

AREA 69 NEWS & NOTES

AREA 69 FALL ASSEMBLY

SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 1, 2017

VOLUME 3

2018 General Service Conference Theme

“A.A. – A Solution for All Generations.”

The 2018 General Service Conference

Discussion/Presentation topics are:

- a. **Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion**
- b. **Participation in All of A.A. – Is My Triangle Balanced?**
- c. *A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets the Traditions*
- d. *Attraction Not Promotion: A.A.'s Relationship to the World*
- e. *Group Conscience: The Guiding Force*

“The Language of The Heart” pg. 126

December 1950

“We, who are the older members of AA, bequeath to you who are younger, these three Legacies – the Twelve Steps of recovery, the Twelve Traditions, and now the general services of Alcoholics Anonymous. Two of the Legacies have long been in your keeping. By the Twelve Steps we have recovered from alcoholism; by the Twelve Traditions we are achieving a fine unity.

Being someday perishable, Dr. Bob and I now wish to deliver to the members of AA their Third Legacy. Since 1938 we and our friends have been holding it in trust. This legacy is the general Headquarters services of Alcoholics Anonymous – the Alcoholic Foundation, the AA Book, the AA Grapevine, and the AA General office. These are the principal services which have enabled our Society to function and to grow.

Acting on behalf of all, Dr. Bob and I ask you – the members of AA - now assume guidance of these services and guard them well. The future growth, indeed, the very survival, of Alcoholics Anonymous may one day depend upon how prudently these arms of service are administered in years to come.”

Bill W.

Editor's Comments

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My name is Renae H., I am an alcoholic and your Area 69 “News & Notes” newsletter editor. I want to thank all those who have contributed articles to Volume 3 sharing their personal stories, experience, strength and hope as it relates to the 2018 General Service Conference Theme and Discussion Topics.

How do you spread the message of hope, recovery and unity to those beyond your home group? Are you ready to be of service on an area level? Contributing to the Area 69 News & Notes publication is a rewarding way to be of service and to share with fellow members around the state. Simply contact your newsletter editor, with your article or photo by emailing:

Area69immediatepastdelegate@utahaa.org

(See additional Newsletter article submission information on the back page of this Volume)

SERVICE: OUR THIRD LEGACY

Service for me began in my Home Group. When I first started attending meetings, I didn't feel part of the world around me. Helping set up the chairs before the meeting and then helping put them away after the meeting began a change in me. I was part of something that made life feel a little less overwhelming for a little bit each week. It didn't hurt that I enjoyed the fellow-shiping that evolved. I loved listening to the members share their experience, strength and hope before, during and after each meeting.

Attending the same meeting, over and over, each week started building my trust in people. I could trust the other members to be at there the same day and the same time each week. My life started to have some stability. I even started to be trustworthy and reliable to show up and be of service. Dare I say that I learned to be responsible?

Before sobriety, I was trustworthy and reliable but it was always for my own selfish and self-centered needs. Slowly, recovery and unity changed my life and gave me hope. My service moved from setting up meetings to chairing meetings and then becoming a GSR. Service gave me the opportunity to grow and learn structure. My perspective changed and I had a new "point of view".

As the group GSR, I widened my AA world and began to travel around the district. It was

wonderful to travel to and from district meetings. The other trusted servants had a thirst for more knowledge and experiences too. In district service I moved from just learning about the 12 Steps of Recovery into the 12 Traditions. My service work eventually moved to an Area position and now I experienced the 12 Concepts. There was no end to the new friendships, travel and opportunity to grow. Attending PRAASA's, Forums, and an International Conference I heard about the six Warranties [outlined in Concept 12].

