

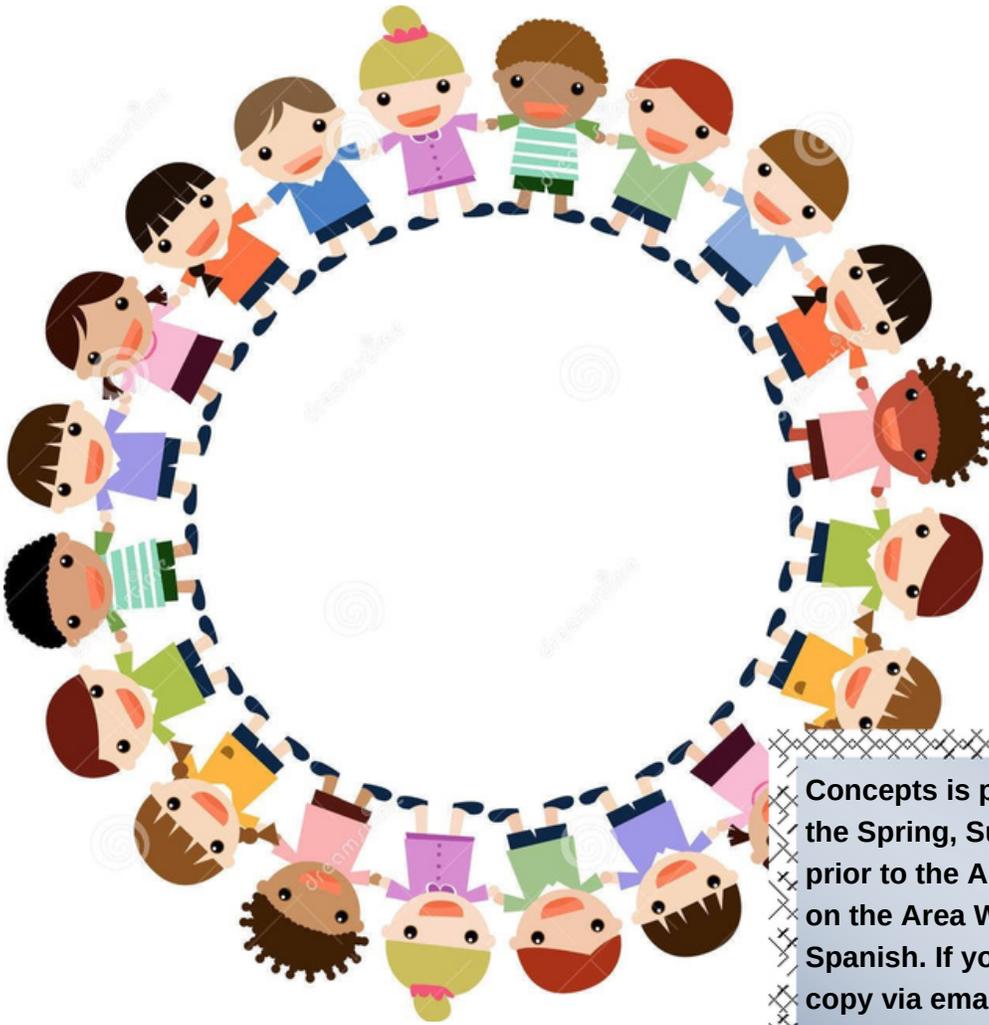
CONCEPTS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA LTD AREA 20 SERVICE LETTER

SPRING 2023 VOL. XLVII NO.1

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Concepts is published four times a year in the Spring, Summer, Fall , and Winter just prior to the Area's Assemblies. It is posted on the Area Website in both English and Spanish. If you would like to receive a copy via email please send your request to the Concepts Editor by clicking this [link](#) or using the [Contact Us](#) page of the Area Website. Happy reading.

GSR Preamble

- We are the General Service Representatives.
- We are the link in the communication chain for our groups with the General Service.
- Conference and the world of A.A.
- We realize the ultimate authority in A.A. is a loving God expressed in our group's conscience.
- As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups so that they can reach an informed group conscience.
- As trusted servants, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength vital to our fellowship.

Therefore, let us have the patience and tolerance for listening while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups.

THE 12 CONCEPTS

FIRST IN A SERIES OF TWELVE

The Twelve Concepts for World Service were written by A.A.'s co-founder Bill W., and were adopted by the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1962. They are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure as it emerged through A.A.'s early history and experience.

