



# CONCEPTS



Volume XLII, No. 3

Northern Illinois Area, LTD. Area 20 Service Letter

Fall 2019

## Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need

(Excerpts from Bill W.'s article in the April 1959 Grapevine. See Concept IX, page 36 of "Twelve Concepts for World Service" for the full article)

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate: they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us."...

Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man (or woman) who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own — well, he really isn't a leader at all....

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its service. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source....

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided, of course, that such action be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility....

Another qualification for leadership is give-and-take, the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us all-or nothing drunks. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flatfooted to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take....

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship. Copyright © by AA Grapevine, Inc.; excerpted with permission.

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# Practice These Principles In All Our Affairs And What This Means To Me

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Practice these principles in all our affairs is the last of three listed ideals in the Twelfth Step.

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Also, on Page 19 of Our Big Book we find “We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs.”

And presumably, in 1934, with Ebby sitting across the kitchen table from Bill. From Our Big Book, Bill’s Story, page 14. “My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs.”

Notice forms of the word DEMONSTRATION in the last two examples! The action or process of showing the existence or truth of something by giving proof or evidence.

What does that mean?

That means that after the completion of the first 11 Steps, we have had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps. We have been given a new life. This is not our same old pathetic life only removed from alcohol. It is a new life. A re-created life.

We tried to carry this message to alcoholics - we are given the responsibility to help God’s children who wander helplessly, suffering from alcoholism. And we do so because our lives depend on this.

And to practice these principles in all our affairs, is to show the world, or at least those around us, in our respective homes, occupations and affairs, that A.A. works. And that we are not the same person the we once were.

In short, we have been restored to sanity.

What are these Principles?

Principles that immediately come to mind are honesty, integrity, humility, anonymity, our primary purpose, our common welfare, having a message to carry, helping others to recover from alcoholism, service to others.

I had a Sponsor that taught me a lot about what Alcoholics Anonymous is. And what it means to be a member of this great fellowship.

Of course, if we are alcoholic, and say we are a member, we are then a member.

But our responsibility runs much deeper than that!

*Continued on pg. 3*

Even before he helped me to decide if I was alcoholic or not. And even before he began to guide me through the Twelve Steps. We talked about what Alcoholics Anonymous is and what it is not. We started on the title page of our Third Edition Big Book, that had our Circle and Triangle with three important words. Recovery, Unity, Service. And we talked about these three words, the Spiritual Principles that apply to each of these words and what they mean to me and to Alcoholics Anonymous.

RECOVERY – The actions of working, teaching, reworking, teaching, reworking, teaching etc. the Twelve Steps so that others can recover and that I can live a life of sanity. The applied Spiritual Principles here of course are the Twelve Steps

UNITY – We cannot do this work alone. We need people around us that believe in and are doing the same work as us. We need to create an environment of people in action, that is attractive to people still suffering from alcoholism. That place is our Home Group. And the Spiritual Principles that will hold this group of individuals together is our Twelve Traditions.

SERVICE – In this example will be talking about General Service Work. Being of service to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Not to be confused as an alternative means of recovery as I sometimes hear. But a great responsibility because in the experiences we have had and the knowledge that we have gained along the way on this journey, we owe a lot more to

Alcoholics Anonymous than we will ever be able to pay back. And I guarantee you, all of us are better suited for this work than you think. We have this duty, to serve in some very important positions to guarantee the future of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Spiritual Principles that guide us through this are the Twelve Concepts of World Service.

Please see Bill's Essay on Leadership located in this current issue of Area 20 Concepts Newsletter.

Concept Nine talks about leadership in Alcoholics Anonymous, the way that we elect these leaders, and the need to choose these leaders wisely.

At an Assembly which was not our typical Election Assembly, we had an election to fill an open position. One of the candidates was a friend of mine. I don't remember who the other candidate was or what the position was. The vote was by a show of hands, and I voted for the person that was not my friend, and my friend did not get elected. I was challenged by some other people that I know about this action, because they thought I should have voted for my friend. I explained Concept Nine to them and my responsibility to choose the best possible person for all positions. They respected my ability to stand for what I believe our principles tell us to do.

