



**Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

Through trial and error, over many frustrating years, I have worked out some positive ideas on ways to help a person who has trouble with Steps Two, Three, and Eleven.

When I first came to AA, I was like many others who have had a normal upbringing with a moderate amount of churchgoing and Sunday school. However, I did not have a solid enough foundation to combat the antireligious ideas advanced by several well-read and intelligent instructors and students at college. As a result, I found myself without any kind of faith. I accepted this frame of mind on what I believed were sound intellectual grounds, but I was not happy about it. I used to envy those people ("clods," I said then) who could blindly accept the teachings of organized religion.

I floundered around in this state for many years, and I was in this situation upon my entry into AA. Fortunately for me, I still was not happy. I wanted to believe, but I did not know how or where to find faith. Blind faith was just not possible for me, I thought.

The first AA group I belonged to happened to soft-pedal the spiritual approach, and they told me not to worry. Now, I know there is a much better solution than not worrying. After all, where does a man go if he accepts Step One, in which he says he is powerless, unless he goes to Step Two, which says he comes to believe that a Power greater than himself can restore him to sanity?

In trying our best to use all the Steps, all the tools, we can get help by discussing these precepts with other members. There are thousands with all lengths of sobriety who had no faith in anything when they came to AA. Most of them have attained a certain degree of serenity; some have gained a lot; very few have gained nothing. Ask fellow AAs how they solved the problem of belief. I'll guarantee you will get many different answers. You will hear of very few overnight conversions. With most, it's a slow process of change.

If you are willing, you can go on from Step Two to Step Three. You talk and talk and talk about it with other AAs. Then you read books and articles on the subject. The Grapevine nearly always has stories about spiritual growth. Go back over the indexes of the past two or three years (in each December issue) and look up the pieces listed under "The Spiritual Side." You can't fail to get help.

Today, we also have thousands of books by a wide variety of authors. Go to the library and browse in the section devoted to the subject, and pick out and read what is available. In the past five years, I have seen at least five or six people get started back from atheism or agnosticism through reading *Thirst for Freedom*, by Dr. David Stewart. Any of Father John Doe's books are bound to help you, as are several books by the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale and Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. These men are experts in this field. This brings me to my next suggestion.

Get some help from a professional with whom you can make personal contact. Every area has people who will generously give you guidance. The person may not be a clergyman. But why not a clergyman? So you have been avoiding the clergy for thirty years, as I did. An honest inventory of myself showed that I felt resentment toward the church and the clergy because at some time in the past they told me the truth about myself and I did not like it and refused to accept it. This also happened to other AAs I have talked to. Even if you were right and a clergyman was wrong thirty years ago, is it not foolish to reject all the clergy for umpteen years to come? Surely, we would be pretty silly to refuse to see any doctor ever again because, at some time in our life, some doctor made an improper diagnosis.

Another way I have found to get help is to pray. For so many years, I said, "I'd be a hypocrite to pray after the life I've led. I'm undeserving. I'm no good." Or "My prayers are never answered." But I was advised to go ahead and pray anyhow, as if I believed in it. By this means, I have learned a few things about prayer which apply, not only to me, but to anyone. There is no set format required. Words, posture, place mean little.

(Continued Page 2)

**Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

What is important is sincerity and a request (if any are made) for something which will genuinely improve us spiritually. If you don't know how, act as if you do, and it will work. And don't forget the prayer of gratitude. For me and many others in AA, gratitude was once a forgotten emotion.

We may not have lived up to our capabilities in the past, but we can start now. If we sincerely intend to, why not ask for help? As for being "no good," or failures, the sooner we banish that thinking, the better. Every one of us has admirable qualities. Let's develop those and pray for help in that effort.

Prayers are always answered, but not always as we expect. We are only mortals and cannot begin to understand the workings of our Higher Power. All we can do is do our best daily and have faith in our Higher Power. There is a slogan which sums it all up pretty well. It says that we should work every day as if everything depended on us and pray every day as if everything depended on God.

I have found a source of help which more or less combines all the others. This is attendance at a retreat, annually if possible. Most of the retreats I am familiar with are run by religious organizations, but this is not essential to get results. The main purpose of most retreats is to give you a few days away from the turmoil of life, under the guidance of an experienced retreat master, to take an inventory of yourself, your life, your plans, your relationship with God. Usually, the first is a very moving experience. But to accomplish any lasting benefit, it should be followed up as best one can in daily living and by retreats in future years.

