

CONCEPTS

Volume XLIV, No. 1

Northern Illinois Area, LTD. Area 20 Service Letter

Spring 2021

Keys to Success

As I've done from time to time in my sobriety I recently thought it would be a good idea to enrich my personal development by taking on a new hobby. I have done this in the past with such topics as computers, wanting to read the classical literature stories that I missed in high school and most recently over the past several years riding a motorcycle. This time the object was learning how to play piano. I mean how hard could it be right? It's not as though I have a tremendous amount of free time what with work demands, personal relationships, children as well as various service commitments but in true alcoholic fashion I got an idea in my head and decided to act on it! Thus begin my intellectualization of the skill of playing the piano. I dug out a keyboard that I had given my daughter for Christmas about 15 years ago, spent money on online music lessons, bought some method books, and then figured I had all of the tools to begin learning. The one thing that was missing in this equation was a teacher; for purposes of this article we'll call it a piano sponsor! I was quite impressed with myself in the way in which I was able to learn the theory behind the notes, figure out the chord progressions and understand the basic foundation of what was trying to be imparted. Notice, I haven't talked very much about actually practicing. For some reason my personality is one in which I sometimes think that possessing all of the relevant knowledge on the topic is sufficient to actually executing the task. So it's no surprise that when I sat down and began to apply all the "vast" knowledge I had accumulated that I was instantly struck with the difficulty of actually putting these concepts to practical action. And what followed was the characteristic frustration and self doubt that tells me maybe this wasn't a good idea in the first place because it's not proceeding at the pace in which I think it should. I thought to myself I should be able to figure this out, I've read a lot of material, watched a lot of other people do it, and it looks so easy to them so why is it so difficult for me? I of course should have realized that when someone makes a difficult skill easy, that they've worked on it for a long time and have invested the aforementioned "practice".

It probably doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out where I'm heading with this analogy for the same approach is often undertaken by newcomers when trying to understand exactly how our program works. Many (including myself in the beginning) feel all they need is the literal understanding of how the program works and that practicing the actual instrument of sobriety (as in the steps) isn't as important. I've seen many times how this leads to the same frustration I experienced in my piano playing, and then self doubt and critical thinking creeps in and we sometimes revert back to our old thoughts and say how this wasn't a good idea from beginning, and decide we'll just move on. Unfortunately in our program moving on and not practicing the actual instrument often means relapse into the pitiful in-

In this Issue

FEATURE: Keys to Success	Pg. 1
GSR Preamble	Pg. 2
Working With Others	Pg. 3
Service Opportunities in Area 20	Pg. 4
In His Words / NIA Service Committee Reports	Pg. 5-7
Grapevine Corner	Pg. 8-9
Delegate's Corner	Pg. 10
Is A.A. For You	Pg. 11
Up Coming Events	Pg. 12

comprehensible demoralization that we're all too familiar with and have the foreseeable consequences of un-arrested alcoholism including jails, Institutions and death.

So, what's the answer then? Well our fellowship is one that suggests that newcomers get a teacher, what we in Alcoholics Anonymous call a sponsor, and then let that person take us through the actual practicing of the steps. It's been shown over time that "intellectualizing" the program doesn't have the profound spiritual impact (or practical outcome) as actually "practicing" the program, slowly at first, step by step with the guidance and support of someone who has been there before. Often our sponsor tell us to "stop reading ahead", to "stay in the moment" but it seems our alcoholic personalities are often not content to be satisfied with where we're at and we may think we should be further along - playing "Somewhere over the Rainbow" when we haven't really learned "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" yet! Might these be unrealistic expectations? Where have I heard that before?

Finding a teacher is often a humbling and vulnerable undertaking. We often have to practice in front of our teacher and we're sometimes embarrassed when we don't hit all the notes perfectly and feel we'll be judged if we haven't prepared for our lessons accordingly. However in Alcoholics Anonymous our sponsors are just like us, and are filling their roles as sponsors not only to teach and support newcomers in the practicing of the steps but also to enrich their own programs. I think it's important for me in my recovery to remember when I'm acting as a sponsor that I remember the frailties and insecurities that I feel when trying to learn a new skill and equate it to the same feelings that the newcomer is failing. My job is to support, teach, encourage and continue to practice myself, and it's in this duet of recovery that we are able to find and pass on the keys to success.

GSR Preamble

We are the General Service Representatives.

We are the link in the chain of communication 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 in order that they can reach an informed group conscience.

As trusted servants, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship.

Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen 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 as a whole.

TODAY



I WILL NOT STRESS
OVER THINGS
I CAN'T CONTROL

Working With Others

When I started this journey my view was small and only focused on staying sober and not going back. I remember as my steps and mind progressed I started to hear, at the meetings, that it was my responsibility at Step Twelve to work with others. This scared me. I had a conversation with my sponsor about my fears and she laughed. She told me I had much to give and it was all laid out for me in the Big Book.

The first time I was asked to sponsor I was still early in my own recovery. I

had worked the Steps and still had a sponsor, but I would say my understanding was still in its infancy. Thankfully this person was willing to grow along with me. From this experience my knowledge increased as it did with each sponsee thereafter. This process did not go on without my ego, lack of acceptance, and insecurities coming back to haunt me. Through working with others I have had a lot of self-reflection and the ability to identify personal defects I did not see while working my own Steps. Thank God we just don't get one go at these Steps.

