

The Lifeline



June 2017

24-Hour Phone: 651-227-5502

Volume 53, Issue 6

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." So reads Step Six. After the guilt and remorse of my last drunk had faded, I didn't think this Step had any application in my life. Now that I was no longer drinking I wasn't a bad person. Character defects? I couldn't see where I had any. My character defects were hidden behind all those hurts and injustices I'd saved up through the years and which I regularly brought out and relived with all the original emotion. Not only that, I accumulated any and every new hurt, real or imagined. In fact I took a kind of perverse pleasure from feeling sad and self-pitying. I was giving power to people who were long gone. Then I realized that these people gave me my favorite excuses for why I did what I did or couldn't do what I should have done. I used them to justify my actions and blamed them for my failures. Every time something went wrong in my life or I failed to live up to some responsibility, I took out the list of abuses I'd suffered and used it as an excuse. I became very adept at hiding my guilt behind these real or imagined hurts. I was a chronic victim.

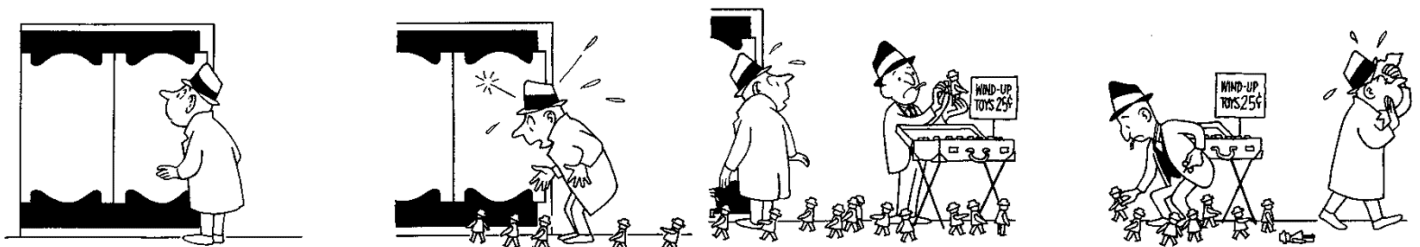
The problem with blaming my frustrations and failures on what others did to me is that it kept me small. I stayed a little boy trapped in a man's body--a self-centered, selfish little boy who expected people to live up to his fantasies of them and got hurt when they didn't cater to every want and whim.

Although I had made a Third Step decision, I couldn't really turn my life and will over to my Higher Power because it didn't belong to me. Unknowingly, over the years, I'd turned my will over to all those people whom I felt had injured me in some way.

Fortunately I reached a point where I was choking on all this garbage. With the help of my Higher Power and the AA program, I chose to grow up. It was about time! I opened up that imaginary closet in my mind where I kept these well-nurtured hurts and tossed them into my past, where they belonged. Into this newly cleaned-out space, I started storing my goals and the hopes and dreams of what I wanted to achieve in life. Now instead of looking backward into the dreariness of my past, I'm looking forward to a bright future because I've finally taken responsibility for my life.

- Ron D., Canaan, Connecticut

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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 Six: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

In thinking about this Tradition I'm reminded of my friend George. In the fall of '94 I was on our local intergroup call list. Late one evening, I was asked to give George a call, as he might want help. George said that he had tried "AA" before but it had never worked--during several previous stays in treatment, he'd gone to meetings there. It was a great surprise to George when I said that most of those meetings were run by the facilities; they were not AA groups but a function of the treatment center or hospital. I said I would be glad to meet him and show him the program of recovery that worked for me--as outlined in our book *Alcoholics Anonymous*--and introduce him to an AA group.

Because of the amount of alcohol George had consumed, I suggested a medically supervised detox. After that, I agreed to meet him at my home group. Unexpectedly, I had to leave early so I arranged for George to be met by a fellow member, Jimmy D.--who became George's sponsor.

Eight years later, when Jimmy D. died, George talked about the wonderful away of life Jimmy had shared with him. George and I often reminisced about how he had given up hope of finding sobriety, and how he thought he had tried AA but had never been introduced to the program of recovery.

"While an AA group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied," AA's Sixth Tradition, long form, says. (AA's Third Tradition, long form, adds: "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.")

- Mike M., Fort Wayne, IA

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Concept Six: The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

This is an easy one to identify with. I think of my family; all of the members of the family have the main responsibility for the well-being and operation of the family as a whole entity. But when my spouse and I are acting in our role as "parent"—we have to exercise the *chief initiative and active responsibility* for the entire family. It is our legal responsibility, as well as one bestowed on us as the (hopefully) most mature members of the family.