I hope I don't sound like an evangelist. I'm not. But I've never heard a talk nor read anything to cover exactly what I've covered. I feel very strongly that there is a better answer to one who asks how to get spiritual help than to say, "Don't worry. It will come sooner or later." We can make it sooner, so let's do it.

- J. B. Minneapolis, MN

(Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. November 1992. Reprinted with permission)

**Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.**

When I called AA for help I was fortunate to get a classic Big Book Twelfth Step call from Floyd O. and Bob B. They did it by the book; there was no lecturing or asking me questions about my drinking--no pressure to get me to do anything. They simply and honestly shared their stories with me without trying to impress me, sharing how their lives had changed for the better since being in AA, and how they were getting along now without drinking. I was also told why they were there --to help themselves stay sober. I was hooked; I wanted what they had. Their twelfth Step call was a good example of attraction rather than promotion, and it really worked for me.

Are we, as members of Alcoholics Anonymous, as attractive as we could be to newcomers and to the outside community? How do they perceive our Twelfth Step efforts--as attraction or as promotion? Do we carry the AA message of hope to them and keep our egos and personal ambitions out of the process? Are we familiar with all three of our legacies? Do we speak the language of the heart--simply and honestly sharing our experience, strength, and hope, or do we get carried away and act like self-appointed AA spokespersons, counselors, or teachers determined to "give it to 'em" whether they want it or not. It may be good for us to think again about our Eleventh Tradition of attraction rather than promotion, and how it affects our unity.

How critical is a newcomer's first exposure to AA? When I was about six months sober, I was looking for a daytime meeting and found one listed in our intergroup directory. It was a meeting held in a local hospital, and it didn't take me long to realize that this was not the kind of meeting I was used to attending. First of all, nobody welcomed me; they didn't read the Preamble or "How it Works," and most people there didn't introduce themselves as alcoholics. Second, a big domineering-looking nurse in a starched white uniform and shining silver name-tag was obviously running the meeting, and she was verbally beating up a guy who was

(Continued page 3)

### **Tradition Eleven (Continued)**

sitting in the center of a circle of thirty people. She did all of the talking--about this poor guy's problems and what he should do. I didn't like it, and told her after the meeting that I've never attended such a weird AA meeting and that I wouldn't be back. She explained that the meeting wasn't intended for outsiders but only for patients. Certainly, the meeting should not have been included in our directory, and whoever listed it was obviously uninformed about our Traditions. Lucky for me, I knew something about AA because I had a good sponsor who helped me to understand what AA was and what it wasn't. In addition, my home group was a good solid Big Book AA meeting, and we also discussed our Twelve Traditions. I knew what a good AA meeting was, so I didn't have to make a decision for or against joining AA based on my experience at that institution's meeting that day--as some other newly sober persons there may have had to do.

I recently heard someone at a meeting say that we may be the only copy of the Big Book that many people will ever see, and it reminded me of an experience I had one evening after three members of my home group and I had finished sharing about our AA experience at a local treatment center. The facility's director asked for us to meet with him in his office. First, he warmly commended us for looking so clean and neat, and for doing such a good job of keeping our message focused on AA principles and speaking within our own experience. He also told us that we made him feel proud to be an AA member. Then he went on to relate some of the problems he's had with other visiting AAs trying to sound like experts on alcoholism and recovery, looking like hobos, using foul language, and hustling his clients. This experience confirmed the need for some simple guidelines regarding our appearance, language, and sharing of experience, strength, and hope when doing this type of Twelfth Step work.

I got more insight into how AA is perceived by others a few summers ago after our International Convention, as my wife and I stood in line on Seattle's waterfront waiting for our harbor cruise boat. We were chatting with a vacationing couple from Michigan about why we were in town, and they told us how impressed they were with the big crowd of AA and Al-Anon members visiting from all over the world. They asked us if some of the special name badges they saw, adorned with pins, medals, and ribbons, officially designated our AA officers: Was it something like displaying our rank and length of service by chevrons and hash marks as in the military? We briefly shared with them about our Traditions, and tried to explain that our structure consisted only of trusted servants with equal status as compared to the conventional type of hierarchy in most other organizations--and besides, the "special" embellished name tags only indicated a member's home state and possibly other conventions they've attended. The experience made us aware how easy it is for others to erroneously perceive AA by the seemingly innocent actions of a few of us. We are reminded in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions that "it is more than a denial of self-seeking. This tradition is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in AA."

