

# The Lifeline



October 2017

24-Hour Phone: 651-227-5502

Volume 53, Issue 10

## Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

THE CHILDHOOD MEMORY THAT made the biggest impression on me was being scolded for repeating a "four-letter" word. I still have an occasional slip of the tongue, but I think there is one word that no alcoholic should ever repeat—a word so damaging that it has every right to take its place alongside even the harshest of four-letter words. This word is "if."

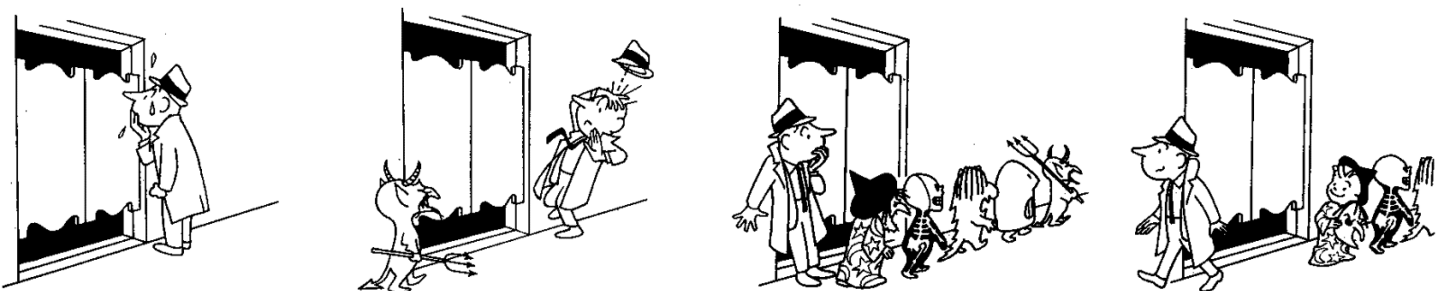
For example, each sober morning, I usually wake up in a good frame of mind. But let's say I happen to pass by the bathroom mirror, and come to the conclusion that "if I lost some weight, I'd look better." While getting ready for work, I might decide that "if I had a better job, I'd be happier." Instantly, I start to feel my once positive mood begin to curdle.

I've discovered that when I'm saying the word "if" what I'm really saying, on a subconscious level, is "I wish." And when I start wishing for things, my focus shifts from all the things I have to be grateful for to everything I think I want—or deserve! Then, just like the old adage about seeing a glass of water as being either half empty or half full, nothing in my life seems good enough. By continuing to follow through with this hazardous train of thought, I could very well "if" myself right back to the nearest barstool.

In short, I now understand that just as I have no mental defense against taking that first drink, I also have no mental defense against speaking that first "if." Just as one drink will lead to another, one "if" will lead to another, until I am awash in a sea of negativity. The only thing that might look good to me at this point would be a drink. I learned at a young age that when I said a four-letter word, I expected to pay certain consequences. I think the same goes for saying "if." Only, in this instance, instead of having my mouth washed out with soap, the price I pay is the loss of my serenity. Fortunately, AA has taught me that I have choices. There are actions I can take to derail this debilitating mental process. First, I can ask the God of my understanding to relieve me of this burden. Next, I can talk to my sponsor or call another trusted AA friend who will most likely advise me to make out a gratitude list. But nothing seems to help me more than being reminded where I came from, and the kind of person I used to be while under the influence of alcohol—that sad, fearful, un-dependable sort of person I will become again, unless I start to focus on my needs instead of my wants.

-- Tracey B., Williamstown, West Virginia

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E-mail: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

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

**Tradition Ten: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.**

### Oops ... Did I Say That?

The day I broke Tradition Ten, I didn't even know it! I had been in AA 13 years and only attending one meeting a week. I had just gotten a sponsor after all these years and hadn't really experienced the true fellowship of AA. It happened at the meeting I always went to but never spoke at. Sitting by my sponsor, I decided to speak, and out of my mouth came the words: "global warming" and "stop pollution." Who could be for global warming and pollution?

No one at the meeting said a word, except one person who made a joke about it. I didn't realize what I had done until the meeting was over. No one chastened me, but I realized I had goofed.

