



Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

When did you have your spiritual awakening?" a woman asked me at the end of an afternoon meeting in another town. "I'm eight months sober and I don't think I'm ever going to get it."

I had been immersed in the Fellowship for four years and I didn't have an answer. An avowed atheist, I mumbled something cute like, "You'll have to ask someone older than I!" That seemed to give her hope, but it was I who was unsettled by my own evasive answer.

Was a spiritual awakening necessary for lifelong sobriety? If I didn't have one, was I going to drink again? I thought of all the stuff I was involved in--sponsoring a new woman, editing an AA newsletter, going to the jail meeting every Saturday morning, and being the GSR for my home group. Was I just whistling in the dark until the inevitable occurred? My neat little home filled with teenagers who were just beginning to trust their sober mother--were they all at risk if some manifestation of a God didn't happen to me? Was this empathy for other drunks and tolerance for the world in general all part of my mind's big con job to lull me into false security? As our AA carload headed home that night, happy and noisy and loving life without booze, I felt restless.

Among the books we had in the car was *As Bill Sees It*. I checked, and found sixteen references under the "Spiritual Awakening" heading, and another twenty-one listed under "Spiritual Living." I determined to read them all if I had to, in order to find an answer to my question.

The first reading was Bill's account of his white light experience. I gritted my teeth and quickly went on to the second. It seemed to indicate that awakening was an ongoing thing. Could it be? The next one told me that the spiritually awakened person was in a very real sense transformed. I got excited, for if ever a drunk was transformed--from barroom brawler to PTA mother, from people-hater to lover of drunks--it was I.

The fourth entry is forever imprinted in my sober memory. It told the story of a guy who shared his life freely with others, and then said he didn't have the "spiritual angle" yet. It said it was apparent to everyone else present that he had "received a great gift, and that this gift was all out of proportion to anything that may be expected from simple AA participation," and that the rest of the group felt he was reeking with spirituality. He just didn't know it yet!

I didn't have to read on. I now knew about my own spiritual awakening. It was when I took the first new woman to a meeting and when I went to the jail on Saturday morning instead of sleeping in. A spiritual awakening happened as I left the dinner table in a rainstorm to go on a Twelfth-Step call and again when I said, "Yes, I'll be your sponsor and we'll go through the book together." It began when immeasurable grace was bestowed on me, and continued as I realized that I could never repay what was given to me by the Fellowship.

A spiritual awakening was happening at that very moment as I sat in the car, letting tears of joy run down my cheeks, unashamed in front of my AA peers. I was certain that untold awakenings were in store for me as I trudged AA's road of Happy Destiny. It's been thirty years since then, and I was oh, so right.

- Judith N., Marysville, Washington

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St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.
608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

Web Site: www.aastpaul.org

E-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org

Fax: 651-290-0209

Office Hours: Monday through Friday — 9 AM to 6 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 1 PM

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there 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.

I was raised in mainline Protestant denominations. I left churches thirty-five years ago, and twenty-three years of sobriety haven't sent me back to organized religion. Recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous has, however, eliminated my anti-religious bent.

I'm left with a tremendous feeling of gratitude for the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. As long as we try our best to live by our Traditions and our traditions, we may never have to face the kinds of trials some denominations or religious institutions have come up against.

There is no hierarchy in Alcoholics Anonymous. Isn't that great? We have one ultimate authority, a loving God; and that authority is never wrong, and is not subject to human failure. Our method of discipline is incredibly effective. We follow the rules as individuals or groups, or we die. Of course, there are no rules, just suggestions and Traditions and traditions.

The chairman of our board of directors has no authority over any member. Our trustees, a dedicated and trusted group of alcoholics and nonalcoholics, put in long hours of hard work. They are paid nothing, and they also lack authority over anyone. We elect area delegates every year and are not surprised by the dedication and self-sacrifice of these ninety-three members. And none of these trusted servants would consider flaunting Tradition or tradition by standing for reelection.