Most of us know that there are no such things as professional AA speakers, counselors, teachers or managers, but the average person unfamiliar with AA doesn't know it--including some of our uninformed AA members. So, I've got to remember not to give them reasons to believe we are something that we're not. It seems easier and more attractive to just keep it simple and do what I know how to do best--to share my experience, strength, and hope, and to learn as much as I can about all three of our legacies, but also to admit that I don't have all the answers. And perhaps it would be good for me to try and put the brakes on my overachieving ways, relax and try to be just an ordinary AA member without the need to impress others with how much I'm doing for AA.

Alcoholics Anonymous is still attractive to newcomers and to all members who want it. And the community, for the most part, views AA as an attractive and well respected Fellowship with a long and successful track record for helping drunks. However, we can always do better, and it has to begin with me. I can become more informed about all three of our legacies, admit that I don't know it all, talk less and do more, be more open minded, be a better listener, more honest and unselfish, more willing, grateful, patient, tolerant, and loving. And it is most important for me to keep trying to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic.

And if I do these things more often, I'll be doing my part in practicing the Eleventh Tradition of attraction rather than promotion. Finally, if I remember to keep it simple, and try to practice all of our Traditions every day, I'll be a better person and a more attractive AA member without the need to promote. Our co-founder, Dr. Bob, talked about the simplicity of the program. He said, "Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.' We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind."

-- Ken Y. , Minneapolis, MN

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

**One Year Speaker:  
Amili S.**

**Women's Basic Text**

**Main A.A. Speaker:  
Terry C. - Uptown  
Wednesday 6PM**

**St Paul Intergroup's  
Annual  
Gratitude Night**

**Saturday  
November 17, 2018  
7:00 pm**

**Lutheran Church of the  
Redeemer**

**285 North Dale St.  
St. Paul, MN 55103**



**ASL Interpreted upon request.**

Please contact Intergroup Staff by October  
17th: 651-227-5502 or [Lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:Lifeline@aastpaul.org)

# Announcements & Updates

## HOOTS!

### WANTED: One New Night Owl Committee volunteer

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

#### Requirements:

- >1 year sobriety
- >Answer the back-up phone during your rotation
- >Experience with Night Owl
- >2 year commitment

Thank you!

Frank N.  
Night Owl Committee Coordinator

Night Owl Tidbit: Do you have an interesting Night Owl story you want to share? Send an e-mail to [nightowl@aastpaul.org](mailto:nightowl@aastpaul.org).



"I've discovered I'm unique — just like everyone else!"

(Clara T. Cartoon reprinted with permission, Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc.)

### Group and Area News

**New Meeting:** The *Restore Us To Sanity* group is now hosting a Monday 7:30PM Men's Big Book meeting at the Eagle Heights Church, 1301 County Road 42 East, Burnsville, MN 55306. the location is Accessible.

**New Meeting:** The *Steps to Freedom Big Book* added a second meeting to its schedule. The new meeting is Fridays, 7:00AM. It is a Close, Mixed, All-Ages, Big Book, and is Accessible. The group meets at Christ Untied Methodist Church, 2500 Hudson Place, Maplewood, 55119.

**Meeting Change:** The *Forest Lake 12 & 12* is now meeting at 7:00PM Thursdays at Hosanna Lutheran Church, 9300 Scandia Trail North Forest Lake, MN 55025. The meeting is Closed, Mixed, and All-Ages .