The Traditions are so important because they are the core that keeps AA strong. Many sobriety groups have split up because of different or personal opinions. The Washingtonian Society was a movement among alcoholics before AA began, which started in Baltimore over a century ago, and almost discovered the answer to alcoholism. At first the society was composed entirely of alcoholics trying to help one another. The Washingtonians permitted politicians and reformers, both alcoholics and non-alcoholics, to use the society for their own purposes. Abolition of slavery was a stormy political issue then. Washingtonian speakers publicly and violently took sides on this question. Within a very few years they had completely lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics.

I had also broken another tradition—Tradition Five, which says that AA has but "one primary purpose"—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. I definitely do not want to be the reason that upsets a member to become agitated and go out in the drinking world again. Sobriety is too important.

-- Naomi M.

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**Concept Ten: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.**

Concept Ten, just like Step Ten, provides me with a wonderful opportunity to see if what I do is in "balance" with what I have been asked to do. (Balance, in the past, having meant a drink in both hands). If I am asked to mow the lawn – but wind up digging up the whole front yard to "level" the front lawn (true story) – I have exceeded both the scope and authority of the task I have been asked to perform. Remember, the Big Book says we are "extremists by nature."

Therefore, it is vital that both the person(s) requesting the task be carried out, and the person (s) carrying out the task, be clear about both the task and the authority which determines its scope. Communication and guidance are the vital principles that have saved many relationships and our whole Fellowship.

- Anonymous

## Thoughts From Your Board

Have you ever showed up to an AA meeting that you found in our directory... only to find out that the meeting no longer exists?!

If so, what a (non-alcoholic) buzz kill! Well, sure enough we have a solution for this - Join the Group Outreach Committee! As a member of the Group Outreach Committee, you can help eliminate discrepancies in our meeting directory and prevent instances of you or the newcomer showing up to a meeting that doesn't exist, listed at the incorrect time, or does not accommodate certain needs. The Group Outreach Committee is also responsible for inviting groups to join our monthly Intergroup Council Meeting, where they can support Intergroup both financially and through our group conscience.

But wait, there's more!!! This service commitment allows you to pick the location, time, and day of the week you would like to be of service! How convenient!

If you are interested in joining the committee or need additional information please contact the Group Outreach Coordinator, Carolyn M ([outreach@aastpaul.org](mailto:outreach@aastpaul.org))

- Carolyn M., Member at Large 2017

## Notes From Your Office

We received an email on Tuesday, September 5th from the Grapevine, announcing their newest publication: *Voices of Women in AA: Stories of experience, strength and hope from Grapevine (GV37)*:

"This collection of 61 stories from Grapevine begins with articles by or about women who contributed to AA early in its history, followed by stories by some of the program's earliest female members. Sections are devoted to spirituality, sponsorship, life changes, relationships, family, careers and friendships. The collection concludes with a chapter devoted to women's meetings."

We expect to have the book in stock by the end of September here at your Intergroup office.

Please consider adding us to your shopping itinerary—we have a full selection of Grapevine titles—one might just make the perfect sobriety or holiday gift!!

Yours In Service,  
The Intergroup Staff

## 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](mailto: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.



# Save the Date!

## One Year Speaker:

John H. - No Time Like The Present, Roseville, MN

## Main A.A. Speaker:

Marti R. - Buda Big Book  
Buda, TX

# St Paul Intergroup's Annual Gratitude Night

Saturday

November 18, 2017

7:00 pm

## New Location!!!

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

285 North Dale St.

St. Paul, MN 55103



ASL Interpreted.



# Announcements & Updates

## HOOTS!

We currently have no open regular Night Owl shifts. Thank you to everyone!

**Reminder to all groups - please send an e-mail when you get a new Night Owl coordinator so we are making a reminder call to the right person. My e-mail is [nightowl@aastpaul.org](mailto:nightowl@aastpaul.org)**

### Night Owl Tidbit:

There are 21 Night Owl shifts each week. One of those shifts is taken by an Intergroup Board member. (Intergroup phones are answered by office staff or volunteers 5 days a week between 9:00 am and 5:30 pm.) That leaves 20 shifts each week X 52 weeks = **1055 Night Owl shifts filled by an individual member or an AA group each year.**

We have our good weeks and our not as good weeks. The role of the Night Owl Committee is to help things run smoothly. We answer the back-up phone number in case someone has a question or needs help. We make reminder calls a day or two ahead of time.