With what wonderful Traditions have we been blessed! A simple membership requirement; group autonomy; one primary purpose; no outside affiliation, or even an opinion on outside issues; self-support; nonprofessional; unorganized; and anonymous. Throughout our Fellowship, rotation is practiced, sometimes rigorously, sometimes not. We seem to have learned, at nearly every level of service, that no one is so bad that we can't endure him/her for one term, nor is anyone so good that we must have him/her for a second term.

Those outside our Fellowship may look at us with amusement or disbelief. Why not a system of membership dues? Why not some paid professionals to conduct some needed fund-raising campaigns? (Think of all the good that could be done with more money!) Why not train the staff to become experts at one desk, rather than rotate assignments? Why not put someone in charge--one of the really "good guys?"

We know why not. It wouldn't work. We seem to have been guided by a power greater than any one of us. This power seems to have allowed us to make mistake after mistake, error after error, and allowed some of us to learn from these mistakes. When our groups were falling apart, and our Fellowship was close to disintegration, Bill W. was able to look at the dismal record of mistakes and the growing list of successes and put together our Twelve Traditions. When it became clear that we needed some guidance for the Fellowship as a whole, Bill wrote our Twelve Concepts for World Service. And as our need for new leaders grew, new leaders appeared.

My job? To live by the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous as best I can; to share my experience, strength, and hope with regard to our Traditions and Concepts, as well as our Twelve Steps; to serve where I can, as well as I can; to understand that the Responsibility Pledge applies to me.

I can't keep AA going, and neither can you. But we can, for as long as God chooses to allow us to exist.

-Al H.

Bakersfield, California

Thoughts From Your Board

How time flies! I can't believe we are already almost to February 2018. Last year was exciting as it was my first year on the Board serving as Secretary. I am excited to enter this year as the Alternate Board Chair. Every opportunity to do any service work has been a positive experience in my life and my recovery, and it all starts with saying yes.

My first service position at my home group was as the "parking cop". This seemed like a meaningless position (there were no parking restrictions or related issues at this meeting), but it forced me to show up to the meeting each week and make my announcement. As a result, I consistently attended and people got to know my name.

Later I became the alternate Intergroup rep for my home group. It was there I made new friends that led me to service opportunities with the Gopher State Committee and ended up getting elected to Secretary by attending the annual Intergroup board elections. Admittedly someone else volunteered me, but I was willing to say yes.

The service work allows me to help do my part to carry the still suffering alcoholic. Having a service position at my home group and elsewhere has contributed to sponsorship opportunities I never would have had. And having an opportunity to serve St Paul Intergroup is a tremendous honor, it is an entity that does a lot of work on the frontlines for the still suffering alcoholic. So thank you for the opportunity to be of service, and I look forward to working together.

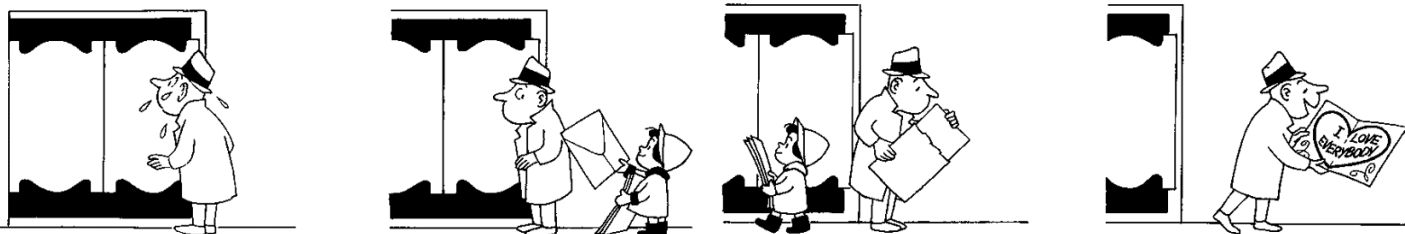
- Rob C., 2018 Alt. Board Chair

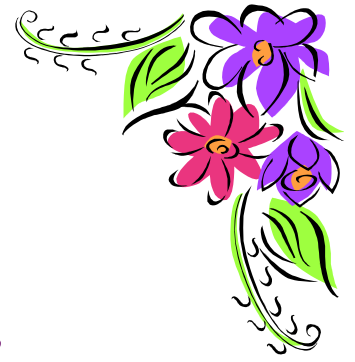
Concept Two: The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs.