The Twelve Concepts for World Service help to ensure that the various service entities remain responsive and responsible to the Fellowship they serve.

1

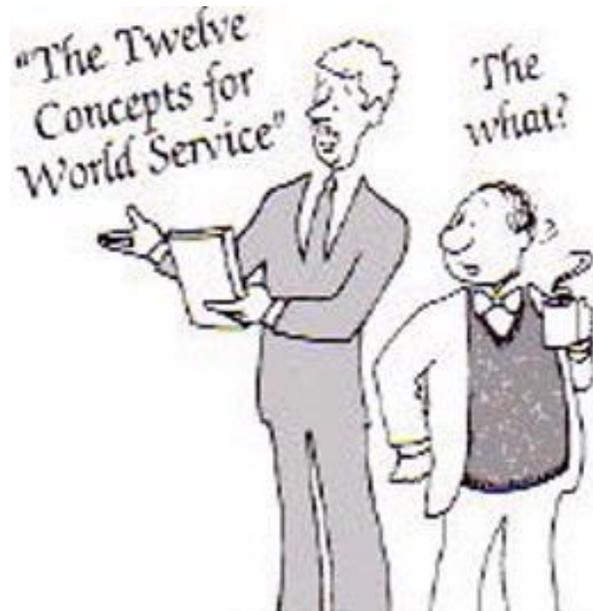
Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

THE AA GROUPS today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services--those special elements of overall service activity which make it possible for our Society to function as a whole. The groups assumed that responsibility at the St. Louis International Convention of 1955. There, on behalf of Doctor Gob, the Trustees, and AA's old-time leaders, I transferred world-service responsibility to our entire Fellowship.

Why, and by what authority, was this done? There were reasons for its stark necessity and further reasons that have to do with AA's fundamental structure and tradition. By the year 1948, our necessities had become clear enough. Ten years earlier--in 1938--helped by dedicated friends. Doctor Bob and I had commenced work on a world-service structure. Our first step was the creation of a trusteeship for AA as a whole. We called this body the Alcoholic Foundation, and in 1954 it was renamed the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This trusteeship was designed to inaugurate and maintain all of those special services for AA that single groups or areas could not perform well. We envisioned the writing of a uniform AA literature, the development of a sound public-relations policy, and a means of handling a large number of pleas for help that might follow in the wake of national and international publicity. We thought in terms of aiding new groups to form and furnishing them with counsel based upon the experience of the older and already successful groups. We thought there would be a need for a monthly magazine and also for translations of our literature into other languages.

By 1950, nearly all these world service dreams had come true. In the dozen years following the creation of the Foundation, AA membership had jumped from fifty to 100,000. The AA Traditions had been written and adopted. A confident unity had replaced fear and doubt, and strife. Our services unquestionably played a significant and critical role in this unfoldment. World service, therefore, had taken on crucial meaning for AA's future.



If these vital agencies were to collapse or bog down, our unity within and carrying our message to innumerable alcoholics would suffer severe and perhaps irreparable damage. Under all conditions and at any sacrifice, we would have to sustain those services and the flow of lifeblood that they were pumping into the world arteries of our Fellowship. Among the AA groups, it had been proven that we could survive great strain and stress. But could we stand heart failure at our world center?

And so, we asked ourselves: What further precautions could we take to guard ourselves against impairment or a collapse? Nevertheless, the period from 1945 to 1950 was one of such exuberant successes that many AAs thought our future was wholly guaranteed. They believed nothing could happen to our Society as a whole because God was protecting AA. This attitude was in strange contrast to the extreme vigilance with which our members and groups had been looking after themselves. They prudently declined to charge Providence with responsibility for their effectiveness, happiness, and sobriety.

When, at AA's Service Headquarters, some of us began to apply this tested principle of "Stop, look, and listen" to AA's world affairs, it was widely thought that we must be foolish worriers who lacked faith. Many said, "Why change? Things are going fine!" "Why call-in delegates from all over the country? That means expense and politics, and we don't want either." And the clincher was always, "Let's keep it simple."

Such reactions were natural enough. The average member, preoccupied with his group life and his twelfth-stepping, knew almost nothing of AA's world services. Not one member in a thousand could tell who our Trustees were. Not one in a hundred had the least idea what had been done for AA's general welfare. Tens of thousands already owed their chance at sobriety to the little-noticed activity of our Trustees and general services. But only some realized that this was true.