**Please Let us know about any meeting changes, new meetings, or any meetings that are no longer. Please email: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)**

### 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, Nov 17th, Dec 15th, Jan 19th**

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, September 18th 7:30pm

1. Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
2. Last month minutes reviewed, motioned Steve and seconded by John K, motion approved.
3. Treasurer's Report, C.J. M – Intergroup is working with an account consultant from the MUCR company to assist with our Quickbooks online program. We are really pleased with the progress we have made so far. Total Contributions: Down -\$1,785 Sales: Down -\$1,254 Operational Expenses: Less this month because August is a 3 paycheck month. Although we are in good condition financially and we have not dipped into our prudent reserve – we ask that you please encourage all groups to contribute to Intergroup.
4. Office Report, Bill S – 91 visitors to the Intergroup Office last month! Lots of new merchandise: Sobriety Birthday cards, posters, and the Meeting-In-A-Pocket! *Please email lifeline@aastpaul.org for further information.*
5. Night Owl Report, Lesli D – Night Owl updated the call forwarding system again. Please visit the Night Owl Program on the Intergroup Website to access the new call forwarding directions or contact the Night Owl Coordinator. One New Night Owl Committee Volunteer Position open (duties/requirements are listed on the report). Two Open Night Owl Phone Shifts available: 3rd Tuesday 5:30PM-10PM & 4th Tuesday 10PM-6AM. *Please contact Frank N at NightOwl@aastpaul.org or leave a message at the Intergroup Office.*
6. Website Report, Lesli D – Website's activity has slightly increase. Down one group and up one meeting. *Contact Jonathan & Sergey at webservant@aastpaul.org.*
7. Outreach Program, Carolyn M – Please help out the Outreach Committee by visiting groups that currently do not contribute to Intergroup. We have a couple people who have joined the Outreach team – always looking for more! *Please contact Carolyn M at outreach@aastpaul.org.*
8. Update from the Board, Jennis S gave the report - Building Committee: Looking into our lease because it is up in May and our building is for sale. Finance Committee: In the process of formulating our budget and Dennis B will present the presentation the committee made. Just a reminder – Intergroup Elections are in November!
9. Liaison Reports: District 8: Mike C – N/A District 15: Jennifer –Fall Workshop: Living Traditions In Our Daily Lives will be held on Oct 27th @ 11:30 in the Christ Lutheran Church, Lake Elmo. There will be chili and a TBD speaker. District 19: Dan R – N/A
10. Intergroup Events: Upcoming -- Ice Cream Social and Long Timers Recognition Sat, Sept 22nd, Gratitude Night: Lutheran Church of the Redeemer on Sat, Nov 17 @ 7PM-10PM, Founder's Day Suite: DoubleTree Bloomington from Fri Nov 23-Sun Nov 25
11. Old Business: N/A
12. New Business:
  - a. Financial Reports Breakdown: Intergroup relies on various contributions (funds, 12th Step work, meeting information, merchandise sales, and news) from the St Paul and surrounding suburbs AA community. Please take into consideration that "the water might be free but someone is paying for the pipes" – carrying the message of AA is free but providing multiple services (24 hr phone service, website, literature, and fellowship events) for the still suffering alcoholic requires healthy contributions.
  13. Group AA Announcements:
    - a. Recovery Fest is on Sept 22nd (after Ice Cream Social) from 4pm-8pm. Event is FREE! Krista will be the speaker, live bands, tacos, and a bounce house. All are welcome.
    - b. OMD Potluck, Sobriety Recognition, & Speaker meeting - 1st Friday @7:00 pm at 550 W 7th St., Saint Paul. Speaker: TBD
    - c. Main Idea Sobriety Recognition: 2nd Friday: 7:30-9:00 pm located @ 499 Wacouta Street, St Paul.
    - d. Rolls and Nickels (Hudson, WI) is hosting a Sunday Funday on Sept 30.
  14. Suggestions for next month's agenda: N/A
15. Grapevine Report, Vane O; Volunteer for October, John K
16. Concept review, Carl O; Volunteer for Concept for VII, Lindsey D.
17. Mock Rep Report, Tom S; Volunteer for October, Marc B
18. Closed with the Responsibility Statement

**Meetings Represented:** District 8; District 15; Basic Text, St. Paul; Como Park Big Book, Roseville; Fireside Women's Big Book, St. Paul; Happy, Joyous & Free, Mahtomedi; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Lakeview AA, Maplewood; Main Idea, St. Paul; Maplewood Alano Groups, Maplewood, On Awakening, St. Paul; One More Was Added to The Fellowship, St. Paul; Roll of Nickels, Hudson, WI; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Uptown, St. Paul; We Can, St. Paul; West End, St. Paul; Women's Basic Text, St. Paul.

