



Carry the Message January, 2010

The Huron Valley Area Intergroup Newsletter

Serving the Recovery Community since 1979

AA's Twelve Concepts for World Service

The Twelve Concepts for World Service are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure. They reveal the evolution by which it has arrived in its present form, and they detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today.

Concept One Long Form

The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

Concept One Checklist

· Does our group have a general service representative (G.S.R.)?

Do we feel that our home group is part of A.A. as a whole and do our group's decisions and actions reflect that?

· Do we hold regular group conscience meetings encouraging everyone to participate?

Do we pass that conscience on

to the district, area, or the local intergroup meetings?

· Is the "collective conscience" of Alcoholics Anonymous at work in my home group? In my area?

· Where do we fit in the upside-down triangle of A.A.?

· Are we willing to do what it takes to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions?

A.A.'s Legacy of Service

by Bill W.

[Editor's Note: Bill wrote these words in 1951, therefore, his words reflect that time period in their details. ©AAWS, Inc, used with permission]

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

Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the

way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

Vital to A.A.'s Growth

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A.

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HVAI Contributions

Contributions to HVAI in 2009. Without the support of groups like these we would not exist. Thank you!

Ann Arbor:

- District 4 Public Information
- Another Second Chance
- 12 Steps Delonis
- Any Length
- Afternoon Winners
- Fri. Night Group
- Spiritual Solution
- Ann Arbor OS Group
- Laughing in Sobriety
- T.G.I.M.
- Get Straight Candlelight
- Jimmy's Group
- Young People/ on the Move
- Stadium 12/12
- Campus AA
- Flim Flam Breakfast
- Women's Steps to Serenity
- Living the Steps
- New Beginnings
- Candlelight Group

- Sat Morning Men's
- S.N.O.W.
- Friendly Group
- Simple But Not Easy
- 1,2,3 Steps
- Stadium Big Book
- Sober Spice
- Working With Others
- More Sunshine
- Singleness of Purpose
- Vision for You
- Open AA Study
- Women's Fusion
- Came 2 Believe
- Wednesdays at Westside

Bellville:

- Open Speaker
- Thurs. 12 Step
- Keeping It Simple

Canton:

- Into Action

Chelsea:

- Chelsea Groups
- Thy Not MY Will II
- Older Adult Recovery Center

Dexter:

- Women/Substance
- We Are Not Saints
- Dexter Group

Hamburg:

- Chain o Lakes

Manchester:

- Manchester Group
- Serenity in Action

Ypsilanti:

- Sisters in Serenity
- Monday Nighters
- Clean & Sober on Park
- BB
- Sat. Night at St. Joe's
- Weekend By the Book
- Heard It- Grapevine
- Unity
- Thurs. Night Steps
- New Courage
- Attitude Adjustment

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The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities.

Until 1950, these overall ser-

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Meeting Updates

Since we printed the April 2009 Meeting Directory, 44 meeting changes have been made to the web site listing. To update your April 2009 Directories, please print and pass on this information. Go to www.hvai.org and click on the AA & Al-Anon Meeting Locator, then type the key word 'change' in the search box. You can print and distribute this abbreviated list as a service.

There is nothing worse than getting up the nerve to go to a meeting only to find it does not exist.

Send Your Voluntary 7th Tradition Contributions To:

Huron Valley Area Intergroup
31 South Huron Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

District 4
Washtenaw County Treasurer
Box 971502
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Central Michigan Intra-Area 32
C.M.I.A. Area 32 Treasurer
10351 Timber Ridge Drive
Milan, MI 48160

AA World Service
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10164-0423

Upcoming Events

January 18, 2010 (Third Mondays): *District 4 meeting* Calvary Methodist Church, 1415 Miller St., Ann Arbor, 48103.

January 24, 2010: *27th Anniversary Breakfast for Monday Night A.A. Group.* Doors open at 8:30am. Speaker Clancy I from CA. Seating limited so no tickets at the Door. Contact a group member for \$5. tickets.

February 7, 2010 (1st Sundays, even Months): *Central Michigan Intra-Area (Area 32),* Corunna V.F.W. Post 4005, 416 Shiawassee St.. Doors open at 9am.

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vices were the sole function of a few oldtime A.A.'s, several nonalcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.'s infancy, we old-timers had been the self-appointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Fellowship Ready for Responsibility

At this time, we realized that A.A. had grown up, that our Fellowship was ready and able to take these responsibilities from us. There was also another urgent reason for change. Since we oldtimers couldn't live on forever, newer trustees would be virtually unknown to the A.A. groups, now spread over the whole earth. Without direct linkage to A.A., future trustees couldn't possibly function alone.