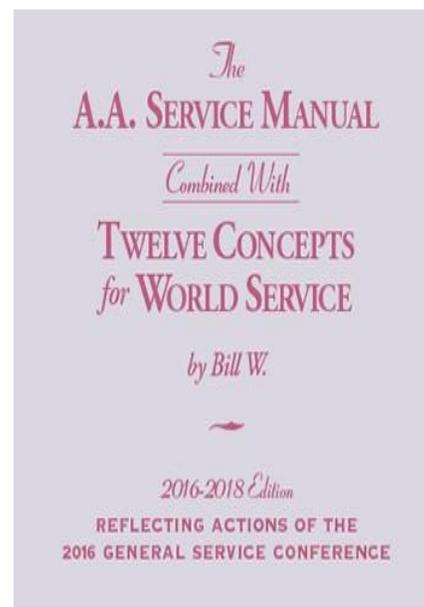
In Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, page 140, it says action is the magic word. "Action to carry AA's message is therefore the heart of our Third Legacy of Service". It also states, "An AA service is anything whatever that legitimately helps us to reach fellow sufferers". On page 49, we are reminded about the "Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service. By the first we recover from alcoholism; by the second we stay together in Unity; and by the third our society functions and serves its primary purpose of carrying the AA message to all who need it and want it."

The Language of The Heart states on page 130, "To serve AA is to live. We gladly accept our Third Legacy and may we guard it well and use it wisely. God grant me that the Legacy of Service remain forever safe in our keeping."

I want to add that the third legacy of service has given me an opportunity to attend several National Alcoholics Anonymous Archive Workshops (NAAAW).

These are exceptional conferences about our AA history and why we need to preserve where we come from and not wish to close the door on our past. My life is more than I had ever dreamed of and I truly owe it all to AA. My service work is a small attempt at paying back what I have been so freely given. I thank AA for a life beyond my wildest dreams.

In love and service,
Treesa J.
Area 69 Literature Chair



Workshop Topic Presentation

"Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not exclusion"

My name is Renae and I'm an alcoholic. I'm grateful to have this opportunity to share some thoughts on one of the 2018 General Service Conference (GSC) presentation/discussion topics with you today. The 67th

Conference passed a recommendation that the theme for the 68th GSC be: "A.A. -- *A Solution for All Generations*". The 67th Conference members selected 5 Presentation/Discussion topics for fellowship wide discussion throughout the US/Canada membership. I was asked to share on topic *a*.

"Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion"

Now we know, that, no one person speaks for A.A., and with that in mind--I reached out to a number of A.A. members to gain additional insight and perspective as it relates to this topic. First, I looked at this topic in two parts. What is "Today's Alcoholic?" What does it mean...what does it look like, what possible characteristics, aside from the basic demographics that are described in the pamphlet "A.A. Membership Survey", could tell us about today's alcoholic? (This survey is conducted every three to four years since 1968 by the General Service Office (GSO)).



The second part is "Inclusion, Not Exclusion". Here, it appears, there may exist some confusion, misunderstanding or outright rigidity within the fellowship

regarding Traditions Three and Five, that could potentially harm the chances a new comer might have of getting and staying sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. It's been my experience that often newcomers aren't fully aware of the true nature of their condition when first entering the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Let's take a look at part one – is today's alcoholic any different than yesterday's alcoholic? Looking at it from a logistical and statistical point of view, one might say "yes - in some ways", and others may say "no – not really." Taking into consideration the input I received from the folks I reached out to, perhaps the biggest difference today is the manner in which the newcomer is entering the halls of A.A.

Technological advancements of today's world provides massive access to all kinds of information with just a click of a finger or the simple ease of a voice inquiry to google! People are finding all kinds of resources when looking for recovery or treatment. Keeping pace with communication, technology, and A.A. Tradition definitely has its challenges. Another common observation was that perhaps today's alcoholic might be hitting bottom sooner based on increasing numbers of young people showing up in A.A. meetings looking for recovery. None of this is scientific of

course, but my own home group is certainly experiencing and welcoming a lot of younger newcomers!

In the literal sense, the idea that today's alcoholic differs in any way from yesterday's, the consensus of the group helping me with my research was unanimously "no". Alcohol is a respecter of no one. The soul wrenching sickness, self-destruction, demoralization, hopelessness, despair and wreckage we all experience while in the abyss of alcoholism, is universal across the board. Of course, the details of our experiences may differ...but the story is the same. Insanity, jails, institutions, or death awaits the man/woman who cannot find a way out.