Should we not do so, our children begin to get a false idea of how much influence they have. This will serve to their having difficulty with interacting with others as they mature. Also, it will create a situation in which there is constant confusion in the household about who is *really* responsible for what.

The old saying was, "The buck stops here!" Well, the preverbal 'buck' does have to stop somewhere. Conversely, it must also start somewhere. This Concept teaches me and my family to identify and carry out our respective roles so that we will do well as a complete family.

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.

Thoughts From Your Board

In the fall of 2016, a friend from my home group suggested that I consider taking on a service commitment to Saint Paul AA Intergroup. He said that the experience of serving a 2 year term as a member-at-large had enriched his life, personal recovery, and understanding of how AA works on a deeper level. In fairly short order, I had attended a monthly meeting as a guest /observer, and was subsequently nominated and elected to the Intergroup board at the following month's meeting.

From the very start, I was welcomed with kindness and respect. I have been afforded countless opportunities to be of service to the amazing AA community we have here in Saint Paul! And you know what? It's FUN!!! I'm serious!!! While we take our responsibility seriously, we are able to laugh together often as we share in a unique form of kinship, which binds us together in fellowship and service! Not only have I been presented with important opportunities to be of service in AA, but also have gained valuable life experience through working together with others as a team.

There are many service opportunities available at the Intergroup office that can help elevate your own personal recovery, and provide the hand of AA to the still suffering alcoholic. Even something as simple as answering office phones, adding your name to the contact list for 12 steps calls, volunteering for NightOwl so people reach someone at any time day or night , or speaking opportunities to share your experience, strength and hope can make a difference.

I am so grateful and honored to be a part of something meaningful and bigger than myself. It's taught be to be unselfish...I would have never been a part of something like this before. AA saved my life!

- Erik M., 2018 Intergroup Member-At-Large

Notes From Your Office

Friday, May 5th

A woman walked into the Intergroup office this morning just after we opened, and asked, "do people stop into your location and say 'You all are just at the right place for me?'" Then she added, "I love that you keep that lamp in the doorway lit all the time. It gives me hope!" She introduced herself as Melissa. She said she drank last night, and wanted to know how we could help her stop. Needless-to-say, we jump right into action. The Intergroup volunteers had a little group meeting with her to introduce Melissa to our program. We gave her a meeting directory and helped her identify a few meeting, which might suit her needs. Lastly, we arranged for another woman to call her back to act as her Temporary Sponsor.

The great thing about being part of your Intergroup is that you never know when the next opportunity to be of service to the still-suffering alcoholic will show-up. It could be a walk-in; a call to our Office or NightOwl programs; answering a call from us to make a 12-step-call or be a Temporary Sponsor to new or returning member; or it could be someone you meet at one of the 60+ Speaker's Bureau commitments we send speakers to every month.

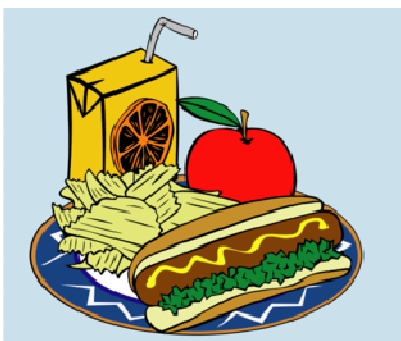
So if you are looking for a service opportunity, please don't hesitate to call us. There's room for everyone here to be helpful, even if you are just a day away from that last drink. You just never know when you will make a difference in someone else's life!

- Bill S., Part-Time Staff

St. Paul Intergroup
~ 51st Anniversary ~

Open House

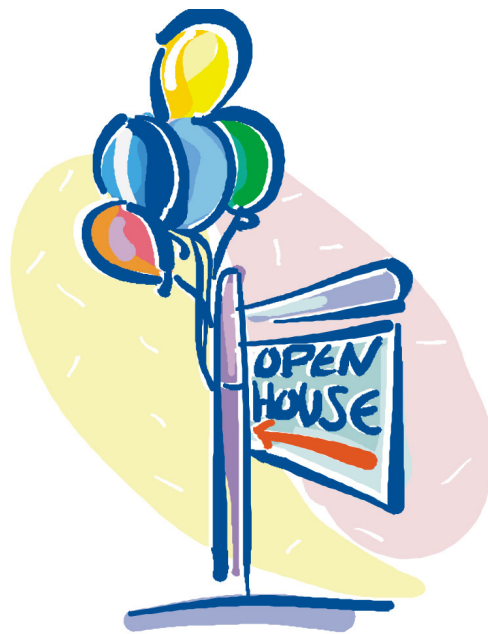
Date: Saturday, June 10th
11:00 AM to 3:00 PM



Join us for fellowship,
food and fun!!

