

The Gateway Newsletter, District 14

Altamont, Duaneburg, Guilderland, Niskayuna, Schenectady, Scotia

May 2012

HMB Area 48, New York

Admitting One's Defects



Step 5

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Tradition 5

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Concept V

Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ May 20: HMB Area 48 May Assembly, Florida Town Hall, Amsterdam
- ◆ June 9: Unity Day, Central Park Pavilion, Schenectady
- ◆ June 16: Fellowship Day, Red Hook
- ◆ July 20-22: 43rd NYS Convention, Marriott Hotel, Albany

This practice of admitting one's defects to another person is, of course, very ancient. It has been validated in every century, and it characterizes the lives of all spiritually centered and truly religious people. But today religion is by no means the sole advocate of this saving principle. Psychiatrists and psychologists point out the deep need every human being has for practical insight and knowledge of his own personality flaws and for a discussion of them with an understanding and trustworthy person. So far as alcoholics are concerned, A.A. would go even further. Most of us would declare that without a fearless admission of our defects to another human being we could not stay sober. It seems plain that the grace of God will not enter to expel our destructive obsessions until we are willing to try this.

What are we likely to receive from Step Five? For one thing, we shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation we've always had. Almost without exception, alcoholics are tortured by loneliness. Even before our drinking got bad and people began to cut us off, nearly all of us suffered the feeling that we didn't quite belong. Either we were shy, and dared not draw near others, or we were apt to be noisy good fellows craving attention and companionship, but never getting it—at least to our way of thinking. There was always that mysterious barrier we could neither surmount nor understand. It was as if we were actors on a stage, suddenly realizing that we did not know a single line of our parts. That's one reason we loved alcohol too well. It did let us act extemporaneously. But even Bacchus boomeranged on us; we were finally struck down and left in terrified loneliness.

When we reached A.A., and for the first time in our lives stood among people who seemed to understand, the sense of belonging was tremendously exciting. We thought the isolation problem had been solved. But we soon discovered that while we weren't alone any more in a social sense, we still suffered many of the old pangs of anxious apartness. Until we had talked with complete candor of our conflicts, and had listened to someone else do the same thing, we still didn't belong. It was the beginning of true kinship with man and God.

This vital Step was also the means by which we began to get the feeling that we could be forgiven, no matter what we had thought or done. Often it was while working on this Step with our sponsors or spiritual advisers that we first felt truly able to forgive others, no matter how deeply we felt they had wronged us. Our moral inventory had persuaded us that all-round forgiveness was desirable, but it was only when we resolutely tackled Step Five that we inwardly knew we'd be able to receive forgiveness and give it, too.

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, pp.56-58

FREE AT LAST

"We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world."

The Big Book, pp.73-74



The saving grace of God doesn't come like a bolt out of the blue. It comes through, in, and from other suffering, as well as rescued, souls like you and me.

Came to Believe, page 94

Another great dividend we may expect from confiding our defects to another human being is humility—a word often misunderstood. . . . it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.

I knew deep inside that if I were ever to be joyous, happy and free, I had to share my past life with

some other individual. The joy and relief I experienced after doing so were beyond description. Almost immediately after taking the Fifth Step, I felt free from the bondage of self and the bondage of alcohol. That freedom remains after 36 years, a day at a time. I found that God could do for me what I couldn't do for myself.

Daily Reflections, May 10

*Procrastination is really sloth in five syllables.
Twelve and Twelve. n. 67*

Tradition Five Checklist, from the AAGrapevine

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. Do I ever copy out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or

consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?

4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

*The deception of others is nearly always rooted in the deception of ourselves.
Grapevine, August 1961*

As Bill Sees It: Essence of Growth (page 115)

Let us never fear needed change. Certainly we have to discriminate between changes for worse and changes for better. But once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, in a group, or in A.A. as a whole, it has long since been found out that we

cannot stand still and look the other way.

The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails.

Grapevine, July 1965

An AA Member Shares about the NERAASA Conference, March 2-4, 2012, Crowne Plaza, Albany, NY

NERAASA stands for Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly. The Region includes 11 states, and the District of Columbia. The first Assembly was in Danvers, MA (Area 30) in 1992, and has been held on an annual basis since. NERAASA is for General Service Representatives (GSR's), District Committee Members (DCM's), Area Officers, Area Committee Members, District Committee member Intergroup/ Central Office Representatives of the Northeast Region to discuss General Service Conference issues and concerns affecting AA as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity and service common to the Northeast Region. The theme for this year's Assembly was "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age."