Also told to me years ago, there will come a time in my life that I will be presented with choices, choices that may be difficult. Choices of whether to stand by the

principles of Alcoholics Anonymous as I know them, or to cave to fear and stand with the beliefs of my friends. This was not the only time I have found myself with those choices. My question here is are you willing to stand up for the Principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and choose the best possible persons for all our positions today?

And even if and especially if that person is you.

So, in my mind that brings us to today, Our Area 20 Election Assembly. Do you believe the people you are being asked to vote for today? Or do you believe that maybe it is you? And that you can do better?

I ask of you, IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO? IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN?

I hope that we see new faces and new ideas as we approach our future.

by Anonymous

## Strong Leadership – an Enduring Need

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The continuing need to develop strong leadership within AA is not new to our Fellowship. Indeed, the spiritual principles which guide us all in service enunciate this notion rather precisely. Concept IX states in part: “Good service leaders, with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are

at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety.”

Half a century ago, one of our founders also wrestled with this same notion of the continuing need for sound leadership within AA. In a compelling article entitled “Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need,” first published in the Grapevine in April 1959, Bill W. wrote: “No society can function well without able leadership in all its levels, and AA can be no exception.” (Language of the Heart at p. 287) He went on to describe his concept of leadership within the Fellowship:

Good leadership originates plans, policies and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. (Id. at p. 288)

Buoyed by a spirit of hope, Bill recognized at the time he wrote this article:

We have an abundance of men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us. (Id.)

This Fall – at the Area level and in three fourths of our Districts – elections will be held to determine those who will serve our Fellowship for the next two years. In the spirit of rotation, we will ask members of the Fellowship to stand for or be nominated

to positions from GSR to their Home Group to Delegate to the General Service Conference. As Bill W. noted: "Because our leadership of service can be truly rotating, we can enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere." (LOTH at p. 78) This rotation compels those in general service to step away from the position they have held allowing another to step forward to grow in service. It also challenges each of us, guided by a loving God and the direction of our sponsor, to examine our hearts and look to how we may next be of service to the Fellowship.

On a closely related topic vital, in 1962 Bill W. stated:

*[I]t is only the GSRs who . . . can name [Area] Committee Members and finally name the Delegates. Hence great care needs to be taken by the groups as they choose their Representatives. Hit-or-miss methods should be avoided. Groups who name no GSRs should be encouraged to do so. In this area a degree of weakness tends to persist. The needed improvement seems to be a matter of increased care, responsibility and education. (Twelve Concepts for World Service pp. 36-37)*

More than 50 years later, throughout much of Area 20, we seem to continue the "hit-or-miss" practice to which Bill alludes. The standing witticism – which I myself too often have repeated – is that, when elections are being held in AA, it is unwise to leave the room, because you may find yourself holding a position upon your

return. Too often, one of the newer members of the Fellowship – with little or no explanation of a GSR's responsibilities – is thrust into a position for which he or she is ill-prepared. In the past, at my home District meeting, I have heard an announcement that the position of GSR at a group was open and an invitation extended to others to consider going to the meeting to assume that position. Recognizing the need to fill such an opening is a step in the right direction; inviting outsiders to show up at a meeting they do not otherwise regularly attend to fill it misses the mark. The notion that it is appropriate to take the position of GSR at a group merely to give one a vote at the Assembly is similarly misplaced.

Personally, I have been heard to say that I was "grunted" into the open position of GSR at my Home Group. This description is, in some sense accurate, since no one stood against me and no formal vote was, therefore, necessary. But it misses a vital point. Prior to his suggestion to the group that I was someone they should consider for the open GSR position, my sponsor had insisted that I prepare myself by becoming aware of what would be expected of me. Prior to my selection by acclamation, my sponsor took me to an Area GSR Orientation Workshop, a District meeting and an Area Assembly, and provided me with the GSR Handbook and AA Service Manual to read.