The Internet and cell phone use has greatly reduced the number of calls we get for meeting information on any given shift. So instead of getting many calls throughout the shift, we may get a half dozen or less. But we get all sorts of other calls too. One call from just a couple of weeks ago was from someone who had not been to treatment and who did not know what to do. He needed to know what a closed meeting was and "how to join AA". Another call answered just a month or so ago at about 1 am from a woman who was alone and very frightened. She was detoxing - had just quit drinking the night before and shaking violently. She didn't know what to do. Once again, the hand of AA was there to help and for that, I thank you!

Cheryl B.  
Night Owl Committee Coordinator

## Group and Area News

**New Meeting:** The *New Beginning* group is now hosting a Tuesday 6:30PM 12&12 meeting at the Sanctuary Assisted Living home, 1746 Oakdale Avenue, West St. Paul, 55118. The meeting is Closed, Mixed, All-Ages & Handicap Accessible.

**Meeting Change:** The *11th Step Meditation* group is now meeting at a new location: Saint Paul's United Church of Christ, 900 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, 55105. The group continues to host a Thursday 6:30AM Open, Mixed, All-ages Mediation meeting.

**Meeting Change:** The Monday and Tuesday meetings of the *Stillwater Morning Groups* have change their meeting time to 7:00AM from 7:30AM. The group meets in the Library of the Trinity Lutheran Church. Both meetings are Open, All-Ages, & Mixed. The Monday meeting format is Discussion And Tuesday's is As Bill Sees It. The entrance to the meetings is on the Third Street side of the Church.

## Your News?

We invite you to share your AA news here!  
Please send your items to [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto: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, Oct. 21st, Nov. 18th, Dec 16th**

**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 August 15th, 2017**

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

Minutes from last month were reviewed, Bob motioned and John seconded, motion approved.

Treasurer's Report, – Matt R went over the report. The prudent reserve is \$45,019. Total contributions are down, group contributions are up and office sales are way up. Expenses decreased \$1,122. See Treasurer's Report for full details. Contact Matt at [treasurer@aastpaul.org](mailto:treasurer@aastpaul.org).

Office Report, Bill S – The beloved "Rosie" pug that often was at the office helping with service work has sadly passed away. There are new key chain fobs in stock, which come in shiny gold or silver finishes.

Night Owl Report, Cheryl B – There are no open regular shifts available. See additional info in the hoots. Contact Cheryl at [NightOwl@aastpaul.org](mailto:NightOwl@aastpaul.org) or leave a message at the intergroup office.

Website Report, Sergey gave the report. There are 692 meetings and 277 groups total. Down 2 meetings and the groups remained level. There are 14 service opportunities and one open Night Owl shift per the website. The mobile site is still up for parallel testing, the link is in the corner of the regular site and still accepting feedback. Contact Jonathan & Sergey at [webservant@aastpaul.org](mailto:webservant@aastpaul.org).

Outreach Program, Carolyn – Volunteers are still needed for visiting meetings. Refer to the Outreach Info Sheet for full instructions. For more information contact Carolyn M at [outreach@aastpaul.org](mailto:outreach@aastpaul.org).

Update from the Board, Jenni, The board has continued researching alternatives to current phone setup and provider. We are considering a new database management software to deal with large number of different volunteer lists. Next month voting on increasing office staff raise. Budget committee is beginning work on next year's budget.

Liaison Reports: District 8 Mike C, Asst Chair trying to create committee how to effectively/appropriately use money after complaints from some groups. ; District 15 no report ; District 19, no report.

**Upcoming Intergroup Events**

Gratitude Night – Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer at 285 Dale Street North in St Paul.

Founders Day – Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> at DoubleTree Bloomington Hotel. 7800 Normandale Blvd. Mpls, MN 55439

**Old Business:**

**New Business:**

District ASL Committee Update from Kristine J. – For month of October there will be ASL interpreters at two meetings other than OMD; Rule 62 and Firing Line. Committee is inviting anyone interested to planning meeting at DaVanni's (Cleveland Ave) at 7pm on Aug 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Group AA Announcements:**

OMD Potluck & Sobriety Recognition Friday Sept 1<sup>st</sup> at 7pm. Speaker is Amy H.