CONCEPT 1 CON'T

Among the Trustees themselves, a sharp division of opinion was developing. For a long time, most of them had strongly opposed calling together a representative conference of AA delegates to whom they would become accountable. They thought the risks were immense and that politics, confusion, expense, and fruitless strife would surely result. It was confirmed that the woes of much lesser undertakings, such as local AA services and clubs, had sometimes been great. Hence the conviction was widespread that calamity would be in the making if ever a conference representing all AA was assembled. These arguments were not without merit; they were difficult to contest.

However, in 1948 there occurred an event that shook us all. It became known that Doctor Bob was suffering from a fatal illness. As nothing else could, this news drove home the hard fact that he and I were almost the sole links between our virtually unknown Trustees and the movement they served. The Trustees always relied heavily upon Doctor Bob and me for advice. They had taken a firm grip on money expenditures but necessarily turned to us every time AA policy questions arose. Then, the groups of that time did not rely much on the Trustees to manage their service affairs; they were still looking to Doctor Bob and me. So here was a society whose total functioning was still largely dependent upon the credit and the confidence which, for the time being, its founders happened to enjoy.

The fact had to be faced that AA's founders were perishable. When Doctor Bob and I had gone, who would advise the Trustees? Who could link our little-known Board to our thousands of groups? For the first time, it was seen that only a representative conference could take the place of Doctor Bob and me. This gap had to be filled without delay. Such a dangerous open end in our affairs could not be tolerated. Regardless of trouble or expense, we had to call an AA General Service Conference and deliver our world services into its permanent keeping. It took little imagination to see that future collapse would be a certain penalty if we did not act boldly and decisively. So, because of the events, we did take the necessary action. Now that the Conference is in its second decade, we find that our former fears of the troubles a conference might involve were largely groundless.

The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations. It now stands proven that the AA groups can and will take the final responsibility for their world services.

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/magazine/1971/nov/first-concept>

CONCEPT 1 CON'T

Service Material from the General Service Office

CONCEPTS CHECKLIST

A service piece for home groups, districts, and areas. Some of these discussion points were initially developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts, or areas, individual A.A. members may find it helpful along with our co-founder Bill W.'s writings, a service sponsor if you have one, and reflection on your own service experience. Additional information about the Concepts can be found in The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service and "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" - pamphlet. (The Concepts stated here are in short form.)

CONCEPT I

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should permanently reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

- Does our group have a general service representative (G.S.R.)? Do we feel that our home group is part of A.A. as a whole, and do our group's decisions and actions reflect that?
- Do we hold regular group conscience meetings encouraging everyone to participate? Do we pass that conscience on to the district, area, or local intergroup meetings?
- Is the "collective conscience" of Alcoholics Anonymous at work in my home group? In my area?
- Where do we fit in the upside-down triangle of A.A.?
- Are we willing to do what it takes to ensure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions?

WALK THROUGH THE BIG BOOK

Chapter 5 How It Works – Part 2

“Next, we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted.” Immediately after praying the Third Step Prayer, Bill tells us we must take some action – the personal inventory. Probably the hardest thing I have had to do in my life was to honestly account for how I have behaved and treated the people I’ve encountered. But Bill tells us, “Though our decision [Step Three] was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.”

This must be an honest look at who we have been. Bill wrote that this “inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process.” So, without emotion. The point is to look at our behavior's facts and do it without judgment or condemnation. We must know the truth about ourselves if we are going to change it. And we must look at OUR behavior, not the behavior of others, no matter how egregious theirs has been.

Bill starts us by listing the people we are holding a grudge against, resentments. Or, to make it easy, the people we are mad at. This also includes not only people but institutions and principles, such as the police, paying taxes, the church, the unfairness of life itself, etc. Secondly, we make a list of our fears. Again, all our worries are about people, institutions, and principles. Thirdly, we list our sexual behaviors. It is important actually to write this down on paper. There is something about writing and seeing it that can't be overlooked. The book goes into great detail on just how to make these lists and what to do with them. It is highly recommended that you use the guidelines of the Big Book and the outlined grid.

LIST ONE	I am resentful at	The cause	Affects my	Our faults
LIST TWO	I'm fearful of	The cause	Affects my	Our faults
LIST THREE	My sex behavior	The cause	Affects my	Our faults

It is essential to complete these lists vertically; write down all of the people I'm resentful of first, then go back and write down the causes for all of them, then complete the "affects my". Please do not do them going across. After completing the first three columns, go back and do the fourth. "Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened? Though the situation was not entirely our fault, we tried disregarding the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame?"