When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter—the actual voice and effective conscience for our whole Society.

This Concept is simply just common sense. Nobody can do everything all the time, everywhere. So, in every family, business and A.A. group responsibilities have to be delegated to various members of that body, and the rest of the body—while holding these members accountable—needs to extend their trust and wishes to them so the wishes can be carried out. In that way everyone can collectively move forward. We all know what it looks like when this does NOT occur in a family setting. This Concept teaches us to learn from that experience.

- Anonymous





St. Paul Intergroup's annual

Spring Fling!

2018 - Date & Time TBA

NEW LOCATION

*Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
285 North Dale Street
(just south of 94)
Saint Paul, MN 55101*



Dinner –TBD

Open Speaker Meeting Dance



Contribution: \$10 Entire Evening, or \$7 Dinner Only, or \$5 Dance Only
~~No one turned away for lack of funds~~

For More Information Call 651-227-5502



ASL Interpreted, upon request.
Please contact Staff at St. Paul
Intergroup to make arrangements:
651-227-5502



Announcements & Updates

HOOTS!

Thanks to all the amazing Night Owl volunteers. You are **awesome!!!**

We currently have the following shifts needing an owl:

4th Tuesday 10pm (overnight)

5th Saturday 2pm-7pm

WANTED: 2 Night Owl Committee volunteers

The Night Owl Committee members take turns carrying the back-up Phone for one week at a time. We help out if a volunteer has a problem and we also make the reminder calls.

Requirements:

>1 year sobriety

>Answer the back-up phone during your rotation

>Experience with Night Owl

>2 year commitment

Reminders to all groups! When you get a new Night Owl Coordinator for your group, please send an e-mail to let me know who it is and update their phone number so the committee person making reminder calls is talking to the correct individual. Send e-mails to me at nightowl@aastpaul.org

Thank you!

Cheryl B.

Night Owl Committee Coordinator

Group and Area News

Meeting Change: The *Eagan Burnsville Savage Thursday 8PM* group changed it's name to the *Plan B Group*. The groups hosts a 8:00PM Thursday Step meeting at 1959 Shawnee Road—AKA 3600 Kennebec Drive, 2nd Floor, Eagan 55112. The Meeting is Closed, Mixed and All-ages.

Meeting Change: The *Tuesday 12x12 at 6PM* changed its name to the *Maria Drunk Squad*. The group meets 6:00PM Tuesdays at the First Lutheran Church, 463 Maria Avenue, St. Paul 55106. The group hosts an Open, Step, Mixed, All-ages meeting.

Meeting No More: The *Downtown Alano, 520 North Robert Street, St. Paul 55101* is no longer holding their Tuesday, 6:30PM Big Book meeting.

Meeting No More: The *Saint Stephen's AA* group is no longer meeting 6:45PM Tuesdays at Saint Stephens Lutheran Church, 1575 Charlton Street, West St. Paul 55118.

Hospitality Suite Reservations

Gopher State Roundup XLV will be at the Double Tree Bloomington, May 25, 26, 27, 2018. Hospitality Suites are available by reservation. If your group is interested in a hospitality suite and the associated rates, please call Paul T. 651-755-6166.

If you had a room last years., you will be sent this year's application in February. We hope to see you there!

- *Gopher State Roundup Hospitality Suite Committee*



Looking for a Service Opportunity?
Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl!

Upcoming Night Owl Orientations:
Saturday, Feb 17th, Mar 17th, Apr 15th

Every Third Saturday from 10:00 - 11:00 AM

St. Paul Intergroup Office

608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

To RSVP please call: 651-227-5502



St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, December 19th 2017 7:30pm

Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and the reading of the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.