Prior to my serving in as GSR, my sponsor had impressed upon me why GSR is the

“most important position” in AA. He made me aware that, as a GSR to my Home Group, I would be expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

Attend monthly District meetings, quarterly Area assemblies and AA service conferences and forums.

- Conduct a monthly business meeting.
- Make announcements to keep the group aware of matters and events of interest.
- Carry the informed group conscience to District meetings and Area assemblies.
- Prepare the Delegate for the annual General Service Conference.
- Report General Service Conference Actions back to the group.
- Make members of the group aware of opportunities to be of service.
- Serve as the phone and mail contact for the group.

When I accepted the position as GSR of my Home Group, I had no basis for claiming that I was unaware that I would be expected to attend four Assemblies, 12 District meetings and other service events within the Area. I understood that I was responsible for providing my group with sufficient information to allow it to develop an informed group conscience on issues affecting it and AA as a whole. And I understood that I was to attend Assemblies and District meetings to vote that conscience on the group’s behalf.

Now, fifteen years later – a period during which I have remained active in General Service – I am grateful for this opportunity that the members of the Fellowship in Northern Illinois have afforded me and enjoy the privilege of supporting others as they walk their path on this journey I have been blessed to take.

by Ray M. Area Archivist

## Corrections Captured My Heart

Recently I have been presented with the opportunity to bring a Big Book meeting into a women's prison and this type of service has been tremendous in my recovery. As someone who came from corrections, it's so strange bringing an AA meeting into a facility myself. When I was incarcerated sobriety was the furthest thing from my mind, but I remember women coming in and reading out of the Big Book, that's where the seed was planted. I wasn't quite ready to sober up but I knew it was possible. Being able to go back in and do the same with others is a huge blessing in my program. I am able to learn so much from these women, they teach me a new form of gratitude every week I see them. I am able to bond with these alcoholics just as I am on the outside. Most importantly they teach me a true meaning of rigorous honesty. I have never experienced something so raw and unfiltered, their desire for sobriety and change but the

overwhelming fear in doing so. These women being so vulnerable is such a powerful God moment! We can get together with a few Big Books and the walls seem to come down. I have been involved in these meeting for a brief moment and the desire to serve in corrections is overwhelming. I am blessed by the fellowship for these opportunities to help others. Without this type of service I would still be a very lost alcoholic! thank you Alcoholics Anonymous for letting my heart find home.

by Anonymous

## The Joy I Am Allowed From Doing Service Work At A Prison

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I have been leading a AA meeting for about three years inside of a medium security prison about thirty-five miles from my home. The prison had closed for a few years and reopened in 2004 as a preeminent substance abuse treatment facility. It currently houses about 1351 inmates, with 935 in therapeutic programs and 416 waiting to get in these programs. Usually 20-40 inmates show up for our meeting which is held in a conference room or the chapel.

We open the meeting just like other meetings except for the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition. We give Big Books and Twelve and Twelves to any inmate who comes to the meetings and asks for them. These books are provided by the Area 20's "Pink Can" fund. Our discussions are pretty much the same as outside meetings except for putting an emphasis on how to live and not come back to prison The recidivism rate for this prison is much lower than the state average. There are a couple of other programs to help inmates so we cannot take all the credit for this result.

When I first started attending these meetings, there were two different fellows that always sat in the front row about ten feet from me . They always participated in the discussions and one of them could recite "How it Works" from memory better than anyone else I have ever heard. When the first one was released, I gave him a small AA booklet. A couple weeks later a past delegate I knew told me he had been to a couple meetings with this former inmate. That made me extremely happy The second one of these two was released about a month later. The night I was to see him at his last meeting while incarcerated, and give him a piece of literature, didn't happen. The facility was on "Lock-down, which meant no meeting. I felt robbed. They stole the last meeting he would attend with me.