Attending from District 14 were Tammy D. (DCM), George D. (Treasurer), John C. (Alt. DCM, Public Information), Brian J. (Cooperation with Professional Community, GSR Friday Big Book Group), and myself, Wyatt W. (Records/Archives, Alt. GSR, Fresh Start Group). John B. (GSR, Scotia Groups) volunteered for the non-smoking Hospitality Suite. On Friday the 2nd, there were 3 Panels. Panel 1 was the main theme, Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age. The Moderator was Peggy M. Area 11 (CT), and the timer was Jan R., Area 70 (VT). Each Panel had presentations from 3 speakers. First was Laura G., Area 70 (VT) on "Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age". Second was Tracy K. Area 47 (C NY) on "Carrying AA's Message Online". Third was William W., Area 48 (HMB) on "Social Web Sites: Understanding Anonymity." Each Speaker is allowed 10 minutes for their presentation, and then the moderator allows people from the audience to speak for 2 minutes each to comment or ask questions to the speaker.

After a break for dinner, Panel 2 was about Corrections. Maryanne S. Area 48 (HMB) was the moderator, and Bill S. Area 47 (C NY) was the timer. The first presentation was from Rick W. Area 49 (SENY). He spoke about the pamphlet "A Message to Corrections Professionals". What information on the the benefits of the AA program of recovery should be included? Then Sheri C. Area 11 (CT) spoke on "Are we being affective reaching out to Corrections Professionals". The third speaker was Kevin L. Area 31 (W MA) on the topic "Are we willing to go to any lengths to carry the message inside Corrections Facilities". After a brief break, Panel 3 was about Finance, with John L., Area 50 (W NY) as the moderator and Tammi H., Area 59 (E PA) the timer. The first presentation was by Bryan L., Area 12 (DE) about "Where does our support come from? AA self-supporting through our own contributions at all levels?" Followed by Cate B., Area 29 (MD), on the topic "Literature sales: How important are they?" Then Dave P., Area 59 (E PA) talked about "Should the current dollar amount on individual contributions and one-time bequests be increased?" After the 3 speakers, John L. opened the floor for questions and comments. With such a large audience, it was necessary to have 3 microphones setup for people to line up to speak. It was important to stay on time, so not everyone always got a chance to share. It should be noted that all the panel discussions for the 3 days were professionally recorded, and available for sale, including in French & Spanish. Very professional and impressive how the whole event was handled.

It was 9:00pm when the 3rd panel finished. Then came the roundtable sessions, held on Friday until 10:15 and on Saturday till 11:00pm. Each night there were 14 separate sessions, each with its own moderator. On Friday, I attended the GSR's session. There were so many of us, they had to break us up into groups of 20. We discussed the duties, responsibilities and the challenges of being a General Service Rep. We finished around 10:30pm. What an amazing experience this has been. And there's Saturday and Sunday still to come.

I'd like to mention something else that I enjoyed at NERAASA. In the Foyer Area, just outside the Ballroom where most of the events took place, was a Yamaha Grand Piano. One of my hobbies I've taken up in recovery is playing keyboards, so this was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. During the breaks in between events, I would go over and play on this beautiful Grand Piano. I got to meet some very nice people from all over the Northeast while playing. Joan R., who was the Chairperson for NERAASA, was listening and she came up to me and said "I hereby proclaim you to be the Official Musician for NERAASA!" I was so elated; it felt like being knighted by The Queen! I was having such a great time, and this was just the first day!

Saturday had a very full day of scheduled events. It started at 9am with a Panel discussion on Treatment. The moderator was Diane C., Area 59 (E PA), and the timer was Donald K., Area 48 HMB. The first presentation was by Yvette N., Area 60 (W PA). Her topic was "How is the drug court system of mandated AA attendance working from a perspective of AA?" Followed by Amy C., Area 13 (DC) on "What is the connection between CPC's role and the courts, considering cooperation and affiliation?" The 3rd speaker was Bill C., Area 29 (MD) with the topic "Does court ordered attendance change the effectiveness of an AA group?"

After a 15 minute break, we moved on to the 2nd Panel, titled "Grapevine". Wayne G., Area 44 (NJ) was the moderator, with Joe M., Area 48 HMB as the timer. The 3 presentations were: "Our Meeting in Print: Is the print magazine becoming obsolete?" by Lisa S., Area 61 (RI). Then David M., Area 45 (S NJ) told the audience about "1944 to 2012... still as timely timeless as ever after 68 years?". Followed by Lori S., Area 30 (E MA) with her topic "Grapevine, La Vina, books and products via the new media".

We all took a lunch break, then started on the 3rd and last Panel presentation, "The importance of Sponsorship". Kimberly R., Area 45 (S NJ) was the moderator, with Kathy R. Area 48 HMB, as the timer. Once again, there were 3 excellent speakers. Starting with Gary S., Area 28 (ME) speaking about "Service Sponsorship". Jonathan P. Area 43 (NH) spoke about "Recovery, Unity, and Service-equally important?" The last speaker was Bill J., Area 44 (n NJ) with his topic, "Leading by Example". When the moderator opened the floor for public discussions, I got the courage to get in line and have a chance to speak. I talked about how vital sponsorship is in AA, and some of my personal experiences of being both a sponsee and a sponsor. My 2 minutes went by so fast!