608 7th Street West
St. Paul, MN 55102
(Corner of Western & West 7th)

For More Info Call Us:
651-227-5502



UPCOMING A.A. EVENTS!!

82nd Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous 1935 - 2017

Akron Founders' Day 2017

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
302 Buchtel Common
Akron, OH 44325

Friday, June 10th - Sunday, June 12th

For More Information and to Register:
foundersdayregistration.akronaa.org

Group and Area News

New Meeting: The *Uptown Groups* is now holding a Women's Only meeting on Thursdays at 6:00PM. The group meets in the Upstairs Back Porch. The format is a rotating Step, Tradition & Topic/Discussion meeting.

Meeting No More: The *Lindstrom Lake Group* is no longer holding its Tuesday 9:00AM meeting at the Lakes Free Church, 29620 Olinda Trail in Lindstrom.

HOOTS!

Thanks to all the faithful Night Owl volunteers who helped to answer the phones during May. Great Job! We currently have no open regular shifts but can add your name to either the waiting list or the backup list. Please send me an e-mail at nightowl@aastpaul.org if: You want to be added to the NightOwl volunteer waiting list or you have a night owl story that you want to share

- Cheryl B., NightOwl coordinator

Suggestions for How to respond to persistent "Drunk Dialers"

"Hello _____, we appreciate that you see Alcoholics Anonymous as an organization to reach out for help, but our experience shows that you cannot get sober over the phone.

We would encourage you to go to a meeting and work with a sponsor.

Please understand that this phone number is being answered by volunteers who give their time to make sure the phones are answered 24/7 for those that are truly seeking help.

We would encourage you to call us again when you are sober and ready to work with us. In the meantime, if you need the number for detox or a treatment program, call First Call for help (211 from a landline or 651-291-0211 from a cell phone)."

HANG UP IMMEDIATELY

Your News?

We invite you to share your AA news here!
Please send your items to lifeline@aastpaul.org.
We look forward to hearing from you.



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

Upcoming Night Owl Orientations:

Saturday, June 17th, July 15th, August 19th

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

St. Paul Intergroup Office
608 7th Street West—St. Paul, MN 55102
To RSVP please call: **651-227-5502**

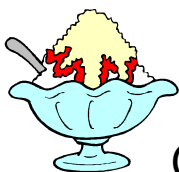


St. Paul Intergroup Annual Ice Cream Social & Long-Timer Recognition

Saturday, August 12th

4:00PM - 6:30PM

Location: TBD



Check back with your Intergroup for more info!

St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes April 18th, 2017

Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and Jenni S. read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.

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

Minutes from last month were reviewed, CJ motioned and Guillermo seconded, motion approved.

Treasurer's Report, – Matt R gave the report. Bank account is \$25,226 and prudent reserve is \$45,000. Liabilities increased and receivables still continue to decrease. Total contributions are up, group contributions are up and office sales are up. Expenses are up \$3,506 due to 3-pay-period-month and Spring Fling and new computers for the office. See Treasurer's Report for full details. Contact Matt at treasurer@aastpaul.org.

Office Report, Dennis – There has been an abundance of volunteers which is appreciated. The new computers are up and running. The transition to the new equipment and QuickBooks Online hasn't been easy but the office is working through it. The Post Office issue has worked itself out, mailing the Lifeline is not a problem. The Lifeline is now available in E-reader as well as PDF and print. The office furniture and equipment will be shifted around a bit this month and the bathroom is receiving a new floor. Contact the Office at manager@aastpaul.org.

Night Owl Report, Cheryl, There are currently no shifts open! Be sure to answer your phone when it rings if you are on the 12th step call list, it could come at any time from any number. Contact Cheryl at NightOwl@aastpaul.org or leave a message at the intergroup office for more information.

Website Report, Jonathan gave the report. 682 meetings and 277 groups total. Down 6 meetings and down 1 group. There are 14 service opportunities and ZERO open Night Owl shifts per the website.