A couple nights later, at my usual Friday night meeting, I talked to a gal whose full time job was being a counselor at the same

prison. She told me how much it meant to inmates to have someone do something special for them, no matter how big or small.

He had given me his new address so I could attempt to help him with BTG. I mailed the literature with a short note to the address he had given me. I wasn't pleased with his new location as it was on the South side of Chicago. Not the best place to stay sober, so I am told.

Late on a Saturday afternoon about three weeks later. As I was getting ready for my regular meeting, my phone rang. It was him, the guy who had gone to Chicago. I was ecstatic, I couldn't have been happier. I felt like jumping up and clicking my heels together but being in my sixties, I just yelled YES. He had gotten my number from the first guy who had gotten it from the past delegate who knew I wouldn't care.

A couple months prior to their release date, I had given them both a flier for the area's one day Big Book Conference that was coming up a couple months after they were released. It was to be at a location less than fifty miles away for both of them. By ten o'clock the day of the conference, I had seen and talked to both of them. Once again I was very happy with a renewed hope of them staying sober. Since I started chairing the prison meetings, I have seen three former inmates at Big Book Conferences, one at a State conference, and one at an annual pot luck dinner held by a

group about thirty-five miles West of me in District 73.

Talk about the benefits of service work, I struck gold. I feel very fortunate to have these people help me stay sober and increase my belief in the power of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Tracy F.  
Area 20 Alternate Grapevine Chair

## Service IS The Secret

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Hello Fellow Members:

In this Concepts article I would like to relay the importance of doing something for the fellowship. Specifically serving. Now before you start to groan let me remind you that we have to give it away in order to keep it.

I remember when I started out in recovery, all that I wanted was to stop hurting and learn how to survive a day without my bottle.

Now that I have some time under my belt I want more. More of the good stuff. Remember, we can be happy, joyous and free and that is what I am looking for. Although I no longer want the bottle, I want to keep all that I have gained from being sober and I don't want my program to get stale.

This is how I have learned how to not let my program get stale. I show up and see if there is anything that needs to be done. Coffee, greeting and chairing came first. I still do those things, however I was introduced to “General Service” in 2006. What a jump-start to more recovery.

Back then I would sit in the assemblies and none of it made sense to me and everyone seemed to use a code language that was not known by me. I asked a woman who became my service sponsor and she explained to me what was going on. I hung in there and now I use the code language myself, however I try not to speak in code. Today I am so interested in what is going on at the General Service office and how all of this has evolved from Bob and Bill. What a miracle that has survived 80 years.

So, to put it mildly, I enthusiastically serve and continue to learn as much as I can. Service to me is something that I GET TO DO, not have to do.

Speaking of something to do, there will be two “Service Orientation Workshops” this fall. One is in District 90 and the other one is in District 11. Please join us. The flyers are on the webpage. If you would like a “Service Orientation Workshop” in your district, please let me know and we can set something up.

And with that “I’ll keep coming back”.

In loving service,  
Marilyn F.

Alternate Delegate – Panel 68

## Being a GSR

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My name is Sue M., I currently serve the 1948 Sobriety Group as their GSR. Recently, I volunteered to do a short orientation at the Summer Assembly breakout session on what a GSR does. Writing an article on my experience as a GSR seemed appropriate.

As the GSR I have the job of linking my group with AA as a whole. The GSR represents the voice of the group conscience at the District and Area level. (pg. S26 from the service manual).

I had been attending my district meetings for a few years. I had just finished a rotation as treasurer, so I was very familiar with what to expect. I took notes to take back to my group and gave a report on how our group was doing. My District is very small. We have not had a DCM for the last 2 rotations, but we do have a secretary and treasurer. There are usually 4-5 people in attendance, so the meetings are informal. I stayed in the practice of typing my report. I knew it would help me as I continued to serve in other positions in the future.