<b><u>2018 Steering Board:</u></b>		<b><u>Office Calls/Visitors—September 2018</u></b>	
Chair:	Lesli D.	Meeting information	87
Alternate Chair:	Rob C.	Inventory/hours/location	29
Secretary:	Carolyn M.	12th Step calls	1
Treasurer:	C.J. M.	Temporary sponsor	19
Alternate Treasurer:	Justin D.	Speaker request	58
Members-at-Large 2018:	Tom S. & Erik M.	Staff & Other Calls	111
Members-at-Large 2019	Brian L. & Vance O.	Total Calls	305
Advisor to the Board:	Jenni S.	<b>Average Calls/Day</b>	<b>16.1</b>
Manager:	Dennis B.	Total Visitors	270

**November 2018 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, November 20th @ 7:30 PM**  
 SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH (Church Basement)  
 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

**SEPTEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Number of Group Contributors	37
Total Group Contributions:	\$4867
Number of Faithful Fivers:	20
Total from Faithful Fivers:	\$520



**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 September**

- 11th Step Meditation
- Amazing Grace Group
- Anoka Day By Day
- Cannon Falls Group
- Cottage Grove Groups
- Dakota Alano SAT 11 AM
- Day by Dei Saturday
- Eagan Burnsville Savage - Sat Speaker
- Easy Does It
- Forest Lake Alano
- Friday Night Oasis Group
- Gloria Dei AA
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Jumpstart 12 & 12
- Lake Elmo Thurs Night Group
- Lakeville Hope Community
- Macalester Group AA
- New Brighton Alano
- No Time Like the Present
- Positively 4th Street
- Ridge Runners II Sat 830 AM
- Rosemount Groups
- Rule 62 Step & Tradition Group
- Saturday Morning PS Meeting
- Saturday Morning Serenity Group
- Saturday Morning Treats
- Shivering Denizens
- Shoreview 12 x 12
- St. Paul Sun Night Speaker Meeting
- St. Peters Fellowship AA Group
- Stillwater Rivertown Group Sun PM
- Summit Hill
- Third Tradition Northfield
- Una Luz en el Camino
- Valley Step Group
- Women's 12 & 12 Monday
- Woodbury Fri I Am Responsible

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

- Adam P., Anne B., Barb M., Chris H., Cody D.,
- David D., Dave F., Desiree C., Don S. Elizabeth B.
- Ellie R., Frank D., Gary M., Jimmy D., Jodie T.,
- Joel C., Joey L., Johnny S., Karen N., Marc B.
- Marc S., Margaret B., Michael C.,
- Spencer S., Steve R., Suzanne B., Tim M.



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





**N  
O  
T  
I  
C  
E**

# **St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup 2018 Board Elections**

**for Board Members & Officers**

**Tuesday, November 20th, 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 to your office a service resume with relevant AA and non-AA experience.

## **For more information**

please visit the Intergroup website:  
<http://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!*



## **Trust Looks Like Tolerance**

A.A. is wonderfully and aggravatingly full of alcoholics. Hanging around with one another and trying to serve together can sometimes be a challenge. After gaining some semblance of a good, stable life by surrendering to the 12 Steps and sponsorship, it is easy to forget that we all got here in a desperate state of self-centered, self-imposed crisis. No wonder we can grate on one another in business meetings at our home group, in group conscience meetings at our districts, and when we gather for Area inventories. We are, on our best days, still a collection of against-all-odds recovered alcoholics. We have not risen above humanness, and we may still be a bit under-developed emotionally compared to the general population.

Given that we all have our origins in lives ruined by alcoholism, we AAs might do better to offer one another a bit more tolerance. Tolerance is easier if we trust that our principles and our Fellowship are big enough and strong to hold A.A. together. The opposite of that trust and tolerance looks like harsh criticism of one another and can even degenerate into name-calling of sorts. We've all heard this at business meetings and group consciences. Any time we call into question the "spiritual" worthiness of someone else's opinion or cast doubt on whether someone else acted in a "principled" way, we are likely trying to discredit them to advance our own opinion. In contrast, our 12 Steps and 12 Traditions call on us to take our own inventories, lead by example, and allow others the autonomy to make their own choices.