Outreach Program, Carolyn M – Make sure meeting information matches what is listed on the website. Volunteers should encourage Intergroup/District participation. Refer to the Outreach Info Sheet for full instructions. For more information contact Carolyn M at outreach@aastpaul.org.

Update from the Board, Lesli D, No relevant action. Contact the office for more information.

Liaison Reports: District 8 Mike C, Nothing to report; District 15, Bob Z- We went to West Regional Svc Conference, Twin cities well represented ; District 19, Patrick – Attended and represented at Dakota County Transitional Fair for correctional facilities. The archives are moving to Saint Paul. Preparing for the Area Assembly.

Upcoming Intergroup Events – Gopher State Intergroup Hospitality Suite (May 26th-28th) Matt R - Matt and Sandy have started the list for groups to sign up for slots to represent intergroup in the hospitality suite. Contact Matt or Sandy to sign up.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Group AA Announcements:

OMD 1st Fr 5/3 7pm potluck, speaker and medallion ceremony, 1221 Marshall Av. Speaker is Stacie M.

St Paul Speaker Meeting 7pm Sunday Nights, Central Presbyterian Church at 500 Cedar St. Use backdoor.

3rd Edition Potluck – Friday May 12th Food at 6pm Speaker at 7pm. Speaker is Karen. Jehovah Lutheran Church at SE corner of Snelling and Thomas.

Rule 62 Annual Potluck June 24th. 321 Hamline Ave, more details to come.

Suggestions for next month's agenda: None

Grapevine Report, Mark J.; volunteer for May, Andrew

Concept IV review, Guillermo; volunteer for Concept V for May, Brian M

Mock Rep Report, CJ.; volunteer for May, Kevin

Closed with the Responsibility Statement.

Meetings Represented: Defogged Men's Group, St. Paul; District 8; District 15; District 19; East Side 12&12, St. Paul; The Firing Line, Roseville; Fresh Air, St. Paul; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Main Idea, St. Paul; Maplewood Alano Groups, Maplewood; New Found Freedom, St. Paul; No Time Like the Present, Roseville; Outright Mental Defectives, St. Paul; Pocketing Our Pride, St. Paul; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; St. Paul Speaker Meeting, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Third Edition, St. Paul; Uptown Groups, St. Paul; West End Groups, St. Paul.

2017 Steering Board:

Chair:	Jenni S.
Alternate Chair:	Lesli D.
Secretary:	Rob C.
Treasurer:	Matt R.
Alternate Treasurer:	Karen C.
Members-at- Large 2017:	J.D. & Carolyn M.
Members-at- Large 2018	Tom S. & Erik M.
Advisor to the Board:	Sandy K.
Manager	Dennis B.

Office Calls/Visitors—April 2017

Meeting information	78
Inventory/hours	20
12th Step calls	4
Temporary sponsor	12
Speaker request	27
Special events	0
Outside issues	7
Info for professionals	0
Administrative	91
Other	41
Total Calls	280
Average Calls/Day	14.0
Total Visitors	184
Average Visitors/Day	7.3

June 2017 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, June 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

APRIL CONTRIBUTIONS

Number of Group Contributors: 43
Total Group Contributions: \$4864
Number of Faithful Fivers: 12
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 April**

- 11th Step Meditation
- A Baffled Lot
- Andover Day by Day
- Apple Valley Monday BB
- Book Club- 'The book club'
- Complete Defeat Group
- Cottage Grove Groups
- Dakota Alano THUR 730PM Mens
- Defogged Men's Group
- Eagan Tuesday Nighters
- East Side Club - East Side Group
- Fourth Dimension
- Friday Night By The Book
- Highland Park Groups
- Highway 96er's Group
- Hole in the Doughnut Group
- Hugo Group
- Inver Grove Heights Club 84
- Joy of Living Group
- Jumpstart 12 & 12
- Lake Elmo Thurs Night Group
- Mahtomedi Tuesday Step
- Maplewood Groups
- New Brighton BB
- No Time Like the Present
- North Dale Group
- North Hamline
- Office Walk-In
- Pages of Wisdom BB
- Rosemount Groups
- Roseville Wed Night
- Rule 62 Step & Tradition Group
- Safe Haven for Women Group
- Shoreview 12 x 12
- St. Paul Sun Night Speaker Meeting
- Summit Hill
- Sunday Ten-Thirty Meditation - Downtown
- Three R's Group
- Uptown Club
- Vadnais Heights Groups
- Valley Creek Thurs Night
- Women's Basic Text
- Woodbury Primary Purpose

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

Allyson K., Angie R., Annette H., Abby S., Bob P.,
Charlie B., Chuck L., CJ M., Connie W.,
Deb E., Don C., Frank D., Henry O., Jimmy D.,
John G., Keith I., Kevin C., L.J., Lonnie A.,
Marc S., Mary Lou S., Mike M., Paul C.,
Rosie P., Suzanne B., Ty K., Woody W.

Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!

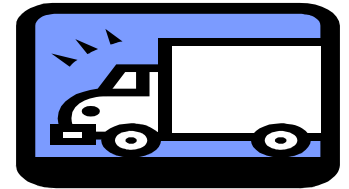


St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup
608 7th Street W.
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3010

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities MN
Permit No. 7451

Please let us know if your address changes one month ahead of time. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of *The Lifeline*. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. Thank you!



St. Paul Intergroup *Faithful Fiver* - Enrollment Form

Faithful Fivers graciously contribute \$5.00 or more to St. Paul Intergroup each month to enable us to 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.

~Yes! Please enroll me as a *Faithful Fiver* !

1. Contact information:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

2. Amount & Frequency:

Amount: \$ _____
Frequency: (check only one)
 Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually
Start on ____/____/____
 Please send my receipt to my email address
 Please send my receipt to my home/postal address
 Please send my **Lifeline** to my **email** address instead

3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit Card*
 Visa MasterCard
Card # _____/_____/_____/_____
Expiration Date: ____/____
Name on Card _____

Signature _____

*I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc.). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup.

Check - Please make payable to:

Saint Paul Intergroup
608 7th Street W.
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3010

2017 Delegate's Report

An Experience of the 67th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous

Having just returned from the 67th General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous held in Rye, New York the last week of April, I am more appreciative than ever of what a privilege and honor it is to be your Delegate from Area 36, Southern Minnesota. Serving side by side with 132 other voting members of the Conference from across the U.S. and Canada, I was Area 36's contribution to the group conscience of the whole Fellowship.

Why I'm Called Your Delegate and Why We Have a General Service Conference

As Bill W. and Dr. Bob aged, it became clear that their role as the primary advisors to the Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation (the original corporate name for our organization) would naturally come to a close. With the longevity of the Fellowship of A.A. in mind, Bill envisioned a structure that would allow the A.A. groups to take over and play the role of advisors to the Trustees once he and Dr. Bob were gone. The blueprint Bill developed for the Conference became a succession plan for our two founding members. In his essay on Concept One from the A.A. Service Manual, Bill shares his realization that "the fact had to be faced that A.A.'s founders were perishable. When Dr. Bob and I had gone, who would then advise the Trustees; who could link our little known Board to our thousands of groups? For the first time it was seen that only a representative conference could take the place of Dr. Bob and me."

The Conference structure that Bill laid out became the channel for the group conscience as described in Tradition Two – the place where God shows up in the activities of our membership. To define that group conscience and to empower it, Bill conveyed in Concept One that "the final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship." In Concepts Two and Three, Bill describes how, out of necessity, our A.A. groups have delegated authority and responsibility for our world services to the General Service Conference. A.A. is just too large (well over 100,000 groups) and is too spread out (covers all of the U.S. and Canada) to function effectively unless the practical management of our services is delegated to a smaller, more manageable number of trusted servants. This is the founding principle of the General Service Conference. I am one of those trusted servants to whom you've delegated authority and responsibility. That's why I'm called your Delegate.

Likewise, the General Service Conference itself has been asked to take on such vast responsibilities and must strive to accomplish such great numbers of tasks that it, too, must delegate authority and responsibility to an even smaller number of trusted servants. These are our Trustees of the General Service Board.

The relationship of the General Service Conference to the Trustees of the General Service Board is working at its best when the Conference acts at the policy level. The Conference appropriately strives to set overarching policies that provide guidance to the Trustees rather than trying to directly handle day-to-day transactions or business practices. As is true throughout our service structure, and is communicated in Concepts Three and Four, if we ask a person or a group to take on a certain task or perform a certain function, then we must naturally also give them adequate decision-making power and adequate freedom to do what they think is best to accomplish what we've asked them to do. Otherwise, we would paralyze our trusted servants by demanding they perform services for us without us giving them the latitude to choose the best way to do so.