The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults, we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight."

The point of all this work: "If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can."

The next chapter is titled Into Action. This will describe what we do with our Fourth Step lists.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Journey into General Service

I started General Service work later in my sobriety. I lived in small Connecticut communities and needed to find out the District or the Area my meetings were located. I was not informed and rarely asked about AA's health and well-being. I just focused on my own.

During those years, although I knew what a GSR was, I wasn't concerned about what they brought to the meeting or their service job. I knew my meetings; I liked my meetings, but I needed to understand what that group of people could do to give back to AA. I didn't understand my role as a member, and I think many others like me.

I needed help understanding the service structure. I just realized that the group conscience was the guiding hand over important decisions that were to be made. I knew little about the Traditions and had yet to learn that the Concepts existed.

When I moved to the Chicagoland area to District 41, I met someone who had spent several months doing General Service work. She requested that I try it. I was ten years sober, and trying something a little different made sense to me. I had renewed my commitment to a true sobriety program because I had just moved. My previous moves due to other life circumstances often cost me my sobriety, and everything I cared about was jeopardized. I was scared. I was ready to do AA differently and "give back" differently. Sobriety could not lose its #1 priority in my life again.

I went to my District meeting and stood for an open Chair for what was at the time Special Needs, now called Accessibilities. Our District was hosting the NIA Big Book Conference that year, and that's when things got busy. There were many requests for support, and I needed to provide a Spanish-speaking panel, an ASL and Spanish translator, and attend all the planning sessions.

I stood for that position when I felt my service pal and closest companion, now our DCM, needed an alternate. Then I became the DCM for two years. Currently, I am the Alternate Corrections Chair for D41. The whole experience taught me so many things. Together we attended functions on the Area and State levels. In February, we were part of the DuPage Open and did whatever responsibility our District had that year. I attended every Assembly and Committee meeting and learned about AA Concepts.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

General Service taught me the process by which AA makes essential changes to keep our program comfortable and attractive to newcomers and how we can work with outside agencies to reach alcoholics without compromising the principles that support AA, the lifesaving and life-changing movement our founders requested we protect.

I have watched heated conversations and arguments become agreements and, eventually, unity. I've watched the group conscience prevail, and the minority opinion sways the room to a different decision. Most importantly, I began to be transformed as we put our differences aside slowly but surely to get to a common goal.

I would recommend General Service to anyone. I'm also excited to say that, without too much prompting from me, my sponsees have already started their process in General Service at their group level and are beginning to step out into other opportunities.

When we realize the power of a group conscience and understand how important it is to have group business meetings that include conversations about upcoming situations that affect AA as a whole - we complete the AA Triangle of recovery, unity, and service. We become trusted servants. We see differences of opinions and attitudes with respect, not as a roadblock to personal choice. Through General Service, I have gained more humility and brought that into my everyday life and AA program.

Lora B.

District 41 Alternate Corrections Chair

2022 NATIONAL CORRECTIONS CONFERENCE RECAP

Thank you to our Concepts Editor for requesting an article about this Conference. The first National Corrections Conference was in St Louis in 2017, and a few of us from NIA got in the car and went, including me, the Alt Corrections Chair, and the Area Corrections Chair at the time. It was a fantastic learning experience for anyone doing Corrections work or interested in Corrections work. We did not know they would take bids for 2019, but we gave it a shot. Portland, Maine, had 2018, and Houston had 2019. At the Portland Conference, I had rotated into the Area Corrections Chair position, and we were ready with a bid for 2020 for all three Areas in Illinois to host together. Our bid was accepted, and we were excited to begin the work. We put a committee together and started the work of a national conference. At the 2019 Conference in Houston, New Orleans won the 2021 bid.

In June 2020, I had the suspicion that Covid would not be done by November, so, with the permission of the Illinois 2020 committee, the National Corrections Conference Advisory Board, and the cooperation of the hotel, I moved the Illinois Conference to 2022. There was not a National Corrections Conference in 2020. Since much of the work was already done, and many committee members were already in place (who stayed through), we adjusted our plans.