This need for trust and tolerance in our Fellowship is not new. At the General Service Conference in New York this year, one of the daily readings were the words of Bob P., from the 1986 Conference:

If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing A.A. today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity – the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions; pressure for G.S.O. to 'enforce' our Traditions; screening alcoholics at closed meetings; prohibiting non-Conference-approved literature, i.e., 'banning books;' laying more and more rules on groups and members. And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders.

Today, as was the case three decades ago, we must work to counter our tendency to force our own standards on others. There are no A.A. police. When we go about trying to require conformity, we are likely to be driving alcoholics away rather than being attractive. Our lives and the lives of the new people coming to A.A. depend on our meetings and groups and service structures being the most welcoming, inclusive places they can be. We can trust that the principles of our program are spiritually grounded enough to carry forward without any of us needing to be the judge and jury on another's sobriety or service. Trust and tolerance will ensure our future. Rigidity will not.

Thanks for all your service,

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

### ***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.

## AA Grapevine Illustrated

Over the next three months I will dissect the primary corporations of Alcoholics Anonymous, of which there are three: The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. (GSB), and two affiliate corporations of the GSB, AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV) and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS). Being an affiliate means that some (in this case, all) of its stock is owned by the parent company. The formal ownership of these corporations from the eye of the IRS are the twenty-one trustees of the General Service Board. All three of these corporations have the same, basic mission: **To Serve The AA Fellowship.**

This month I will describe the makeup of the AAGV, its mission, its structure and some practical aspects for every AA member to know what they own from a spiritual basis, beyond what the IRS considers it to be. I know of no other corporation that operates with an inverted triangle that places the management on the bottom and the general membership at the top, but that is also how we retain our spiritual design.

First, AAGV has a more robust corporate mission to provide a focus. A shortened version of the mission is that it is a multi-media publisher of the International Journals of Alcoholics Anonymous and related content. Additionally, its primary purpose is to carry the AA message to everyone interested in alcoholism.

Notice the plural, "Journals". That is because two separate and individually designed magazines are published: Grapevine and the La Vina. The Grapevine is the magazine begun in 1944 by "ink-stained wretches", and La Vina is a Spanish Grapevine publication that was officially started in 1996 after some experimentation with some Spanish articles in the AA Grapevine.

Next, note "related content". AA Grapevine has an array of other publications (books) in paper and ebook formats, plus CDs, online content and miscellaneous items. AAGV has also been making an annual pocket planner and calendar for many years, two favorite items of the fellowship.

All the work of the AAGV is done by nine full-time staff, a nine-member Board of Directors that includes employees, trustees and non-trustee directors, plus essential to their work are the members of the fellowship, particularly Grapevine chairs at all service levels, Grapevine Representatives (GvRs) in the AA groups (RLVs for La Vina) and several outside vendors. The fellowship is the source of the articles and members of the fellowship serve on the Editorial Advisory Board.

Likely one of the most practical aspects of AAGV that isn't always known by the fellowship is that it operates under a "self-support mandate". What that means is that no one – no AA member or AA group – can contribute money to the AAGV. That is contrary to AAWS, which is supported by group contributions and literature profits. This mandate has always created a challenge in publishing what the fellowship asks for from the Grapevine but not always subscribing and purchasing the requested materials at a level necessary to generate the profits necessary to pay the bills and keep a solid business model in place. In spite of that, it has been remarkable that over the years the net drain on AA's reserve fund (the source of money for deficits) has been essentially nil. There have been occasions of profits that always get re-directed back to the reserve fund.

Another little-known fact is that AAGV can provide an incredible amount of historical/archival material with no special authorization by anyone via the AAGV Digital Archives. Every single issue of the Grapevine can be read online for one annual fee. Recently restructured to provide a robust user interface to find something in particular, e.g., topic, region, time frame, the Digital Archives is a treasure trove for recovery, unity and service.

## AA Grapevine Illustrated (Con't)

Right now, the AAGV has a "Subscription Challenge" going on during 2018, which will result in the Grapevine having a number of articles on the region that has the greatest increase in subscriptions. If every reader of this article either influences the purchase or make a subscription purchase to support the Grapevine, it is highly probable it will be the West Central Region being featured!