Empowering a small group of trusted servants with this much authority and responsibility can be frightening for some of our members. To ease the fear and build trust, we are very intentional about keeping lines of communication open between groups, Districts, Areas, Regions, the General Service Conference, and the General Service Board. The General Service Conference process that we have all prepared for and participated in over the past few months in Area 36 is designed specifically to facilitate this kind of communication.

(Continued Pg. 2)

2017 Delegate's Report (Cont.)

As an example of the Concepts in action, consider that the topics and issues that were discussed and sometimes acted on at the General Service Conference this April were often first discussed in an A.A. group or at a District Meeting or perhaps at an Area Assembly. Many of the ideas were passed along to the General Service Conference after careful consideration by one or more bodies within the Fellowship. When we Delegates, acting as the General Service Conference, adopt any motions or policies as a result of these ideas, we do so in the form of Advisory Actions. Our Advisory Actions should be seen as high-level guiding principles and suggestions that the Conference passes along to the Trustees. Concept Six asks us to trust our Trustees. We must allow them to decide how to best carry out what we've asked them to do. It requires each of us, at whatever level of service, to act with a certain level of maturity and confidence. We need to act like God truly is present in the group conscience of A.A.

The 67th General Service Conference

The Conference this year took place at the Hilton Westchester Hotel in Rye, New York, a suburb about an hour northeast of New York City. To give you a sense of the pace of the week, after checking in, I went outside of the hotel a total of three times for a total of about 5 minutes over the next eight days.

This year was the 67th time the General Service Conference has been held and it was my first of a two-year rotation. I and the group of my fellow first-year Delegates are called Panel 67 Delegates to designate that we first began serving under the 67th Conference. Roughly half of the 93 Delegates who are voting members of the Conference were Panel 67. The other half were Panel 66 Delegates, whose first year of service as Delegate was last year. Along with the 93 Delegates, the other voting members are 12 alcoholic (normally 14, but currently two positions are vacant) and 7 non-alcoholic Trustees of the General Service Board, 6 non-Trustee Directors of our two corporate boards, 12 alcoholic General Service Office staff, and 3 staff of The A.A. Grapevine. The total is 133.

The Saturday we arrived was a day of orientation to the conference and meetings where we heard talks and presentations by Conference members. Sunday, we participated in the first committee meetings of the week. The Conference week was basically focused on committee meetings on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, then shifted to Committee Reports back to the full Conference body starting on Wednesday. It was during the Committee Reports that we took up issues and proposals for debate and decision by the full Conference.

The Committee Process and My Assignment to the Conference Committee on Trustees

We receive the General Service Conference agenda items and extensive background material in February. Our Area does a great job of encouraging groups and Districts and committees to read and consider and discuss and debate the topics. As a Delegate, I was well-prepared by our Area to participate in the General Service Conference as an informed part of the group conscience. But many of the agenda items we talked about extensively in the Area never came before the full Conference. Most of the discussion and consideration of agenda items happens in committee.

My committee assignment is to the Conference Committee on Trustees. Our committee's scope is primarily to tend to the qualifications, procedures for election, and participation in the election of trustees, non-Trustee directors, and appointed committee members of the General Service Board and the two corporate Boards, A.A. World Services, Inc., and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Our committee also approves the geographical areas that make up the regions of the General Service Conference. Currently there are eight regions, two in Canada and six in the U.S.

(Continued pg. 3)

2017 Delegate's Report (Cont.)

The committees of the General Service Conference parallel the committees of the General Service Board. The Conference Committee on Trustees parallels the Trustees' Committee on Nominating. Our first committee meeting on Sunday afternoon was a joint meeting of the Conference Committee and the Trustees' Committee. The committee work done early in the week was a familiar process thanks to the long history in Area 36 of having a committee structure that parallels the committee structure of the General Service Conference. I was able to participate fully having been well prepared by Area service.

On Monday, my committee reviewed the resumes of all candidates for three Trustee positions that were up for election this year. Regional Trustees for the East Central and Southeast Regions were rotating. Each Area in these Regions had the opportunity to forward the name of one past Delegate to stand for the open position. These Regional Trustee positions were voted on by the Delegates from that region, along with the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees and the Trustees' Committee on Nominating. The third Trustee position that was elected at this year's Conference was the Trustee-at-Large, U.S. The voting members for the At-Large position were the 79 Delegates from the U.S. and the 8 members of the Trustees Committee on Nominating.