The rest of Saturday afternoon was dedicated to having the Northeast Regional Trustee Report, led by Gary L. Then a Business Meeting was held, with Joan R., Area 48 HMB, the moderator and Marty S., Area 59 (E PA) as the secretary.

After the Banquet, they had the Flag Ceremony. This turned out to be a very exciting event. Each of the 11 states and the D.C. had their own delegates holding their home state flag. Each group would then be announced, and as they paraded into the Ballroom, the crowd would let out the loudest cheers as they passed by. A chance to get really rowdy! Then came time for the Speaker Meeting. Joan R. introduced Dorothy H., Past Trustee, General Service Board, as the Speaker, from Philadelphia Area 59. Dorothy had a very interesting story to share, and she did an incredible job describing and sharing her story. We got a standing ovation when she finished.

As if that wasn't enough excitement for one day, there was still the Saturday Roundtable Sessions. I went to the Archives roundtable, and found it very interesting and informative. I made good friends with the Francis G., who was the moderator. I'm the new Archivist for District 14, so I had plenty of questions about what an Archivist does for AA. and how to get other people in our district to start an Archives Committee.

Sunday's agenda was the Roundtable Reports Back, Panel 62 Area Highlights, and what's known as the Ask-It-Basket, which people wrote down questions and put into a special box. Then Delegates would take turns with the answers. There were closing remarks, then, after 3 days, NERAASA 2012 was adjourned.

One important fact was that 885 people registered to partake in NERAASA 2012. But there also were many volunteers who helped with registration, literature tables and serving coffee at the smoking & non-smoking Hospitality Rooms. My estimate is that there were almost 1,000 AA members under one roof, and most were present for the Flag Ceremony & Speaker Meeting. Next year's NERAASA 2013 will be held in Lancaster, PA. and NERAASA 2014 will be in Providence, RI. Everybody would say "See you next year!" I sure hope so. - In Service, Wyatt

District 14 Trusted Servants

D.C.M. Tammy D.
Alternate DCM/Records..... John C.
TreasurerGeorge D.
Cooperation with the
Professional Community Brian J.
Corrections-Men'sWilbur S.
Functions Fred C.
Newsletter Editor Michelle C.
Public Information John C.
Secretary..... Karen K.
TreatmentMike H.
Grapevine Representative.....Lois M.
Records & Archivists.....Wyatt W.
Alternate Functions.....Mike J.
Literature.....Mike M.
Bridging the Gap.....Jack B. & Joe A.
Corrections-Women's.....
Special Needs/Accessibility.....

HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE! - The May District meeting will be held on Monday, May 21 from 7:35-9:00 p.m. at the Scotia United Methodist Church.... The meeting is open to all A.A. Members!

Contributions to A.A. as a Whole

District 14
PO Box 494
Schenectady, NY 12301

HMB Area Association
RTE. 30, #114
118 Polar Plaza
Amsterdam, NY 12010

General Service Office
PO Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Capital District Central Office
575 Broadway, Room 128-130
Menands, NY 12204
Phone: 518-463-0906

Please remember to use your group # when sending contributions.

Treasurer's Report for April 2012

Starting cash on hand \$1,696.45
Checks written 200.00*
Deposits 120.00
Cash on hand as of 4/16 1,616.45

*Checks written to City of Schenectady / Unity Day Pavillion.
Other Items: \$50 given to corrections by Niskayuna Beginners Group - thank you!

SUPPORTING OUR DISTRICT

- The Thursday 6:30 Scotia meeting needs your support!
- There will be a Fall district workshop. If you are interested in helping to plan it, contact Tammy D. at District14DCM@yahoo.com
- Consider making a donation to support Corrections at your next business meeting.

HMB Area 48 May Assembly

Hosted by Districts 4, 8, & 14 on Sunday, May 20 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm at the Florida Town Hall, 167 Fort Hunter Road, Amsterdam. Lunch will be provided. Contact Les B. with questions at 518-378-2417.

Unity Day

Will be held on Saturday, June 9 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Central Park Pavilion in Schenectady. Suggested donation is \$5.00 at the door. The district has a healthy budget for this event so no monetary donations or food donations are needed. Contact district14functions@yahoo.com if you would like to help organize it.

June Fellowship Day

Fellowship Day will be held on June 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Red Hook, NY at the Bertels Mann Campus Center, Bard College, 51 Ravine Road. For information contact: althmbchair@aahmbny.org

43rd NYS Convention - July 20-22, 2012

This year's convention is being hosted by our very own Area 48 and will be held in Albany, NY at the Marriott Hotel, 189 Wolf Road. Pre-registration deadline is June 28. For convention itinerary, registration, room reservations, etc., go to the following website: http://www.aahmbny.org/events/State-NYSConventionFlyer-201207_20-22.pdf