Minutes from last month were reviewed, Mark motioned and Paul seconded, motion approved.

Treasurer's Report, – Matt R went over the report. The prudent reserve is \$35,019 and the Checking Acct is at \$24,266. For November the total contributions are down, group contributions are down and office sales are down. Expenses increased \$1,344 from last month due to refilling inventory and annual insurance payment. November is also typically a slow month heading into the holidays and December/January expected to be higher. See Treasurer's Report for full financial details.

Contact Matt at treasurer@aastpaul.org.

Office Report, Bill S – The Office still seeking volunteers to contribute writings to the Lifeline. Email lifeline@aastpaul.org.

Night Owl Report, Cheryl B – Only 1 shift open (4th tues at 10pm). Still seeking two Night Owl Committee Members. Changing phone service in spring, will be trainings. Cheryl stepping down at year's end, Patti B will be new Night Owl Committee Chair. See additional info in the Hoots. Contact Cheryl at NightOwl@aastpaul.org or leave a message at the intergroup office.

Website Report, Jenni gave the update. The website is switching to the mobile version on December 28th. Traffic is steady. Contact Jonathan & Sergey at webservant@aastpaul.org.

Outreach Program – Volunteers are still needed for visiting meetings, see Thoughts from the Board in the Lifeline. Refer to the Outreach Info Sheet for full instructions. Contact Carolyn M at outreach@aastpaul.org.

Update from the Board, Lesli D, Introduced and welcomed new board members Guillermo, Madeline, and Brian L. Said goodbye to Sandy and Matt departing the board.

Liaison Reports: District 8 Mike C, Had a Founder's Day Suite. The Literature Rep donated books to various facilities. Accessibilities Chair transferred funds to the ASL Fund. ; District 15 Bob Z, Fall workshop was well attended, working on a new slightly bigger budget. Co-op'd with Districts 35&36 on a literature opportunity. Have a new treasurer; District 19 Alt Rep Patrick, Passed the 2018 budget. Trying to co-op with District 25 for a workshop. Going to attend the West Central Regional meeting in Iowa.

Upcoming Intergroup Events

Intergroup New Year's Eve Celebration Dec. 31st - Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. Details and flyers shared.

Old Business:

New Business:

Founders Day Presentation by Ed from planning committee. A 77 year tradition. See the orange flyers, plenty of volunteer opportunities still open.

Group AA Announcements:

OMD Potluck & Sobriety Recognition First Friday 12/5 at 7pm. Speaker is Crissy. OMD MOVING FEB 1st to St Marks on W 7th.

Main Idea Xmas Eve Potluck 5pm-11pm at First Baptist. See website for details

Como Big Book having annual potluck Jan 13th at 5pm (6pm speaker). New Life Presbyterian. See website for details.

Suggestions for next months's agenda:

Grapevine Report, Sandi; Volunteer for January, Mark

Concept X review, Paul C; Volunteer for Concept XI for January, Paul C

Mock Rep Report, Lindsey; Volunteer for December, Lesli

Closed with the Responsibility Statement

Meetings Represented: Basic Text, St. Paul; Como Park Big Book, Roseville; District 8; District 15; District 19; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Look To This Day, St. Paul; Maplewood Alano, Maplewood; Maria Drunk Squad; Outright Mental Defectives, St. Paul; Pocketing Our Pride, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Third Edition, St. Paul; Women's Basic Text, St. Paul.