Thank you for having the opportunity to be your servant.

Tom A.

West Central Region Trustee & AAWS Director

## Thoughts From Your Board

Hello everyone, I am so glad to have been asked to serve on the Board. I started my term as the Treasurer in January of 2018, so it is coming to an end. I would like to take a minute to thank Dennis B., the Office Manager and all of the past Board members for all of their hard work and help in keeping our doors open for the still suffering Alcoholic. This position came with some challenges; Dennis, myself and the current Board have been working to clear up the Quick Books accounts since January. We did end up hiring an outside accounting firm to help us. We received validation when she told us that it usually takes two years to clear up a switch from the desk top version to the on-line version of Quick Books. I mention this so you know what we have been up to or if you have heard rumors about our state of affairs. We are in need of your financial help.

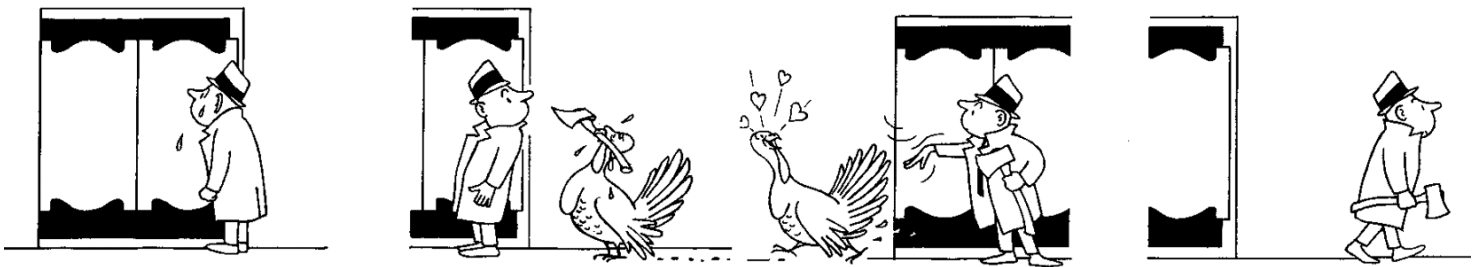
As we have brought the numbers into alignment we have noticed a few patterns in our finances. Our cost of goods and expenses have gone up, our sales have gone down. This seems to be a pattern that is true at the General Service Office and as well as other Inter groups around the country. This information is helpful for us to know, yet it does not solve the problem. Here are our supporting numbers – we have 267 Groups and 13% of them donate to the Intergroup per month – We have less than 20 Faithfull Fivers on our books. In short and to keep it simple, we need more outreach to those groups that are not donating, If we received \$10.00 from each of our groups we would be in really good shape. I am aware of many people who love our little office and the services that we provide; I am challenging you all to become a Faithful Fiver. (If 25 more people signed up, we could pay most of our monthly phone bill.)

Throughout this year we have looked at many ways to cut costs and improve our finances. Along with the current board we have made decisions that have improved our bottom line. We still need your help! If your current group already donates, please talk to everyone you know and see if their group donates. If you currently are a Faithful Fiver, please talk to everyone you know and see if they will become one too. I think it's important to remember that we are running a not for profit business. Our business provides services to the still suffering alcoholic and to the alcoholic who wants to be of service. We need to adjust to the changing times to make sure our services stay relevant, useful and available to all of us.

We have a fabulous group of people on the Board and we all welcome your feedback and questions.

Yours in service,

C.J. M.—Board Treasurer

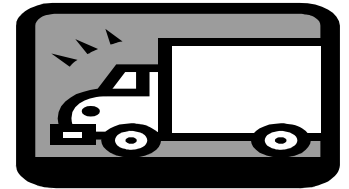


St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup  
608 7th Street W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3010

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 *Individual Contribution* Enrollment Form

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

### 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 \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 *Faithful Fiver* (\$5.00/month)  
 *Terrific Tenner* (\$10.00/month)  
 *Fantastic Fifteener* (\$15.00/month)

### 3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit Card\*  
 Visa  MasterCard  AMEX  Discover  
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