After New Orleans, we continued to work on putting the Conference together. It was a Friday afternoon through Sunday morning conference at the Hyatt Regency in Schaumburg. We had four main speakers, Friday night, Saturday afternoon Spanish speaking, Saturday banquet, and Sunday morning. We had many panels, including Corrections Professionals, Returning Citizens, and Taking our Message into Jails and prisons. We also had a Zoom component free for Correctional Facilities and sober living facilities and homes.

I want to thank everyone in NIA that helped us with this conference to make it a success. It takes a lot of dedicated committee members and volunteers to make a conference as memorable as they made it for us. Thank you also to everyone who attended and helped make the conference a success. This year's conference is in Oklahoma City, and 2024 will be in North Carolina. The current conference information (as well as the Zoom recording of our conference) is at nationalcorrectionsconference.org.

Thank you again.

In your service,

Dawn B.

NIA 20 Panel 72 Alternate Chair

GRAPEVINE News



What's New For March 2023

2023
CARRY THE MESSAGE PROJECT

Give a Gift Subscription to an alcoholic who needs it. Great for:

- Sponsors - Newcomers
- Prisons - Detoxes
- Doctors' Offices - Group Celebrations - District and Area Events - Giveaways

WANT TO HELP ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC?

Grapevine & La Viña are Great Twelfth Step Tools!

Get your group, district, area or AA friends to join in. Carry the Message. It's easy!

Go to aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message to get started and see our new Carry the message video at www.youtube.com/AAGrapevine

2023 Carry The Message Project

Learn more [here!](#)

GRAPEVINE LA VIÑA

To sign up for our Daily Quote and monthly newsletter visit -

aagrapevine.org
aalavina.org

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[@alcoholicosanonimos_lv](https://www.instagram.com/alcoholicosanonimos_lv)

Find us on YouTube at
The AA Grapevine Channel

Listen to our Podcast
aagrapevine.org/podcast

Follow Grapevine and La Viña

Learn more [here!](#)

LISTEN AND RECORD

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Show us you would in a meeting—only recorded (for up to 7 minutes).

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- Call the Audio Project voicemail: (559) 726-1216*
- Or use your own digital recorder or smartphone to record.
- To begin, visit: www.aagrapevine.org/audioproject for more information.

GET INSPIRED! Listen to sample stories on our website. It's simple and easy to participate!

*King Records Chicago, Inc. 2023

Grapevine Audio Project

Learn more [here!](#)

WE ARE HIRING!

Join the AA Grapevine, Inc. Team!

We are looking for:

- Editor (La Viña Magazine)
- Editorial Assistant (La Viña Magazine)
- Controller

To learn more and to apply, [click here!](#)

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www.aagrapevine.org/store
www.aalavina.org/tienda

We Want You to Be a Part of Our AA Grapevine Community! Learn the ways you can participate [here.](#)

What's New in Print and Online



Grapevine

Current Issue Spotlight:

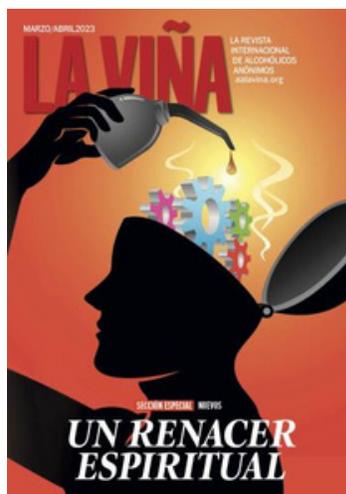
This month's issue features "Get into Service!" AA members share experiences about getting involved in various kinds of AA service and then about how much joy it brings.

Submit Your Story for Upcoming Issues:

1. Young & Sober (ICYPAA Celebrates 65 Years!) — Did you come into AA at an early age? What was that like? What were the challenges? Do you go to Young People's AA (YPAA) meetings, dances and Conferences? How did that help you? Share! (stories due March 15)
2. Mid-Sobriety Challenges — Share about some challenges you've had after 8, 10, 20 years sober. Have you ever nearly relapsed? Did you ever stop going to meetings or disconnect from AA? Have you ever been a dry drunk? How did you get back on track? What helped you may help someone else. (stories due April 15, 2023)

More upcoming topics: Sober Holidays! & Remote Communities. Important:

We're looking for stories of experience with each Step and each Tradition! (Pick a particular Step or Tradition and share your experience!) We also need your jokes!



La Viña

Current Issue Spotlight:

This month's issue features "Nuevos."