Here we find ourselves at part two – "Inclusion – Not Exclusion". Let's look at Webster's definition of "inclusion": **Noun 1.** (countable) An addition or annex to a group, set, or total **Adjective 1.** Including (almost) everything within its scope. **2.** Including the extremes as well as the area between; i.e. Numbers 1 to 10 (*inclusive*). Bill W. shared his thoughts in a February 1948 issue of the A.A. Grapevine titled "Tradition Three". The following is in excerpt in part:

"The Third Tradition is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes 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 rules.

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 convention. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the law 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 any half way 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 away and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity."

"The Language of The Heart" pg. 79

This is the first two paragraphs of his relatively short essay, however, I think it beautifully conveys the emotion and impression that I would like to reflect in my own thoughts and actions when meeting and welcoming the newcomer to Alcoholics Anonymous. I want to share the last paragraph of Bill's article:

"Let us of A.A. 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 thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life – and a useful one!"
"The Language of the Heart" pg. 80

I don't know of a much better way to get an A.A. member's attention when researching and giving a topic presentation than to share Bill W.'s ideas and attitudes, thus - reminding us of our own fragile beginnings toward sobriety in A.A.. The following excerpts are from Bill's essays in **"Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", Tradition Three, pg.139:**

*"This Tradition is packed with meaning. For A.A. is really saying to every serious drinker, "You are an A.A. member if **you** say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you've gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications---even your crimes---we still can't deny you A.A. We don't **want** to keep you out. We aren't a bit afraid you'll harm us, never mind how twisted or violent you may be. We just want to be sure that you get the same great chance for sobriety that we've had. So you are an A.A. member the minute you declare yourself.*

To establish this principle of membership took years of harrowing experience. In our early time, nothing seemed so fragile, so easily breakable as an A.A. group."

"A member gives us a vivid glimpse of those days. "At one time," he says, "every A.A. group had many membership rules. Everybody was scared witless that something or somebody would capsize the boat and dump us all back into the drink. Our Foundation office asked each group to send in its list of 'protective' regulations. The total list was a mile long. If all those rules had been in effect everywhere, nobody could have joined A.A. at all, so great was the sum of our anxiety and fear.

*We were resolved to admit nobody to A.A. but that hypothetical class of people termed 'pure alcoholics.' Except for their guzzling, and the unfortunate results thereof, they could have no other complications. So beggars, tramps, asylum inmates, prisoners, queers, plain crackpots, and fallen women were definitely out. Yes sir, we'd cater **only** to pure and respectable alcoholics! Any others would surely destroy us. Besides, if we took those odd ones, what would decent people say about us? We built a fine mesh fence right around A.A.*

Maybe this sounds comical now. Maybe you think we oldtimers were pretty intolerant. But I can tell you there was nothing funny about the situation then. We were grim because we felt our lives and homes were threatened, and that was no laughing matter. Intolerant, you say? Well, we were frightened. Natural, we began to act like most everybody does when afraid. After all, isn't fear the true basis of

intolerance? Yes, we were intolerant.

How could we then guess that all those fears were to prove groundless? How could we know that thousands of these sometimes frightening people were to make astonishing recoveries and become our greatest workers and intimate friends?"....

I want to pose a question to ourselves and to our groups; are we sometimes just as fearful and intolerant within our own groups of the perceived beggar, tramp, crackpot, queer and fallen? Are we ourselves, guilty of judging a book by its cover, author, and publisher? In other words – what a person looks like, how they introduce themselves, where they come from; i.e. treatment centers, mental institutions, jails etc.? Do we “*cater only to pure and respectable alcoholics*” as Bill W. stated above? I feel these are very vital questions to seriously reflect upon when considering our personal attitudes and the attitude of our groups regarding how inclusive and welcoming we are. I believe this can truly mean a matter of life or death for the newcomer who has not yet been given enough time, love and tolerance - from us - to discover the true nature of his/her fatal condition...

In Love & Service,
Rena H.
Area 69 Panel 59
Immediate Past Delegate

A Member Shares Her Experience, strength and hope...