<u>2018 Steering Board:</u>		<u>Office Calls/Visitors—December 2017</u>	
Chair:	Lesli D.	Meeting information	71
Alternate Chair:	Rob C.	Inventory/hours	27
Secretary:	Carolyn M.	12th Step calls	2
Treasurer:	C.J. M.	Temporary sponsor	17
Alternate Treasurer:	Madeline S.	Speaker request	19
Members-at-Large 2018:	Tom S. & Erik M.	Special events	0
Members-at-Large 2019	Brian L. & Guillermo O.	Outside issues	12
Advisor to the Board:	Jenni S.	Info for professionals	3
Manager	Dennis B.	Administrative	56
		Miscellaneous	33
		Total Calls	260
		Average Calls/Day	13.0
		Total Visitors	248

February 2018 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, February 20th @ 7:30 PM

SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH

398 West Superior Street; St. Paul, MN 55102

**7th Tradition
Suggestions for Groups**

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

The Conference-approved pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

50% St. Paul Intergroup

608 Seventh Street West
St. Paul, MN 55102

30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

10% Southern MN Area 36

Area Assembly
P.O. Box 2812
Mpls., MN 55402

10% District Committee

Ramsey County:
District 8, P.O. Box 131523
St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:
District 19, P.O. Box 1466
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:
District 15, P.O. Box 181
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

SE Ramsey County:
District 26, P.O. Box 75980
St. Paul, MN 55175

DECEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Number of Group Contributors	38
Total Group Contributions:	\$4979
Number of Faithful Fivers:	17
Total from Faithful Fivers:	\$362



District Meetings

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center
1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 108
Roseville
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM

District 15 (Wash. Co.)

Christ Lutheran Church
11194 N. 36th St.
Lake Elmo
4th Mon., 7:00 PM

District 19 (Dakota Co.)

Rosemount Community Center
13885 South Robert Trail
Rosemount
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)

Grace Lutheran Church
1730 Old Hudson Rd.
St. Paul
2nd Sun., 7:00PM
www.district26-area36.org



**Thanks to all the Groups
that contributed in December**

- Amazing Grace Group
- Apple Valley Daily Reflections
- Apple Valley Monday AM Women's Mtg.
- Children of Chaos Plus
- Complete Defeat Group
- Cottage Grove Groups
- CRC Friends of Bill W.
- Dakota Alano
- Dakota Alano MON 6PM BB
- Dakota Alano MON 6PM BB
- Dakota Alano MON 6PM BB
- Dakota Alano SUN 8PM
- Dakota Alano THUR 1145AM
- Dakota Alano WED AM Roosters
- Fellowship Club AA
- Forest Lake Alano
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Highland Park Groups
- Hole in the Doughnut Group
- Lake Elmo Thurs Night Group
- Midway Club
- North Dale Group
- Oakdale Woodbury Sun Group @Canvas Heath
- Prescott Saturday Morning Group
- Ridge Runners II Sat 830 AM
- Ringmaster's Group
- Roseville Centennial Group
- Rule 62 Step & Tradition Group
- Safe Haven for Women Group
- Saturday Morning PS Meeting
- Saturday Morning Serenity Group
- Ship Of Fools Group
- Shoreview 12 x 12
- South Saint Paul 301 Club
- St. Croix Alano
- Third Tradition Northfield
- White Bear Lake - Thursday Night Group
- White Bear SAT AM Women's Group



Thanks to all of the FANTASTIC Office Volunteers who helped in December:

- Adam S., Barb M., Bob P., Brian D., Carly D.,
- Camille M., Chrissie S., Christian C.,
- Chuck L., Dan F., David D.,
- Frank D., Henry O., Jake B., Jeff T., Jimmy D.,
- Marc S., Rose W., Suzanne B., Tom G.,
- Tony Z., Wylie C., Woody W.

Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!



Creating Controversy: Are Our Troubles of Our Own Making?

In the past year, our Fellowship has been sorting through what some members would consider a controversy involving a lawsuit about ownership of an original printer's manuscript of the first edition of our Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Even calling an issue controversial immediately makes it suspect in A.A. Our Traditions warn us to avoid taking stands on outside issues to avoid controversy. But for any of us who have been sober for even a few years, we've seen many difficult issues come and go in our groups and in the general service structure. We can always learn something from how we respond and how we try to resolve such issues within our group conscience. We often see in hindsight that we ourselves created controversy when what was really happening was simply A.A. facing a difficult choice.

