

**REPORT CONCERNING ADVISORY ACTION #15**  
**TO THE GRAPEVINE BOARD**  
**BY NORTHERN ILLINOIS (AREA 20)**

To support the efforts of the Grapevine Board, the 2010 General Service Conference supported a proposal by the Grapevine Conference Committee to gather information with respect to the value of the AA Grapevine to the Fellowship, the use made of it and possible changes to the magazine. More than two thirds of the Delegate Areas have participated in a survey to reach the broadest possible spectrum of the Fellowship as contemplated by the Advisory Action #15. This survey included the four questions posed by the Grapevine Conference Committee, as well as eight additional questions proposed by a Delegate subsequent to the General Service Conference. This broader effort received the support of the Grapevine Board to whom Advisory Action #15 proposed submitting the Fellowship's response.

In Northern Illinois (Area 20), the survey was included in the summer edition of the Concepts newsletter, was available on the NIA website ([www.aa-nia.org](http://www.aa-nia.org)), and has been distributed at Area Assemblies and Committee meetings and through DCMs. The Area 20 Fellowship's responses to the survey were tabulated in a spreadsheet format and used to prepare this report. The spreadsheet has been forwarded on to be included in a combined Delegate area report. In addition, the following summary of the responses to the four questions posed by the Conference Grapevine Committee is being separately submitted to the Grapevine Board as contemplated by Advisory Action #15.

**PARTICIPATION**

The Fellowship in Northern Illinois submitted 221 completed surveys. This represents roughly 1% of the total Area 20 Fellowship. Nineteen of the 25 Districts in Area 20 were specifically represented. Of those who knew their home districts, more than half of the responses originated in one of four districts.

The average age of the Area 20 respondents was 51.3 years and the average length of sobriety was 11.4 years. Responses and subscriptions broke down by age group as follows:

<b><u>Age</u></b>	<b><u># of Respondents</u></b>	<b><u># of Subscribers</u></b>	<b><u>Subscribers (%)</u></b>
0-29	18	3	16.7%
30-39	31	3	9.7%
40-49	35	10	28.6%
50+	126	56	40.3%

**QUESTION 1**

What is the value of the Grapevine magazine to you?

**Summary of Responses**

A significant number of respondents (43) stated that the value was in the shared stories of others' experience, strength and hope. Many simply mentioned that the Grapevine is a good or easy read (28), while others spoke of the specific value they found in the Grapevine. Some read it for insight or inspiration (15), to stay connected (10) or as a reminder (2). Others stated that they read it for information (8). There was specific reference by some to: the wide range of topics not normally discussed at meetings or of outlooks represented (11); to stories reflecting

the “old days” or by “oldtimers” (5); and to the calendar of events (4). Ten responses mentioned the value to include entertainment, humor and jokes.

Of those responding, more than 10% stated that they either had never or did not read the Grapevine (20) or read it only infrequently (12).

## **QUESTION 2**

How do you use the Grapevine magazine?

### **Summary of Responses**

The predominant use for the Grapevine was for personal recovery (100). While use of the Grapevine in 12-Step work was mentioned by only 3 respondents, 10% of the respondents (23) reported they shared a copy of the Grapevine with others. Only two reported using a Grapevine subscription as a gift. Grapevines are used as topics for leads at meetings (34) or in Grapevine meetings (6) by Area 20 respondents.

Only one respondent mentioned using the Grapevine in service work generally. But a number mentioned its use behind the walls (15); with the homebound (6); in treatment facilities (5), hospitals (2) and senior centers (1); in remote areas (2); and with professionals (1).

## **QUESTION 3**

What would you like to change about the Grapevine magazine?

### **Summary of Responses**

Of those responding to this question, the greatest number (82) stated that they would change nothing in the Grapevine. Others (13) stated that they like it as is. Those suggesting changes to content mentioned increasing content relating to the following: newcomers (3), Steps (2), Concepts (2), “gray” pages (2), Trustees (1), service (1), and humor (4). One response specifically criticized the lack of substance in stories, while one stated that short stories were easier for newcomers. Two responses suggested greater diversity in viewpoint, while one expressed dissatisfaction with the topical format of issues.

Few commented on format with only one stating he liked the new “more modern” look. One stated he disliked the changes in format generally, and two disliked the perfect binding. Bigger print was requested by three. While only two suggested decreasing the cost of production, five specifically mentioned returning to black on white printing. One respondent stated that he would not mind paying more, while three mentioned lowering the price.

Electronic or internet delivery was referred to by nine, while improved efficiency of delivery in the printed format was mentioned by one. Improved promotional materials were mentioned by three.

## **QUESTION 4**

What do you think the purpose of the Grapevine magazine should be?

### **Summary of Responses**

Slightly more than a third of those responding to this question (74) stated that the purpose of the Grapevine should be to carry or share the message of experience, strength and hope. A slightly

smaller number (65) indicated that the Grapevine is to serve as our “meeting in print.” Among the latter were those that specifically mentioned the portability of the Grapevine for use while travelling, when unable to get to a meeting, “anytime I want” or “nightly.” Other responses included those who felt the Grapevine served as a “valuable tool” to supplement the other tools in our tool box (9), as a means for the newcomer to identify with the problem and solution (6), as a forum for new ideas (6) and as entertainment (2).

Respectfully submitted,

Ray M.  
Delegate  
Panel 60/Area 20  
(Northern Illinois)

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