Last month I had the opportunity to attend a pre-assembly workshop in Moab, UT. The whole experience was enlightening on many levels, and we were able to have some lively discussion about this year's Topics: Today's Alcoholic – Inclusion Not Exclusion; Participation in all of A.A. – Is My Triangle Balanced?; A.A. Technology – Where Innovation Meets the Traditions; Attraction Not Promotion – A.A.'s Relationship to the World; and, Group Conscience – The Guiding Force.

This was fascinating to me because, as it turns out, there are so many more opinions in the world besides my own. On the last day, we got to hear summaries of the discussions, and here is what I gleaned from each topic.

To me, the most important part of “Inclusion” was always knowing how to draw the line in the sand between addicts and alcoholics while defending the 3rd Tradition. However, just because I have always been inclusive with everything else, that doesn't mean other people and places still struggle with ethnicity/status/religion/etc. Alcoholism isn't selective, we don't get to choose who gets

recovery. The suffering is universal, why protect ourselves at the cost of excluding the one who is still suffering?

I think there are a lot of different ways to build a solid AA foundation, but underneath it all, I think they all boil down to our Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity, and Service. There are a million ways to be of service or to show unity and love, but the message I got was that, for us, helping other alcoholics is still our strong suit and the best, most genuine way to bolster our own recovery.

From what I heard in the discussions, I think the biggest hurdle we face with advancements in technology is the same hurdle we face with everything else: informing our members, new and old, of the guidelines and practices best recommended when dealing with public forums such as social media. The A.A. Guidelines have very clearly stated suggestions for how to conduct oneself on a public level, and the reasons are clear, but not very well known.

Equally, there are so many takes on attraction rather than promotion. As I understand it, it's the simple difference between acting in such a way that we create a truly inviting, safe, and hopeful place for people to find the solution and possibly

redemption, as opposed to trying to sell the idea of recovery by

using one's own success or progress as an intended goal. Selling hopeless people empty promises only makes them more hopeless, acting toward people and respecting them as human beings in pain, showing them kindness, tolerance, love, trust, and responsibility will actually plant seeds and bring about change.

That ties into the last topic of the Group Conscience being our guiding force. There are so many little decisions that could be made by any group to satisfy any peculiarities. The important aspect to remember is that the relative health of any group depends on how well they practice the program and utilize the Traditions. Because the fellowship is comprised of so many people with so many opinions, there isn't a lot that one meeting (or a few people who attend one business meeting) can do that won't get changed or phased out because it doesn't sit right with the collective group conscience. Either an unhealthy meeting will get dissolved or Tradition-strong members will reinvigorate it. The fellowship moves as a whole, and we are all part of it.

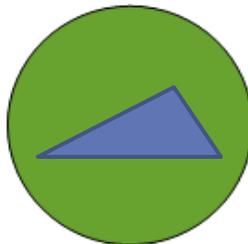
This is personal to me, but I feel there is a reason the Traditions work so well, and it ties into why the program works so well for me. I think we all have some sort of conscience that we were either ignoring or suppressing in some

way. The program awakened mine and taught me how to listen to it. I know when something doesn't feel right to me, and I'm learning more how not to do it. The same goes with the group conscience. We all know when something doesn't feel right for a group, whether people know the Traditions or not. Good examples are good examples, everyone knows one when they see one. When people are trying to govern by mandate rather than lead by example, it becomes obvious to everyone, and they get overruled. It is our choice how to act, in and outside the rooms, and as far as I can tell, our most shining examples aren't the most noticeable, but they are the ones we naturally gravitate toward.

Sheridan W.
Alt DCM SW District 7
St. George, UT

Workshop Topic Presentation

**"Participation in all of A.A. –
Is My Triangle Balanced?"**



What does your triangle look like?

On a piece of scrap paper along the left side, number down from 1 to 7.

**Column 1: Are you sober today?
Draw a line down from 1. Yes = 7**

Column 2: How many meetings did you attend this week. Max out at 7.

Column 3: How many times were you of service this week?