Submit Your Story for Upcoming Issues:

May/June: Relapse

We are always looking for stories on individual steps and traditions!

La Viña Workshop

We invite you to join the last Friday of the month at 12pm EST for our LV informational workshop. We review products, books, suggestions for ongoing presentations, GSO/GVLV updates.

New meeting ID: 815 9593 1777

Instagram

We need your pictures! Send us your most striking photographs that reflect the joy of living, serenity and other sobriety themes. [Click here!](#)

La Viña Customer Service: USA (800) 640-8781 / Intl.: +1 (570) 567-0437



AAGrapevine.org

Make your plans and add your events to our online calendar at www.aagrapevine.org/share.

Grapevine is always looking for stories, photographs, and illustrations. Please visit www.aagrapevine.org/share to learn more about how you can participate with Grapevine.

To listen to La Viña audio story (in Spanish), visit www.aalavina.org.

Area Chair / GVR Corner

Please let us know at EA@aagrapevine.org if your Area plans virtual or face-to-face events.

To request Grapevine Complimentary materials, please download the request form www.aagrapevine.org/gvr-resources.



Grapevine Travel / Remote Events

March 4 – 6

PRAASA

Los Angeles, California



If you attend area events we'd like to know!

Also, if you take anonymity-protected photos at events, we'd love to post them on the [GV Display Gallery](#).

Please send the information and photos to EA@aagrapevine.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

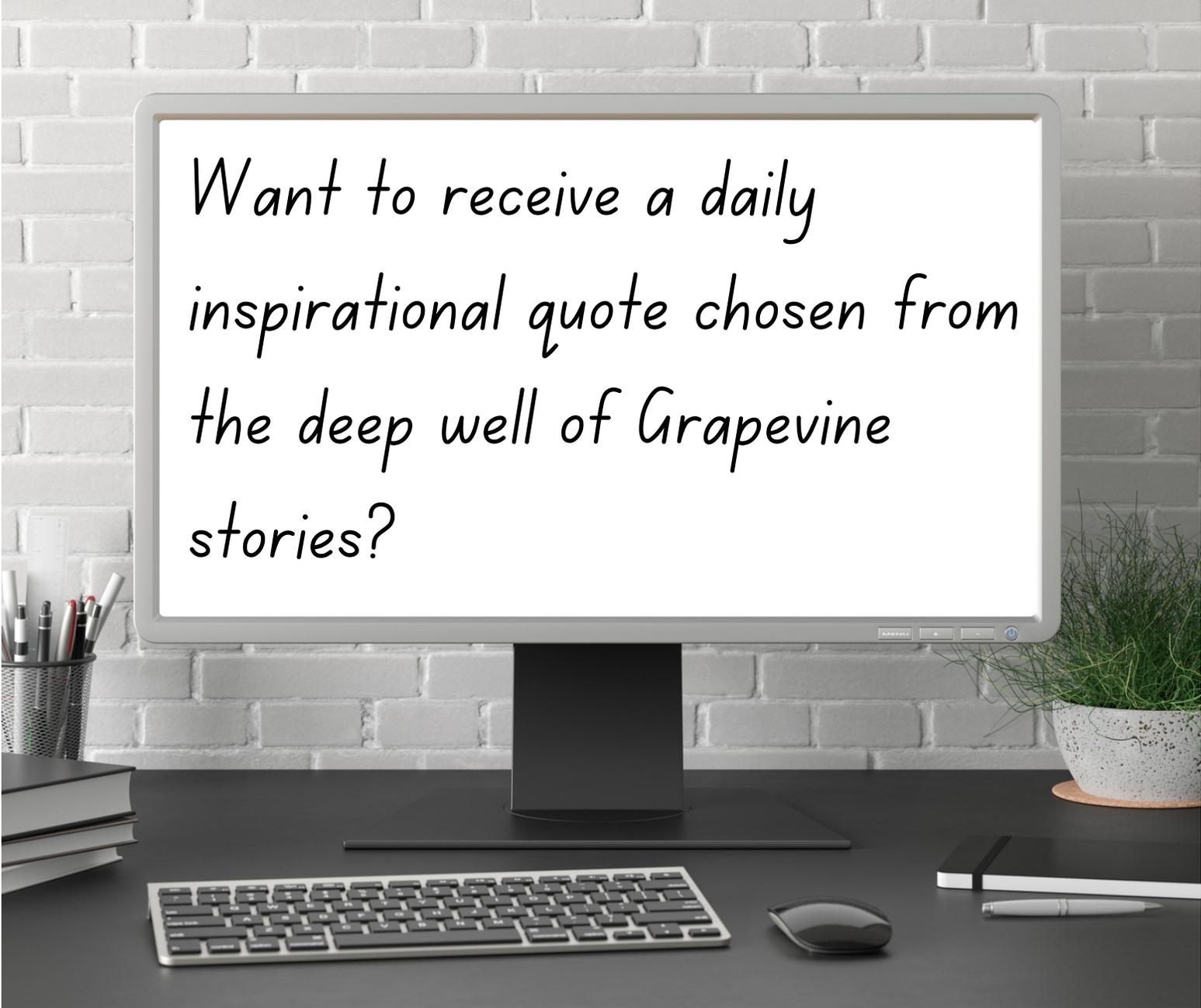
In 1971, the Grapevine Conference Committee recommended:
“All delegates return to their home groups with a determination to begin thinking of the Grapevine as a major tool in helping to achieve and maintain sobriety.”