Midway Monthly Speaker Meeting and Fellowship Aug 26<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Midway Club.

Firing Line Sat Aug 26<sup>th</sup> speaker meeting and potluck. Flyer on website.

Suggestions for next months's agenda: None

Grapevine Report, Bill S; Volunteer for September, Dan

Concept VII review, Matt; Volunteer for Concept VIII for September, Cheryl

Mock Rep Report, Michael; Volunteer for September, Mark

Closed with the Responsibility Statement

**Meetings Represented:** Como Park Big Book, Roseville; District 8; East Side 12&12, St. Paul; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Look To This Day, St. Paul; Meeting of the Waters Mendota Heights; Midway, St. Paul; New Brighton Big Book, New Brighton; No Time Like the Present, Roseville; Outright Mental Defectives, St. Paul; Pocketing Our Pride, St. Paul; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; Third Edition, St. Paul; Uptown Groups, St. Paul, West End Groups, St. Paul.

<b><u>2017 Steering Board:</u></b>		<b><u>Office Calls/Visitors—August 2017</u></b>	
Chair:	Jenni S.	Meeting information	107
Alternate Chair:	Lesli D.	Inventory/hours	37
Secretary:	Rob C.	12th Step calls	7
Treasurer:	Matt R.	Temporary sponsor	24
Alternate Treasurer:	TBD	Speaker request	42
Members-at-Large 2017:	J.D. & Carolyn M.	Special events	6
Members-at-Large 2018	Tom S. & Erik M.	Outside issues	11
Advisor to the Board:	Sandy K.	Info for professionals	6
Manager	Dennis B.	Administrative	78
		Other	66
		Total Calls	384
		<b>Average Calls/Day</b>	<b>16.7</b>
		Total Visitors	231

**October 2017 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, October 17th @ 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

**AUGUST CONTRIBUTIONS**

Number of Group Contributors: 40  
Total Group Contributions: \$5243  
Number of Faithful Fivers: 18  
Total from Faithful Fivers: \$270



**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](http://www.district26-area36.org)



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

- Fireside Women's BB Group
- 11th Step FINE Group
- South Suburban
- Como Park BB
- Mendota 1030 AA Group
- No Time Like the Present
- Women's 12 & 12 Monday
- Look to This Day
- Office Walk-In
- Third Tradition Northfield
- Maplewood Groups
- Midway Club
- Just for Today Women's
- Cannon Falls Group
- Dakota Alano SAT 9AM As Bill Sees It
- Shoreview 12 x 12
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Dakota Alano THUR 1145AM
- Rule 62 Step & Tradition Group
- North Dale Group
- Rosemount Groups
- Anoka Day By Day
- Lake City Group
- Highland Park Groups
- White Bear Wed AM Women's
- Dakota Alano WED 8PM
- Saturday Morning Serenity Group
- Uptown Club
- Summit Hill
- Fellowship Club AA
- Anoka Day By Day
- One More was Added to the Fellowship
- Inver Grove Heights Club 84
- St. Peters Fellowship AA Group
- North Hamline
- Island Lake Group
- Pocket Our Pride - Spring Lake Park
- Dakota Alano WED AM Roosters
- Thursday Night AA - Fellowship Club
- Ridge Runners II Sat 830 AM

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

Becky L., Bob P., Chrissie S., Chuck L.,  
CJ M., Debby C., Frank D.,  
Henry O., Jack A., Jeff K., Jesse V., Jim B.,  
Jimmy D., John G., John L., Marc S.,  
Peg F., Suzanne B., Ty K., Woody W.

**Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!**





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# **St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup 2017 Board Elections**

for Board Members & Officers

***Tuesday, November 21st, 7:30pm***

**at the Group Representatives Meeting**

St. Stanislaus Church  
398 West Superior Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102

## **Open Positions:**

### ***Alternate Chair***

(3-year commitment—become Board Chair)  
(Sobriety Requirement—3 years)

### ***Alternate Treasurer***

(2-year commitment—become Treasurer)  
(Sobriety Requirement - 3 years)

### ***Secretary***

(1-year commitment)  
(Sobriety Requirement - 3 years)

### ***Two Members-at-Large***

(2 year commitment)  
(Sobriety Requirement - 2 years)

*Nominations will be accepted at the Intergroup office, or at the October and November Representative Meetings. Please submit a service resume with relevant AA and non-AA experience:*

*lifeline@aastpaul.org*

## **For more information**

please visit the Intergroup website:

<http://www.aastpaul.org/?topic=14&article=28>

or call us between 9:00AM – 5:30PM, M - F

**651-227-5502**

*We will be happy to answer any questions!*



## We Can Each Make Change Happen in A.A.

I've had the experience of expressing an idea about how A.A. should change or improve and having it get passed along all the way to our General Service Office. I've actually seen something I wrote while I was a General Service Representative (GSR) get added to an A.A. pamphlet. It's not a big deal, but I know it can be done. Because of it, I know I'm not helpless or disregarded as a group member or group representative. My ideas can help shape what A.A. does. But first, I had to be taught how to serve and I had to be shown how the general service structure works.

My second home group was where I learned about service as a privilege and an honor. The group took Concept IX seriously, especially Bill's essay, "Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need." New people to the group were given opportunities to serve right away, but the jobs and responsibilities matched their level of experience. My first jobs were washing coffee cups and picking up chairs after the Saturday night speaker meeting. My first jobs got me involved in Fellowship with other group members shoulder to shoulder at a time when eyeball to eyeball was still terribly awkward and intimidating for me.

As I progressed through the steps with my sponsor and showed up consistently at my home group, little by little I was entrusted with more responsibility and authority in my service positions. Our group took the "trusted servant" thing to be a two-way relationship. We each had to earn the trust of our group in order to move on to our next service position. Completing our current job assignments adequately showed we were ready for more responsibility. The group took notice and nominated and elected its members to the next right job based on how consistently they served in their previous roles.

It wasn't until I was nearly 10 years sober that I was elected the General Service Representative (GSR) for my group. I had just spent two years as the Alternate GSR, attending every event that our group's GSR attended in order to be ready if I ever had to step in as a substitute. As the GSR, I attended monthly District meetings and regular Area Assemblies and other events. At our Area Assemblies, GSRs were asked to sit in on Area standing committee meetings to share their experience and perspective on issues facing each committee. I worked in finance professionally and had been our group treasurer and the treasurer for a round up event. My background spurred my interest in what issues the Area Finance Committee was looking at.

When I attended the Area Finance Committee, they were considering an agenda item from the General Service Conference that was approaching. The item was suggesting that A.A. should develop a separate pamphlet or other new materials specifically to help groups set up their finances and bank accounts. Because of my finance background, I had read some of the materials A.A. already had available to help new groups and new group treasurers with financial topics. I knew enough to know that we already had some very useful materials on this topic and there was no need to develop entirely new materials. So, I suggested that we simply add a paragraph to our current pamphlet, *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*, that would tell people about these materials. The chair of the Area Finance Committee explained that if I had an idea like that I should suggest it at my group business meeting. I took his suggestion. When I took the idea back to my group, they supported it. We then took it to our District. The District liked the suggestion and forwarded it on to our Area Assembly. The Area Assembly approved the idea and forwarded it to the General Service Office for consideration.

Today I refer to this paragraph in the "Self-Support," pamphlet as an example that we should never discount our ideas about how to improve A.A., no matter how seemingly unimportant. And we should never believe that as a group member we don't have any say in what happens at the other levels of the A.A. service structure.

(Continued pg.3)

## We Can Each Make Change Happen in A.A. (Con't)

In fact, it is our responsibility to share our thoughts and opinions about the many issues and topics that come up in A.A. service. God shows up in the group conscience and we don't want to limit God by not doing our part to be an active participant in it.

So look for the "Self-Support," pamphlet at the next group or District or Area meeting you go to. And look for the following paragraph. When you find it, you'll know an individual A.A. member wrote this, that a group supported it, that a District considered it, and an Area recommended it. You can be assured your ideas could just as easily follow the same path.

**Q Does G.S.O. have any specific information for our group or group treasurer about how to handle our group's finances?**

**A** Yes. There are two excellent publications available from G.S.O., A.A. Guidelines on Finance and the pamphlet "The A.A. Group Treasurer," that provide specific information to groups regarding practical matters related to their group finances, such as setting up bank accounts, obtaining tax ID numbers, and outlining the responsibilities of a group treasurer.