We use the Steps to deepen our Recovery. We use the Traditions to widen our Unity. We use the Concepts to broaden our Service. Bill was once asked: What do the Three Legacies of AA represent? His answer- *"The three legacies of AA - recovery, unity and service – In a sense represent three impossibilities, impossibilities that we know became possible, and possibilities that have now borne this unbelievable fruit."*

RECOVERY

Bill W's sobriety date is Dec. 11, 1934. He met Dr. Bob on May 11, 1935. This first encounter between Bill W. and Dr. Bob was perhaps the first AA meeting although the name Alcoholics Anonymous was not coined until the book was written. "Our talk was a completely mutual thing," Bill recalled. "I had quit preaching. I knew that I needed this alcoholic as much as he needed me. This was it."

But it wasn't until Bob finally got sober on June 10th or 17th (!) that Alcoholics Anonymous is thought to be founded. To a desperate drunk trying to stay sober for a few hours, it might not matter who founded the organization that offers help.

The conception of the Steps started in the Oxford Group, but Bill re-worked and added to them. His first draft took him 30 minutes. In 1939, Jim B., a very early member came up with "God

as we understood Him" and a "Power greater than ourselves." Without recovery there would be no unity. Without the ability to carry the message" there would be little, or no, recovery.

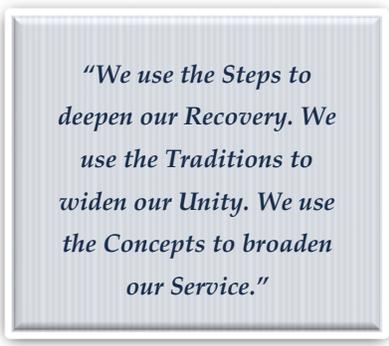
UNITY

The Washingtonians wound up getting into "outside issues", eventually doing them in, which led Bill's thinking of how to protect A.A. from the same demise. Bill led a 5 year campaign for the Traditions. To quote Bill in AA's Legacy of Service:

"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 own 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!" Only five years later, several thousand A.A. members, meeting at the 1950 Cleveland Convention,

declared that A.A.'s Twelve Traditions constituted the platform upon which our Fellowship could best function and hold together in unity for all time to come."

We read the Traditions at every meeting. Unfortunately, they are usually just words on a wall or words on a piece of laminated



"We use the Steps to deepen our Recovery. We use the Traditions to widen our Unity. We use the Concepts to broaden our Service."

paper. Not long ago I worked with a sponsee that had recently done a high dive belly flop into a relationship. I started hearing, "He said...he did...he didn't...judgement, judgement, judgement." Neither party in this relationship had experience in a committed relationship. I asked if they were practicing personalities before principles. If the Traditions hold us together in Unity, could they work in relationships? Years ago I remember hearing an Alanon cassette tape(!) called, "The 12 Traditions in Relationships". I found a newer version on YouTube. The Traditions absolutely came alive for me. I then suggested to my sponsee that they listen. Bottom line, I heard the Traditions with fresh ears and can enthusiastically apply them more to my life today.

Each of us can ask ourselves: what can I do to make the Traditions come alive in my recovery? What can we do to make the Traditions come alive for all our members...newcomers, middle, yearlings and old timers alike?

Without Recovery there would be no Unity. Without the ability to "carry the message" there would be little, or no recovery. Without Unity there might be no meetings for the gathering of alcoholics and the "carrying of the message" and recovery for the alcoholic who still suffers.

SERVICE

These were some of the events which led to the formation of The Alcoholic Foundation:

Per Bill: *"A financial gift came in the Spring of 1938 and its result was to help Dr. Bob and me through that very trying year. We could not have actively continued without it. Yet, money wise, our budding movement of alcoholics was still left very much on its own -- just where it should have been left too, however difficult that seemed at the time. We still had no field staff, no hospital and no book. For these same purposes, our friends suggested the formation of a Foundation to which givers might make tax free contributions. We alcoholics endlessly discussed this new project with them, consuming hours of their business time.*

Frank A. and a friendly Attorney, Jeff W., put out much effort on the original Foundation Trust agreement. The lawyer had never seen anything like it. The new

Foundation should, we insisted, have two classes of Trustees --- alcoholics and non-alcoholics. But, legally speaking, what was an alcoholic anyhow, he queried and if an alcoholic had stopped drinking, was he an alcoholic anymore? Then, why two classes of Trustees? That, said our attorney, was unheard of.