This meant that we had to form a conference representing our membership which could meet yearly with our board of trustees in New York, and thus assume direct responsibility for the guardianship of A.A. tradition and the direction of our principal service affairs. Other-

wise, a virtually unknown board of trustees and our too little understood service headquarters operations would someday be bound to face collapse.

Suppose that future trustees, acting quite on their own, were to make a serious blunder. Suppose that with no linkage to A.A., they tried to act for us in time of great trouble or crisis. With no direct guidance from A.A. as a whole, how could they do this? Collapse of our top services would then be inevitable. And if, under such conditions, our world services did fall apart, how could they ever be reconstructed?

These, briefly, were the conclusions that led to the formation of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Later, I will outline in more detail the events that have now become A.A. history.

The deliberative body known as the Conference is made up of elected area delegates from the United States and Canada — now numbering about ninety —

together with the trustees, the directors of A.A.W.S., Inc., and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members numbering forty or more. The Conference held its first annual meeting in 1951. Since then it has met annually in April in New York.² It has proved itself an immense success — establishing a record of advisory actions that have served the Fellowship well during the intervening years of growth and development.

Highlights of A.A. Service History

To go back to the beginning: One day in 1937, at Dr. Bob's Akron home, he and I added up the score of over two years' work. For the first time we saw that wholesale recovery of alcoholics was possible. We then had two small but solid groups in Akron and New York, plus a sprinkling of members elsewhere. How could these few recovered ones tell millions of alcoholics throughout the world the great news? That was the question.

Forthwith, Doctor Bob and I met

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with 18 of the Akron Group at the home of T. Henry Williams, a steadfast nonalcoholic friend. Some of the Akron Group still thought we ought to stick to the word-of-mouth process; but the majority felt that we now needed our own hospitals with paid workers and, above all, a book for other alcoholics that could explain to them our methods and results. This would require considerable money — millions perhaps. (We didn't know that millions would have ruined us even more than no money at all.) So the Akron meeting commissioned me to get to New York and raise funds. Arrived home, I found the New York Group in full agreement with this idea. Several of us went to work at once.

A.A.'s Early Money Problems

Through my brother-in-law, Dr. L. V. Strong, Jr., my only remaining friend and the confidant of the worst of my drinking time, we made a contact with Willard S. Richardson, a friend and longtime associate of the Rockefeller family. Mr. Richardson promptly took fire and interested a group of his own friends. In the winter of 1937, a meeting was called at the office of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Present were Mr. Richardson and his group, Dr. William D. Silkworth, alcohol-

ics from Akron and New York, Doctor Bob and I. After a long discussion, we convinced our new friends that we urgently needed money — a lot of it, too.

One of them, Frank Amos, soon made a trip to Akron early in 1938 to investigate the group there. He returned with a very optimistic report, of which Mr. Richardson quickly laid before John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Though much impressed, Mr. Rockefeller declined to give any large sum for fear of professionalizing A.A. He did, however, donate \$5,000. This was used to keep Doctor Bob and me going during 1938. We were still a long way from hospitals, missionaries, books, and big money. This looked mighty tough at the time, but it was probably one of the best breaks that A.A. ever had.

In spite of Mr. Rockefeller's views, we renewed our efforts to persuade his friends of our crying need for money. At length, they agreed that we did need more money, certainly enough to prepare a textbook on our methods and experience.

In the late spring of 1938, I had drafted what are now the first two chapters of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous." Mimeographed copies of these were used as part of the prospectus for our futile fundraising operation. At board meetings, then held nearly every month, our nonalcoholic friends commiserated on our lack of success. About half of the \$5,000 Mr. Rockefeller

advanced had been used to pay the mortgage on Doctor Bob's home. The rest of it, divided divided between us, would, of course, soon be exhausted. The outlook was certainly bleak.

A.A. Its Own Publisher

Then Frank Amos remembered his oldtime friend Eugene Exman, religious editor at Harper's, the book publishers. He sent me to Harper's, and I showed Mr. Exman two chapters of our proposed book. To my delight, Mr. Exman was impressed. He suggested that Harper's might advance me \$1,500 in royalties to finish the job. Broke as we were, that \$1,500 looked like a pile of money. Nevertheless, our enthusiasm for this proposal quickly waned. With the book finished, we would be \$1,500 in debt to Harper's. And if, as we hoped, A.A. then got a lot of publicity, how could we possibly hire the help to answer the inquiries — maybe thousands — that would flood in?

There was another problem, too, a serious one. If our A.A. book became the basic text for Alcoholics Anonymous, its ownership would then be in other hands. It was evident that our Society ought to own and publish its own literature. No publisher, however good, ought to own our best asset.

So two of us bought a pad of blank stock certificates and wrote on them "Works Publishing, par value \$25." My friend Hank P. and I then offered shares in the new book company to alcoholics and their friends in New York. They just laughed at us. Who would buy stock, they said, in a book not yet written! (*...continues next month*)