My first Area Assembly was very confusing! It was also the chairperson’s first assembly, so we all had a learning curve! I remember raising my hand for a vote then realizing we were voting on something different. Oops. I’m voting incorrectly! It was exciting, fast paced for me and I didn’t understand procedure. I learned a lot.

*Continued on pg. 10*

Communication is a two-way street. Each month I submit a report to me group including group, district and area events, current balance and motions to be voted on and information under new business. I report what happened with the motions after the assemblies. I read the report at our group conscience/business meeting and put a copy in our announcement folder for all to read. I also share my personal growth and experiences hoping to attract interest for the next rotation.

What's different today? I have gotten to know my home group members much better since becoming a GSR. When I go to the district and area meetings my thinking now is, what's best for my group? How would they vote if they were here? How will this affect my group? It's no longer about what I want or believe should be done. I carry their group conscience but if I hear something during the discussion at the district or area that I think would change my group's conscience, if they were part of that discussion, I understand I have the right of decision to vote differently than the group conscience. Going back to my group and explain why I changed the vote has helped me grow as a leader and I now have practical experience using the Traditions and Concepts.

I have also represented the group conscience at the workshop to prepare our delegate for the General Service Conference. There was a spiritual aspect to this that I did not expect. Taking part in something that can have a positive affect

for our current AA members and the suffering alcoholic that has not made it through the doors yet is something everyone should experience. Soon, I will get to participate in the election process of a new delegate. What an honor that will be!

Being a GSR has been a very positive experience for me. It has been amazing. It has prepared me for the next service opportunity, whatever that is. I have helped my group members see that AA is much bigger than just the fellowship in our small town of Freeport. I have gained the confidence and trust of my group members including the old timers!! They now see me as a leader within my group.

One last thing. As I finished up my short orientation at the breakout session, I encouraged the GSR's in the room to support each other. It was our class of GSR's. I know some will continue down the triangle. Maybe one of us will be leading that breakout session someday. There may be a future delegate from that group. I am grateful to have the opportunity to develop these relationships and continue to encourage and support them. I get to do the same thing in my home group. Thank you, 1948 Sobriety Group, for the privilege of serving as your GSR.

Sue M.



# Do Meeting Makers Really Make It?

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In my early sobriety I remember hearing many A.A. sayings and slogans, among them was “Meeting Makers Make It.” The prevailing A.A. wisdom behind this was apparently alcoholics who attended A.A. meetings – presumably a lot of them – would stay sober. Being new at the time I wasn’t quite sure how this worked. Just how many meetings did you need to go to? Were there certain kinds of meetings you needed to attend to be a Meeting Maker Who Made It? What was so magical about meeting attendance that sobriety was all but guaranteed for simply showing up? Because if meeting attendance was all there was to this sobriety thing, I could definitely be a Meeting Maker! I certainly wanted to “Make It.” So, I began to attend meetings.

I went to a lot of meetings. Daily meetings, twice daily meetings, early morning eye-opener meetings, lunch bunch meetings, after hours night cap meetings. I went to all kinds of different meetings. Open, closed, Big Book, beginner, 12 & 12, Grapevine, Step, open discussion, and topic meetings. I went to women’s meetings, mixed meetings, and even accidentally stumbled into a men’s only meeting. During this time while I was busy going to a lot of meetings, I wasn’t doing much of anything else. I wasn’t getting a sponsor, I wasn’t working the steps, I wasn’t getting settled in a home group. I wasn’t being active in our program of recovery. And I was miserable. I was going to all these meetings and watching all these shiny, happy people and wondering what was I doing wrong? I had become a Meeting Maker all right. A Meeting Maker who was making meetings, but not much else. I was sitting in a chair, right in the middle of A.A. meetings, but nowhere in the middle of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. And too prideful, selfish, fearful, and angry to know the difference. I wasn’t drinking, but I was hanging on by a slim, resentful thread. One day a fellow Meeting Maker that I sat next to each Monday night and every Sunday morning stopped showing up. Each week she and I used to talk about all the different meetings we were going to and how the program of A.A. wasn’t working for us. She never came back and later I heard she had committed suicide. She never “Made It” and I knew that easily could have been me. My untreated alcoholism was doing nothing more than warming a seat with my excuses and complacency. It was time to take action.