Here is some backstory for this current dispute. The manuscript at the heart of the debate was bequeathed to A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S.), one of our corporate boards, via a letter written in 1979 by its then owner, Barry L. In the letter, Barry L. stated that he was making the manuscript a gift to A.A.W.S., but that he would like to retain possession until his death. Unfortunately, Barry's wishes were not carried out as he asked. When Barry died, the manuscript was not turned over to A.A. It has since been sold among private collectors more than once. Just in the last year the manuscript was once again put up for public auction. This time around, our General Service Board and the board of A.A.W.S. filed a lawsuit asserting rights to the manuscript and asking to prevent its sale. For a time, the court ordered that the manuscript be held by a third party while the matter was under consideration. Most recently, however, our General Service Board and the board of A.A.W.S. have decided to voluntarily dismiss their case, while at the same time continuing to assert that A.A.W.S. has clear ownership right to the manuscript.

When first announced last summer, the action by our corporate boards to block the sale of the manuscript was met with mixed reactions in our Fellowship. There has been opposition to the action from a variety of sources with arguments ranging from the controversy itself threatening our unity (Tradition One), the focus of energy on an archival document distracting us from our primary purpose (Tradition Five), and a concern that potential litigation could draw unfavorable public attention to A.A. (Tradition Ten and Concept Twelve). These points are well-considered.

Unfortunately, the arguments circulating around A.A. have been largely one-sided primarily because of legal concerns that have prevented members of our General Service Board and A.A.W.S. Board from sharing openly what went into their decision to file suit. Hearing only one side of a debate can mistakenly lead us to believe it is the only voice to be heard.

As Delegate for Southern Minnesota, I have had many conversations with A.A. members about the manuscript and the potential litigation. While A.A. principles suggest we should not take positions on outside issues (Tradition Ten), some members believe this does not mean we must automatically concede every difficult issue that arises. The discussion I heard on this topic reminded me of the place in the Big Book where describing our Ninth Step it says that "as God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone." As much as we would like to avoid difficult debates, is there ever a time that engaging with the outside world and taking a stand on a tough topic or situation is necessary?

One recurring theme among members I spoke with has been the "Right of Decision" found in Concept Three. Another viewpoint included an appeal to trust our trusted servants, an idea found throughout The Twelve Concepts. Another principle discussed is Concept Ten's tenet that "every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority." Put together, these principles support the assumption that if our corporate boards acted in substantial unanimity on this issue, there would certainly have been lots of discussion, consideration, and sharing of minority opinion.

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The boards would have had to first determine that they were the proper entity to decide these issues. Our group conscience operates in the same fashion whether it is in our home group, our District, our Area, the General Service Conference, or at the General Service Board or corporate boards. It is easy to second guess any group conscience that goes against my own opinion. I can sometimes forget that Tradition Two promises us that God shows up in the group conscience. I have learned too much about myself in A.A. to believe that I am the arbiter of the truth. I am on shaky ground when deeming my individual opinion as superior to the group conscience of any service body within the A.A. structure, no matter how much its decision goes counter to my will. That is why I am still sponsored and why I still believe that the group conscience is the best place for deciding difficult issues.

The group conscience is at its best when the issues at hand are discussed openly. One disheartening discovery I had was learning that many of our A.A. members had joined "secret" Facebook groups where opinions about the manuscript lawsuit were being shared. I was invited to one such group by someone in A.A. whom I trusted, so I joined before I knew what I was getting into. Once in the group, I was saddened to see posts from long-time members of our Fellowship expressing divisive opinions. This sort of "secret" forum does not lend itself to a fully informed discussion. The opinions I saw there were extreme and there was not the leveling effect of a true group conscience. The secret group seemed to be creating and fanning controversy beyond what might really exist. I was so discouraged by who and what I found in the secret group that I immediately removed myself. What I saw there was evidence that these sorts of topics should be debated openly in our group conscience meetings. In a true group conscience, we bring our ideas and opinions with the intent that they can be challenged by the group. Though we may be tempted to share our criticisms of others with only our like-minded friends, the better principle is to let ourselves be held accountable by openly participating in the group.