Need help with Customer Service?

Subscribers to Grapevine and La Viña
If you or someone you know is experiencing delivery issues, please email or call 1.800.631.6025 or 1.800.640.8781 (Spanish). Email CustomerService@aagrapevine.org for English or Preguntas@aagrapevine.org for Spanish.

We are pleased to be of assistance.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER

A computer monitor on a desk displays a handwritten message in black cursive script. The monitor is on a dark desk with a keyboard, mouse, and a pen holder. A small potted plant is on the right side of the desk. The background is a white brick wall.

*Want to receive a daily
inspirational quote chosen from
the deep well of Grapevine
stories?*

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/share> emails

*Please let your friends know and pass it on. We also have
options for weekly and monthly.*

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

The Elmhurst Public Library in Elmhurst, Illinois, contacted District 41 in Area 20 via the district 41 Webmaster in August 2022 regarding being ‘Agency of the Month’ for September 2022. This query was forwarded to the DCM and other available committee chairs.

The library’s social worker contacted us regarding this new program of providing information about local community groups. We discussed the anonymity tradition with her. She informed us of what the library would provide (space, current books, and marketing assistance with posters) and what District 41 would be responsible for (poster content, literature (Big Book and 12&12) pamphlets and Grapevines).



The photo above shows the display on the second floor. Other pamphlets and meeting directories were placed on a general community pamphlet wall. The Literature Committee and other committee chairs and members assisted with coordinating these efforts. A special shout out to Ed, District 41 Literature Chair, for planting the seed pre and post-Covid restrictions with the library staff. We didn’t know those conversations and donations of Big Books and Grapevines would bear this fruit a few years later. Thank you, Elmhurst Public Library!

Respectfully submitted,

District 41- NIA 20
630 750-5486

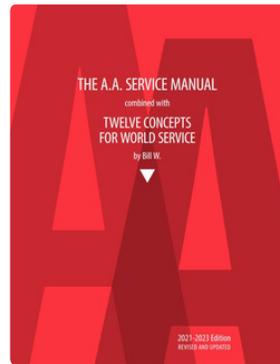
**LEGACY OF SERVICE:
CONCEPTS STUDY**
Hosted by NIA 20 District 11

**3rdThursday of Every Month
7:30pm via Zoom**

Meeting ID: 970 0499 1067

Passcode: 639187

Contact dcm@aa-nia-dist11.org
with any questions





NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20 - 2023 SPRING CONFERENCE

IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE AND SERVICE

~ MARCH 10-12, 2023 ~

CO-HOSTED BY DISTRICTS 22 AND 23

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ENDS ON FEBRUARY 10, 2023



AA SPEAKERS

SLOAN B. FROM WAUKESHA, WI

JEFF V. FROM FARGO, ND

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First Name _____ Last Name _____
Address _____ City/State _____ Zip _____
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Please Specify: AA Al-Anon Alateen Guest

Registration \$30 Saturday Boxed Lunch \$15

Banquet Dinner \$52 (Choose One) Chicken Vegetarian

Total: \$ _____

Mailing Address: 2023 Northern Illinois Area Spring Conference, PO Box 681491,
Schaumburg, IL 60168

Make Checks Payable to: 2023 Spring Conference

Special Needs/Accessibility Services (please describe) _____

Please submit registration together if you'd like to sit together for the banquet (max 8)