We explained that we wanted our friends with us. And besides, we urged, suppose all of us alcoholics should get drunk at once, who then would hang on to the money! Surmounting many such obstacles, the Alcoholic Foundation was finally inaugurated. It had four non-alcoholics and three alcoholic Trustees.

In 1949 50,000 copies of a preliminary pamphlet called "The Third Legacy" was distributed and in 1950 the Foundation supported something called a General Service Conference. Between 1957-60 Bill worked on codifying principles and developing essays for the structure of the "Third Legacy of Service."

"Recovery, Unity, Service — these are the Three Legacies given to the whole membership of A.A. by its founders and their fellow oldtimers. When this heritage was announced, at the St. Louis Convention in 1955, celebrating A.A.'s 20th birthday, Doctor Bob was already gone. But Bill W. spoke for him and the other pioneers, as well as for himself, in turning over to all of us the responsibility for A.A.'s continuation and growth. The A.A. Service Manual's current version of the handbook first known as "The Third Legacy Manual," may seem to be simply a guide to organization and procedure, and its approach is indeed practical. At the same time, it

is based firmly upon spiritual principles", as Bill explains in his introduction to the manual. In 1962, the General Service Conference accepts Bill's long-awaited manuscript for Twelve Concepts for World Service. In the introduction, Bill writes that his aim is "...to record the 'why' of our service structure in such a fashion that the highly valuable experience of the past, and the lessons we have drawn from that experience, can never be forgotten or lost."

"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 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. Service includes 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."

Let's go back to the three legged stool, or the triangle in the circle. Without Recovery there would

be no Unity. Without the ability to "carry the message" there would be little, or no recovery.



Without Unity there might be no meetings or fellowship for the gathering of alcoholics and the "carrying of the message" and recovery for the alcoholic who still suffers.

Without Service on the local AND the worldwide level, who would open the doors to the meetings? Without Service, who would provide books or pamphlets that help us "carry the message"? Without Service, how could an isolated alcoholic in, say, Whittier, Alaska be in contact with another alcoholic? Without Service, how in the hell could each of us and ALL of us do something for the person who still suffers? Without Service our stool would fall over and we would be on our collective asses!

Take the length of your lines and create the legs of a stool. Or the sides of a triangle. What do we all need to do to balance our stools? To create more equal triangles?

The founders of AA have given to each of us three great legacies: First Legacy: Recovery has given us a second chance to find happiness and freedom; to live useful and productive lives. Second Legacy: Unity has provided us with a fellowship

made up of people who share our own common problem, who give us the love and support necessary to maintain our sobriety.

A final quote from Bill W:

“As I watched all this grow, I became entirely sure that Alcoholics Anonymous was at last safe – even from me.”

(Sources: “A.A. Comes of Age”,
“The Language of The Heart”)

Carol M.
District 9 Moab, Utah

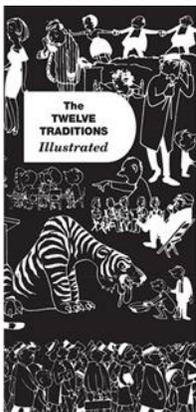
Workshop Topic Presentation

“Group Conscience – The Guiding Force”

What is a group conscience? Is it a meeting of the minds? Is it an ego deflator? Tradition Two reads: “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.” In the AA pamphlet

The Twelve Traditions

Illustrated, there is a cartoon featuring a newly elected group Secretary that shows us what a group conscience is NOT.



The new Secretary proclaims, “I’ll show this group some real

leadership!” He got carried away with being “in charge,” and is certain he knows better than the other group members how to manage the group’s money. The group conscience takes our friend down to right-sized. Sanity returns, the new Secretary calms down, rejoins the group, and the group begins a discussion about working the program. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous may be chosen to serve in many different ways – group Secretary, Central Office representative, General Service Representative, Conference Delegate. All must remember that they serve for the good of all, without authority over any.