I found a sponsor to take me through the steps and I became a part of a home group meeting where I could be accountable. I still went to a lot of meetings, but now I began to make myself useful. I offered to make coffee, clean ashtrays, wipe down meeting tables, greet people at the doorway of the meeting room and shake people’s hands. I introduced myself to newcomers and sat and listened as they shared their stories of loss and pain, and in return I shared mine of hope and gratitude. When I got my driver’s license back, my sponsor told me to buy a big car so I could take lots of women to meetings and introduce them to the program of A.A. through the joy of the common solution we share. I quickly learned about the “meeting before the meeting” – coffee and breakfast served with a side of laughter. Or the “meeting after the meeting” – ice cream at the local Dairy Queen or dessert and a healthy debate at a local diner with new best friends that I just met an hour before. The difference was amazing! These were the same meetings, in the same places, with the same people. The only thing that had changed

was me. I was still “making meetings” but I had come to realize that meetings were not the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

What I know to be true today is that A.A. meetings are a critical part of my recovery, but they are not and cannot **be** my recovery. When I attend meetings, I enjoy surrounding myself with people whom I can relate to, people who don’t judge, people who “get” that crazy thinking that still goes on in my head, even as a sober person. Meetings can be that place where I learn and share and feel at home. But for my recovery to be solid, I need equal parts of good sponsorship, a strong relationship with my Higher Power, a working knowledge of our program’s steps, traditions, concepts and principals, abundant opportunities to be of service, the fellowship of other alcoholics and, of course – meetings – in order to make it!

by Anonymous

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## Get Ready for the 2019 Fall Assembly!!



**NORTHERN ILLINOIS  
AREA 20  
2019 FALL ASSEMBLY**

**WHEN**  
**Saturday, September 14th, 2019**  
Registration & coffee @ 8am  
Assembly is from 9am until 5 pm

**WHERE**  
**United Methodist Church**  
429 Brainerd Avenue, Libertyville, IL  
(See parking instructions on page 2.)  
Questions? Call Michael L. at 847-571-5002 or Mary M. at 847-710-5033.

Participate in AA Worldwide through our elected area delegate. Sharing sessions on a variety of topics, such as:

- Accessibility of AA
- Technology in AA
- Changes to literature
- AA in corrections & treatment facilities
- Cooperation w/ the professional community
- Public information

**ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME**

ASSEMBLY INCLUDES:

- Area 20 business
- Service committee breakout meetings
- Election assembly

**WHO VOTES?**

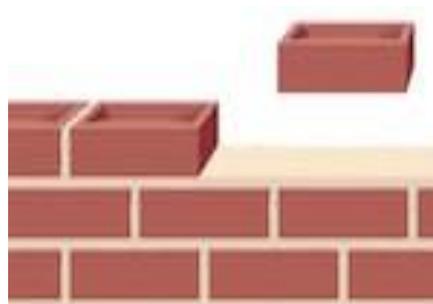
- GSRs
- DCMs
- District Committee Chairs
- Area Committee Chairs
- Area Officers
- Any interested AA member

# 2020 Spring Conference & Assembly

## AA: A foundation for life

How strong is your foundation? Join us next March at the NIA 2020 Spring Conference and Assembly and make your own assessment. And, if your foundation is in good shape, come anyway and share your experience strength and hope with others who are just now learning how the program of Alcoholics Anonymous can change their lives.

The 2020 NIA Spring Conference and Assembly will be held March 20-22 at the recently remodeled Chicago Marriott—Schaumburg; the Spring Assembly will be held Saturday morning, March 21, as part of the Conference.



Featuring two nationally known AA speakers and informative panel discussions, workshops and breakout sessions, the jam-packed, service-focused weekend will be the place to work on your program next spring. A member of the General Service Office staff will headline the program on Sunday morning.