The review of resumes and approving the slates of Trustees and officers for consideration by the whole body of the Conference were fairly routine matters. The issue that took more time and discussion by our committee were two agenda items: one that addressed the voting procedures for electing Trustees-At-Large in the U.S. and Canada and the other that addressed the geographical boundaries of the regions, the number of Areas per region, and the number of Areas overall.

The agenda items on voting and regions came from an Area in the West Central Region, which is the region that includes our Area. The West Central Region has eight Delegate Areas in it. This is the smallest number of Areas in a region in the U.S. The largest region in the U.S. is the Northeast Region with 18 Delegate Areas. One of the unintended consequences of having such disparity in the size of regions is that the smaller regions are less likely to have one of the Delegates from their region selected as Trustee-At-Large U.S. Each region chooses just one candidate to forward to the full Conference for consideration for the Trustee-At-Large position. In this year's election for Trustee-At-Large U.S., six candidates were put forward. The disadvantage for the candidate put forward by the smallest region is that fewer voting members are likely to have had any interaction or knowledge of the candidate. Based simply on familiarity and perhaps loyalty to our regions, the candidates from the larger regions typically receive the highest vote totals in the first ballots of our Third Legacy voting procedure. After the first round of voting, those candidates with the lowest vote totals begin to be removed from the list of candidates. It is not surprising that the candidate from the West Central region is at a significant disadvantage.

The disparity in voting influence is not the only consideration in reviewing the number and geographical boundaries of our regions. The other issue at play is the ability of Regional Trustees to effectively serve all the Areas in their region when they are in regions with very large numbers of delegates or are in regions that span enormous geographical boundaries. This issue is harder to argue because, as is so often the case with our dedicated trusted servants in A.A., you will seldom find a person involved at this level of service who would ever complain about their workload. Most people who have served long and well in A.A. understandably take pride in their service and sometimes take pride in how much they have sacrificed. But more and more we have been having legitimate debates in A.A. about the downside of asking so much from a few, select trusted servants to the Fellowship. The possibility that we could create more regions or otherwise reapportion the number of Areas per region in order to more equitably distribute the burden of service is a worthy topic to discuss.

The nine Delegate members of our Conference Committee on Trustees chose to debate the Trustee-At-Large voting procedure and the re-regioning topics together. There was good conversation back and forth. Delegates from the larger regions did not immediately see that there was any real problem to be fixed.

(Continued pg. 4)

2017 Delegate's Report (Cont.)

I made a plea to the Delegates from the larger regions to remember our role as Delegates is not to represent only our Areas or our Regions, but to always be asking what would be best for A.A. as a whole. That helped a few of them to think with a more open mind.

Because this was the first time in recent years that a topic involving re-regioning had come up, our committee was seeing it at the very beginning of the process. We were not prepared to talk through and hash out a full, comprehensive proposal to send to the full Conference. Instead, we drafted the following language that became an Additional Consideration from our committee addressed to our corresponding group on the General Service Board, the Trustees Committee on Nominating.

The committee discussed the voting procedures for electing trustee-at-large/U.S. and a request to consider the need to restructure the number of regions and number of regional trustees serving on the General Service Board. After thoughtful discussion, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating review all available historical information and the current regional geographical structure and, if changes are needed, provide all options for restructuring to be considered. The committee requested that the committee's review include consideration of each regional trustees' ability to effectively serve his or her areas; consideration of geographical factors and whether an equal or similar number of areas per region is desirable; as well as feasibility and cost analysis, and that a progress report be brought back to the 2018 Conference Committee on Trustees.

How to Find Out More about the 67th General Service Conference

One of the joys of serving as Delegate is having the opportunity to give reports to Districts and Intergroups across the Area about the experience of the Conference and the issues discussed and decisions made there. No hour-long presentation or brief article like this one can capture the scope of the experience. I can assure you that I have returned from my first Conference with more respect and more trust in our general service structure and the trusted servants who are active in it. To find out more specifics, I would invite you to attend any of the District or Intergroup meetings where I will be making full reports and answering questions. You can find my schedule on the Area 36 website, www.area36.org. You can also find a document there that contains the Advisory Actions passed by the 67th Conference, the Additional Considerations that Conference committees passed along to Trustees' committees, and a list of the proposals and agenda items considered on which no action was taken.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Delegate. And thank you for all of your service as well.

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