The Twelve Traditions

Illustrated pamphlet also talks about a well-informed group conscience. What does this mean? Most of us have attended a group’s business meeting at one time or another. Many groups have business meetings monthly; others meet quarterly. There is no right or wrong in how often a group holds a business meeting. Whether the group is voting to elect new group officers, discuss financial issues, or resolve group problems, it is essential that the members be given all facts relevant to the subject at hand and the minority opinion is heard prior to voting.

On the first three pages of the chapter on Tradition Two in our book “*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*”, a story is told about a man, a “good AA,” who moves to a new city where there is no AA. This man knows that to stay sober, or even to stay alive, he

needs to pass on to other alcoholics what was so freely given to him. A group is formed as he starts to work with others and the new man is “the boss” at first. The new members help others, then the group begins to experience growing pains. Over time, group problems arise and the newer members decide it’s time for someone besides the “oldtimers” of the group to be in charge. An election is held. The oldtimers came to realize that they are servants, not senators. The oldtimers then became “elder statesmen” or “bleeding deacons.” The elder statesman sees the wisdom in the group’s decisions and holds no resentment over his reduced status. He has sound judgment due to his lengthy experience and sits quietly on the sidelines, patiently awaiting developments. On the other hand, the bleeding deacon is convinced that the group cannot get along without him, constantly connives for reelection, and continues to be consumed with self-pity. It is a dangerous place for an alcoholic to be because a bleeding deacon could be drained of all AA spirit and principle and proceed to get drunk. Happily, most of the bleeding deacons survive and live to become elder statesmen. They go on to become “the real and permanent leadership of AA. They do not drive by mandate; they lead by example.

A group conscience, well-advised by its elders, will be in

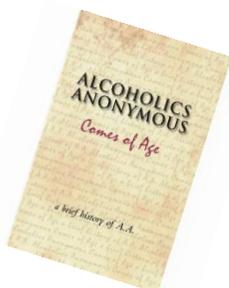
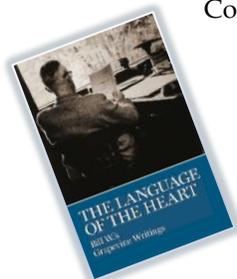
the long run wiser than any single leader.”



On the last couple of pages on Tradition Two in the 12&12, a story is told about one of our co-founders who had to learn a hard lesson about the necessity of a group conscience. Bill W. had been doing some 12-Step work in a hospital in New York. Charlie, the gentleman in charge, talked to Bill about how “unfair” it was for Bill to be doing all this work and remaining broke. Charlie offered to move Bill into the hospital, where an office and a salary would be provided to Bill. Bill was to become a lay counselor. Bill was very excited about this prospect and, while he was racing back to Brooklyn on the subway, he had what he thought was “a seeming flash of divine guidance.” He felt as though he heard “the word of God” encouraging him to move ahead with this plan. Once he returned home, there was a meeting wherein Bill talked to the group members about this exciting new opportunity. Bill’s fellow group members listened carefully, then told Bill that he could never become a professional. Bill said the hospital’s plan was ethical, but

the group members said AA wouldn’t run on ethics only; it had to be better. The idea was good, but not good enough. AA was a matter of life and death, and only the best would do. The group’s spokesman reminded Bill of something Bill had said, saying, “Haven’t you said right here in this meeting that sometimes the good is the enemy of the best? You can’t do this thing to us!” The group conscience had spoken. Bill admitted that the group was right and that he had been wrong. Bill had not heard the voice of God on the subway. Bill said, “Here was the true voice, welling up out of my friends. I listened, and – thank God – I obeyed.”

Sheryl T., Area 69 Archives
Committee



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Area 69 Upcoming Service Events



November 4-5, 2017 Fall Workshop
Cedar City, Utah

December 3, 2017
December Committee Meeting
SLC, Utah

February 24, 2018
February Committee Meeting
Layton, Utah

March 2-4, 2018
Pacific Region AA Service
Assembly (PRAASA)
Sparks, Nevada

April 6-8, 2018
Pre-Conference Assembly
Provo, Utah

For More Information Visit:

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