Another discomfoting realization came when I was reminded that there is a group of A.A. members who are private collectors of A.A. historical and archival material. This isn't news to me and would not overly concern me, except that I learned that some individuals in this network of collectors were coming to the defense of the person currently in possession of the disputed manuscript. I have even heard A.A. members suggest that our General Service Board and A.A.W.S. are doing harm to the person who currently possesses the manuscript by asserting A.A.'s right to the book. In my idealistic view of the world, I would not expect an A.A. member, even a collector, to defend someone who had possession of an A.A. artifact that had so clearly been bequeathed to A.A. As much as my pointing out this kind of thinking and this kind of behavior may itself be fanning the flames of controversy, it is sometimes our responsibility to hold each other accountable inside our Fellowship. On some level, it might be our own behavior that is creating and inciting an inflated sense of controversy surrounding the manuscript lawsuit. We can do a lot to change the tone of the conversation by calling on each other to stay closer to our principles.

While I appreciate the fact that our General Service Board and the A.A.W.S. Board recently decided to forego legal action at this time, I am concerned that we not let lessons go unlearned just because the difficulty is momentarily passed. Those boards decided that A.A. is better served not to be distracted by the expense or controversy of a lawsuit. But our response as a Fellowship shows that we have a lot of growing up to do where it concerns how we act when faced with such a difficult issue. We can start by first being principled ourselves in any such discussion. Then we can help hold and inspire our fellow members to the same principles, no matter how much we disagree.

With hopes for thoughtful consideration all around,

-Curt K.

Delegate – Panel 67, Area 36 – Southern Minnesota
delegate@area36.org

AA Grapevine, Inc. – A Co-Equal Corporation

Alcoholics Anonymous has three corporations, and the AA Grapevine is a co-equal affiliate corporation to Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS), a focus in a prior article. Each have their respective mission to carry out, and AAGV's is:

“Its primary purpose is to: CARRY THE AA MESSAGE to everyone interested in alcoholism through its magazines, websites and related items which reflect the experience, strength and hope of its members and friends on topics related to recovery unity and service.

It strives in all its activities to operate in accordance with the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of AA, without soliciting monetary contributions from AA members or groups to fund operating expenses.”

Each time I read this, I realize the Grapevine is so much more than a magazine. From its start in 1944 by some “ink stained wretches” we now have a second corporation that has a primary purpose very similar to what all of us as AA members and AA groups' primary purpose is, which is to carry the message. However, the Grapevine is discharged with an even greater responsibility to carry the message not only to the alcoholic, but also to others interested in alcoholism.

Considering that, we've tasked the AAGV corporation to serve as a resource similar to virtually all of our service structure committees: Public Information, Corrections, Treatment, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and AAGV also publishes books and provides the digital archives of the Grapevine (a magnificent repository of AA history) – all available at the fingertips of every AA member. That, I believe, is a monumental task by a group of people one-tenth the size of our General Service Office.

The Grapevine has an international flavor to it with articles sometimes coming from other parts of the world, and it serves the Hispanic population with the La Vina and other AAGV publications that are published in Spanish, which carries the message and fulfills AAGV's primary purpose to the Spanish-speaking population as well as our materials do to the English-speaking population.

While AA as a whole is tasked with the provision to be self-supporting through our own contributions (Seventh Tradition) and this applies to all aspects and service entities of AA, the Grapevine has been held especially accountable to this with a self-support mandate via its subscription and publication profits and not being able to take any direct contributions, which AAWS and the General Service Board can do. Over its 73-year history, there have only been a few rare instances where AAGV has needed a temporary infusion of money from the Reserve Fund to remain stable and solvent, and it has always put money back into it – in fact, more than it has taken out. That is true self-support!

