step 12, I must **PRACTICE** using these principles in my life. According to Webster's dictionary: a summary of principles is called a Creed and it is interesting to note that most Creeds begin with the phrase, I BELIEVE, perhaps I have begun to grow in a spiritual way of life.

Ron M., Berea

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Letter To The Editor

In response to the letter about the drug-alcohol controversy.

If you are having a problem with the first half of the first step, back up one step.

Doctors, lawyers, judges, nurses, etc. are sending anyone and everyone to A.A. only to find out A.A. is not the place for their recovery. My Big Book does not have the (Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict) story in it. (12th printing, 1971)

I am very grateful for the people who do take this view. I go to 12-14 meetings a month and if it were not for a few Alcoholic's carrying the message I may not have a program.

In "how it works" whatever happened to ▪ we deal with alcohol.

A.A. is on its way out, if not gone already. Dr. Bob would have turned over in his grave if he knew his picture and name were on TV. A.A. has added more to

the Big Book to serve more drug-related addicts and in my opinion only, by the year 2000 there will be no more A.A.

Sincerely,  
One Alcoholic to Another

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Being Supportive!! - "Get Active"

Many AA's ask me how I have stayed sober for over ten years without a slip/relapse. Of course, the stock answer is "One Day at a Time" and "Don't Drink and Go to Meetings." But there is another very important saying: "You Got to Get Active!"

AA is an action program . . . Yes, we first work and keep working the Twelve Steps. In my opinion, with the first four steps we take a look at ourselves and our past drinking history: We admit we are powerless over alcohol. That our lives became unmanageable. We accept a power greater than ourselves which means to me stop playing God and trying to control people places and things. And we take an inventory.

Then the last steps we are to get out of ourselves: tell one person the nature of our wrongs, make amends and spread the message.

### PASS IT ON!!

This is where many fail. It is only human nature to start out enthusiastically sober in the program. And after a year or two drift away from AA meetings when we are feeling good and things are better.

So, I believe to stay sober one must get involved in AA. One must make a commitment. Join a home group get active!! If you are committed to make the coffee each week you won't get sidetracked to hitting the bar instead. The saying is "Clean the ashtrays and make the coffee." One can set up and tear down a meeting. Yes, attending AA meetings regularly **Is** Twelfth Step work. Being supportive of your fellow AA. One can open a meeting. After a year sober, one can sponsor a newtimer. You can become a secretary or treasurer of a home group. You can be a lead speaker. **Go** to prisons and jail meetings. **visit** the sick AA in the hospital. God gave us all different talents. **and** one can get active in the AA organization as a GSR Rep. and District Committeeman. **I** have been and done all of the above and this is how I stayed sober. **for** over ten years. **STAYING ACTIVE.**

Ralph W.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★





**CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. MALACHI CENTER**

2416 Superior Viaduct • 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 3, 1991

**PLEASE ATTEND**

your group may be represented by you or a member assigned to be your group representative. Let us take an active part in these important meetings to uphold OUR—

**UNITY IN FELLOWSHIP**

James P., Moderator

Mark L., Secretary

Published monthly by the Cleveland Central Committee of A.A., a non-profit fellowship dedicated to service. Address all letters to Central Bulletin, 940 Rockefeller Building, 614 Superior Avenue, N.W., Cleveland, Ohio 44113. District Office (216) 241-7387

Harry D., Founder and Editor 1892-1968

**PURPOSE**

Because better understanding is the key to Friendship;  
Because the public act of any group or individual involves our entire Fellowship;  
Because we must continually take inventory of ourselves as individuals and as groups;

**The A.A. Central Committee has these purposes:**

To bring together representatives of all groups for discussions of policy and practice; to create high standards; to guard against exploitation or commercialization; to insure our humility as groups and individuals.  
To protect unity of thought and purpose through the Central Bulletin, the Area-wide Meetings, and such other activities as seem consistent.  
To maintain standards through the sponsoring of a Hospital Committee and such other committees as are necessary to carry on this work.  
To serve as a clearing house for ideas.

The **OBJECT** of the Central Committee is **SERVICE**.

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

**November 5, 1991**

ST. MALACHI'S CENTER

8:00 p.m.

The roll call showed that 38 members were present, representing 30 groups.  
Minutes of the October meeting were read and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Action Committee:** Announced new committee member, John O., from the Westside. This gives us committee members on both sides of town.

**Central Bulletin:** There is an editors' meeting every other month at 7:00 p.m. The next being December. Merry Christmas.

**Treatment Facilities:** Merrick Hall (which had become Koala Center) is now part of the Meridia System. It's named Meridia Recovery Center.

**OLD BUSINESS:** At this time the Central Office is working on a form that will help group-starters register their new meetings. Announcements being separated as A.A. and Non-A.A. will help eliminate A.A. getting a bad name.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The office is improving their computer network reliability. Glenda R. will be resigning as Treasurer soon. She will be replaced by Phil D. Thank you.

**New groups:** Groups blessed to be added to the meeting schedule were:

**Powerless Tuesday A.M.**

Tuesday 10:00 a.m.  
Salvation Army Building C/W  
69 Pearl Street  
Painesville

**Serenity Sunday B/B Study**

Sunday 5:30 p.m.  
Club 24  
1635 Lee Road  
Cleveland Heights

**Sunday P.M.**

Sunday 7:45 p.m.  
Cleveland Friends Meeting House  
10916 Magnolia Drive  
Cleveland

**N.W. Passage**

Friday 7:00 p.m.  
Lake. Office on Aging  
16022 Madison Ave.  
Lakewood

**Saturday Evening B/B**

Saturday 7:00 p.m.  
Hitchcock Center C/W  
1227 Ansel Road  
Cleveland

**Split Second**

Wednesday 8:00 p.m.  
Matt Talbot inn  
2270 Professor Ave.  
Cleveland

**The Wanderers**

Sunday 9:00 p.m.  
Saharid Social Center  
15325 Brookpark  
Brook Park

**N.E. Ohio General Service:** The Third Legacy Meetings will be held at the 12 Step Recovery Club at 1480 Pearl Road, Brunswick. The first meeting is January 19, 1992. There are many different languages for the Big Book to be translated into. This is only one reason why we need put more in the baskets.

74 Speakers were supplied by the District Office to non A.A. Groups for the months of January thru October 1991.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

| Central Committee Financial Report     |          | October 1991      |
|--|----------|-------------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD                |          | \$2,265.68        |
| Sale of Literature • Misunderstandings | 428.00   |                   |
| Rent for 10-1-91 Meeting               | \$25.00  |                   |
| Bank Service Charge                    | \$4.40   |                   |
| Printing                               | 233.90   | 164.70            |
|  | (263.30) |                   |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                     |          | <b>\$2,430.38</b> |

| Central Bulletin Financial Report   |          | October 1991    |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD             |          | \$403.64        |
| Total Deposits                      |          | \$224.00        |
| Printing • October Central Bulletin | \$234.53 |                 |
| Mailing • October Central Bulletin  | \$56.28  | (290.81)        |
|                                     |          | (66.81)         |
| <b>NEW BALANCE</b>                  |          | <b>\$336.83</b> |