From *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*, Pamphlet F-3

Thanks for all your service,

Curt K.

Delegate – Panel 67

Area 36 – Southern Minnesota

delegate@area36.org

## General Service Board—Strategic Planning

While it would likely be difficult to attend an AA meeting and not hear the phrase "one day at a time" said with passion—likely more than once—Bill W. also addresses the proper use of it in Concept IX when he writes about leadership and also having vision. He tells us that one day at a time is a valuable principle that refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not to foolishly re-pine over the past nor wish to daydream about the future.

In fact, he stresses the need to plan in the next paragraph, "As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God's real Providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capacity for foresight...." In fact, Concept VIII charges the trustees with just this task:

8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

I'd like to take the opportunity in a few paragraphs to provide information and examples of how the trustees, in practical terms, animate this Concept. It begins at the July Board meeting, the first time that the General Service Board (GSB) assembles after the General Service Conference (GSC). In a three-hour session, the GSB meets to review the current Strategic Plan that was approved on Feb. 1st, 2016 and is reviewed at the July Board meeting each year, revises and then implements the tasks indicated in the plan. Items are assigned a GSB Priority Code, which not only factors in importance but also

## General Service Board—Strategic Planning (Con't).

As with any strategic plan, items in the plan evolve as they are explored and developed. Existing items may be actioned, eliminated, combined, or in some way addressed as time passes. This past session, at the July 2017 GSB Strategic Planning meeting, the list of priorities began over 40 items, but by the end the list was transformed to a list a bit over half that amount. In October and January, the GSB will work on the implementation of the plan for 2017-2018, and then in July 2018 the GSB will once again work over the plan itself.

When reviewing the list, a common element in the vast majority of the items is "communication". There are multiple reasons why that is the case. First, it is undoubtedly because that this the essence of all of our 12-step work. We "Carry the Message" in many different ways -- far too many to try to categorize in this writing. Second, the GSB, AAWS and GV are all tasked with a wide array of responsibilities – as directed by the fellowship through the GSC process – to design, implement and carry out these tasks. Often, this work is planning ways of carrying the AA message not at the office, but at the area, district, group or individual level. From PSAs to pamphlets to podcasts, the AA message, this language of the heart, can be found in a wide array of venues and formats with an eye to inclusiveness for all who suffer from the age-old malady of alcoholism.

With such a wide spectrum of communications methods, the Board has determined that an overall communication audit was necessary to insure effectiveness, lack of redundancy with an eye to being most effective with the group contributions that make all this communication possible. A Communications Audit is just beginning, and it is being managed by the General Service Office with oversight by AAWS, AAGV and General Service Boards.

Here are a few more examples of strategic planning items that are currently underway:

The GSB will encourage the AAGV and AAWS boards to explore a common web platform.

The GSB will develop a plan to embrace more direct sponsorship of other countries.

The GSB will develop a permanent process utilizing optimum communications methods allowing for all trustees, directors and staff to share full details of current projects and functions.

The GSB will more effectively communicate the availability of online contributions—onetime and recurring.

GSB will the study current makeup of each operating corporate board and their rotations to determine if their current makeup and rotations are the most effective for our mission.

While just a sampling of items, it is quite evident that improved communications underlies it all. It is also very evident when discussions on implementation take place, the value to AA as a whole is paramount, followed by how to help the future alcoholics that need and want the solution found in our fellowship.

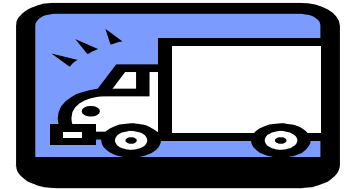
As the West Central Regional Trustee, it is common for me to discuss strategic planning items with the delegates of the WCR. Of course, the GSC is commonly consulted on the planning, and often is the source of items that get added to the strategic plan. As seen in last month's article that covered aspects of AA on a worldwide basis, there is a great need and countless opportunities for the AA message to be a solution for people in many corners of the globe that have yet to hear about how a mental obsession and physical allergy to alcohol can be arrested when a few simple steps are followed and a Higher Power becomes the central fact of an alcoholics' life.

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*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* !**

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