In 2001, the fellowship did make a decision to continue the (new-at-the-time) La Vina as a service to AA as a whole, and hence, group contributions do pay for the deficit of that magazine, but that is recognized as a service to AA members, one that reaches many, many alcoholics with each of its issues. In fact, it's been calculated that the readership rate of the La Vina results in a much larger percentage of Spanish-speaking members being exposed as readers versus the AA population reading (or not reading) the AA Grapevine.

On a bit of a personal note, several AAGV resources are an important part of my daily AA life. I set out a few years ago to go through the digital archives (DA), and while I wholly read only some of the articles, the DA has a portion of each article to read as you scroll through it, and I can find the ones that catch my eye and read them from start to finish. Plus, with the newly-revised

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cataloging of the DA, you can perform multi-level searches with a range of criteria to find articles of interest to suit any AA members reading desires.

Of course, the foundation of the AAGV is the monthly magazine. While I have not typically been an “e-reader” kind of a guy, the newly deployed GV app is nothing short of spectacular. Not only can I search and read each issue and also save them locally to my tablet and phone, I (and you!) can now listen to any of the stories in audio form by just clicking the title link in the table of contents.

That also leads me to tell you that an array of stories is available in audio format. If you'd wonder what it would be like to listen to them, AAGV provides you with samples to experience audio GV stories. In fact, one of those stories can be yours: you can literally “call-in” your story and share it orally and then it can be submitted as a GV article/story. I encourage every AA member to do just that to support your Grapevine.

For those that may consider the AAGV more of a newcomers' tool, I'd like to highlight another angle to it that I've found. You may recall Bill Wilson spoke in 1958 about emotional sobriety being yet another frontier, a statement targeted a bit more at the longer-term AA member. I've come to find the publications that AAGV has on Emotional Sobriety – there are two volumes – provide me, as an AA member with 32 years of sobriety, with stories very relevant to someone that has been in the rooms of AA for a long time. While relevant for everyone, I hope our old-timers crack the cover of these books or download these e-books and find yet another source of sound AA material.

With all this going on in AAGV, you will likely be surprised to know that all this is done by 9 employees, and that includes everyone from start to finish, including the accounting department. I've been around AAGV as a trustee long enough to see a corporation that serves us efficiently and effectively without compromising its primary purpose. A big challenge, because the Grapevine provides us with a channel of communication for many voices in AA, rather than just the singular “voice” of AA. Yes, you will find sometimes a diverse set of stories in an AA Grapevine magazine, but it is also a reflection of the spectrum of AA members of the twenty-first century.

Bill Wilson was a huge supporter of the Grapevine and used it many times to introduce new ideas to the AA members. Likely the biggest of course, were the Traditions of AA in the late 1940s. The digital archives can provide a rich history of this to you. As your West Central Region Trustee, I know we, the General Service Board, are reviewing ways to take a fresh look at how we can fulfill AA's primary purpose by using the resources at the AA Grapevine. Keep your eyes open for in upcoming issues you will likely see the Grapevine being used to communicate to you, the AA members, on topics of intense, current interest. We want you to be informed and history shows that the Grapevine can be a central component as a communications channel in AA, much like this article is for me to you, and please, feel free to contact me anytime.

With Gratitude,

Thomas A.

WCR Trustee & AAWS Director

The Lifeline: Purpose Statement

The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Incorporated. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition, or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of our A.A. experience.

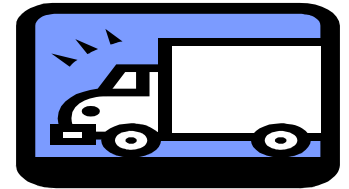
Please email your article to lifeline@aastpaul.org, or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 608 Seventh Street West, St. Paul MN 55102. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc.

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Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to *The Lifeline*. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Faithful Fivers* (\$5.00/month), *Terrific Tenners* (\$10.00/month), or *Fantastic Fifteeners* (\$15.00/month).

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