An Alcathon will run nearly continuously throughout the weekend so participants can attend a meeting whenever they need or want one. A display of material from the NIA archives will offer insights into our history. Conference-approved literature as well as *Grapevine* and *LaViña* recovery resources also will be available for sale.

### Conference Speakers

We have some great speakers for the 2020 Spring Conference, said Kayla Z. Program Chair. On Friday night we'll feature Zach F. from the Three Legacies Group in Buffalo N.Y.; on Saturday night, following the banquet, we'll hear from Jenny L., a member of the Chicago Group in Dallas, Texas. A member of the staff at GSO will speak on Sunday morning.

Cost for the entire weekend is a modest \$25; there is no charge to attend only the Assembly. Other features of the conference have been un-bundled and are priced separately—the Saturday night banquet is \$43; a box lunch in conjunction with the Assembly Saturday is \$15; and an ice cream social (cups or cones) on Friday evening is \$13. Coffee is free throughout the weekend and a hospitality suite will have snacks and sweets available all weekend.

A discounted room rate of \$99 plus tax, per night is being offered for a block of rooms with either king-sized or two queen-sized beds.

*Continued on pg. 14*

A Conference Planning Committee, comprised primarily of members from District 28 and District 21, has been working diligently for the past six months to create the best Spring Conference NIA will hold in 2020. Registration flyers are expected to be available at the 2019 Fall Assembly and online through the NIA website. We look forward to seeing you there. Bring your hardhat.

Kevin K., DCM District 28

Tom G., DCM District 21

Co-chairs, NIA 2020 Spring Conference and Assembly

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## Announcements

**Sep 14** Fall Assembly - United Methodist Church - 429 Brainerd Ave, Libertyville, IL 60048  
(Please check the area website ([aa-nia.org](http://aa-nia.org)) for parking instructions)

**Sep 21** A Way Out 19th Anniversary Party @ Libertyville Civic Center, 135 W. Church St.,  
Libertyville, IL 60048

**Sep 28** NIA General Service Workshop @ McHenry Co. Group - 110 W. 1st Street,  
Kewanee, IL 61443

**Oct 5** NIA Archives Workshop @ House Group - It's Not The Dusty Old Stuff Anymore  
4910 4th Ave, Moline, IL

**Oct 6** 2020 Spring Conference Planning Committee @ All Saints Lutheran Church - 630 S.  
Quentin Rd., Palatine

**Oct 12** Fall Committee Meeting @ Lord of Life Lutheran Church - 40W605 IL Route 38 LaFox, IL  
60119

**Oct 18 – Oct 20** East Central Regional Conference – Area 75 @ Crowne Plaza Milwaukee  
Airport - 6401 South 13th Street Milwaukee, WI

**Nov 2** Big Book Conference. THE PROMISES - Parkview Community Church, 764 St. Charles  
Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

**Nov 22** McHenry Soberfest - "How it Works" @ Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva, WI

**Dec 7** Winter Assembly. District 11. More information TBA

For more information or directions to the events, please check the NIA website for details.

## From the Editor

A very special thank you to everyone that contributed articles for this issue of our "Concepts" Newsletter. The collaboration of these submissions is a true testament of our God centered program, putting into action our twelfth step. "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

"Now, through knowledge and experience, the newer member is aware that service is our most important product after sobriety. With this knowledge, the individual is able to share their vision with others and ensure the future of Alcoholics Anonymous." (AA pamphlet Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.)

We can only keep what we have by giving it away!

### **I Am Responsible**

***When anyone, anywhere,  
reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of A.A.  
always to be there***

***And for that:  
I Am Responsible***

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Comments, suggestions, subscription requests, and experience, strength and hope, should be directed to the editor:  
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All A.A. members are encouraged to see Concepts on-line at: <http://www.aa-nia.org>

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**DUE DATE FOR THE WINTER ISSUE OF  
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NOVEMBER 15TH, 2019**