It has been proven to me the more I seek I will find. I now understand the great emphasis put on "the newcomer is the most important person in the room." I feel that is because I learn from them, they help me to remember where I was when I walked in. They give me back my desperation that drove me to recover in the first place. Working with others has revealed so much to me. Every sponsee, and all they came with, have been a lesson. I have been able to watch people bring about a dramatic and remarkable change to their lives. I have watched others die for this disease. It will always hurt when someone loses the battle, but my God doesn't waste a hurt.

Most of the teachable moments in my recovery did not come along with rainbows and sunshine. I once was told that my only job was to shine their light while they dig. I was to share my experience, strength, and hope to guide them through the Steps. Through these processes I have learned that I am not responsible for their outcome. If they succeed in the journey of finding themselves and God, I'm grateful for being a tool in their journey. If they fail to trudge this road it is not my doing. Relinquishing the outcome I found to be the hardest. I so badly wanted everybody to succeed and find what I had found working the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Amie T.



NIA 20

Open Positions



There are currently a number of Area positions that are open. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact the Area Chair, Carmela R at: chairperson@aa-nia.org.

Accessibilities Alternate Chair, Answering Service Alternate Chair, Archives Committee Alternate Chair, BTG Alternate Chair, & Grapevine Committee Alternate Chair

Recommended Qualifications • Service as a G.S.R. • Service as a District Service Committee Chair or Alternate or • Service as a District Officer or Alternate. • Familiarity with the A.A. Service Manual, the A.A. Service Structure, and the Twelve Traditions are very helpful.

Responsibilities • Encourage participation in your Area Service Committee comprised of all District Chairpersons and their alternates and other A.A.'s interested in service work. • Attend all N.I.A. Assemblies and Committee meetings each year. Northern Illinois Area 20 Service Manual, version 06/2019 Page 39 of 49 • Attend the Pre-Conference Workshop. • Attend the N.I.A. Spring Assembly Conference. • Attend the Illinois State Conference when N.I.A. hosts the State Conference. • Participate in the Spring and/or State Conference as requested by the Spring or State Conference Committee. • Coordinate regular communications with members of the Area Service Committee. • Be available to attend District meetings upon request. • Be accessible to the Fellowship. • Report on Area Service Committee activities at Area Committee Meetings. Committee Chairs or their Alternates must submit a written report at Assemblies and committee meetings. • Have a working familiarity with the A.A. Service Manual, N.I.A. Service Structure Guidelines, and the Service Committee Workbook. • Hold Workshops on carrying the message through your Service Committee. • Have available a limited supply of Service Committee related Conference Approved literature and/or service pieces from GSO at Assemblies and Committee Meetings. • Chair Assembly Service Committee meetings. • Chair committee meetings at the Pre-Conference Workshop (See Pre-General Service Conference Workshop Guidelines). o Report at the Assembly to include: o Committee activities since the last Assembly. o Discussions at your Committee breakout session. o Progress of activity on applicable Primary Purpose Motions, to include details regarding costs to date. • Share ways to carry the message through your Service Committee at Assemblies and Conferences. • Develop a forum for the discussion of District concerns regarding related service opportunities. • Foster a committee atmosphere among the District Committee Chairs. • Formulate an informed group conscience regarding Area-wide service opportunities and issues with an emphasis on General Service Conference agenda items. • Be a resource and consultant to District Committee Chairs and other volunteers regarding service activities in their communities including the assessment of service opportunities and the development of projects. • Develop guidelines for activities and services within the responsibilities of your Service Committee. • Mentor the Alternate Service Committee Chairperson in order to prepare him or her to become Chairperson in a future rotation.

Bids for 2022 Conferences:

Bidding is open for a district or districts to host the 2022 Spring Assembly Conference or the 2022 Illinois State Conference. We are required to host the State Conference in 2022 according to the rotation schedule established by the three Illinois Areas. There are guidelines available on the NIA Website (aa-nia.org) as well as help available from the Conference Advisory Committee, Carmela (Area Chair) and Marilyn (Area Delegate), who sit on the State Conference Policy Committee, and Eric (Area Alternate Chair) who was the Chair of the 2019 State Conference Committee.

In his Words

Doctor Bob S

“The question which might naturally come into your mind would be: ‘What did the man do or say that was different from what others had done or said?’ It must be remembered that I had read a great deal and talked to everyone who knew, or thought they knew anything about the subject of alcoholism. But this was a man who had experienced many years of frightful drinking, who had had most all the drunkard’s experiences known to man, but who had been cured by the very means I had been trying to employ, that is to say the spiritual approach. He gave me information about the subject of alcoholism which was undoubtedly helpful. *Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience. In other words, he talked my language.* He knew all the answers and certainly not because he had picked them up in his reading.”

Service Committees

Treatment Committee

It’s a New Year – Treatment Today

As we approach the one year mark of the onset of the health care crisis, this has been a time of reflection as we look both back and forward to the work of carrying the message into treatment facilities. We are well into the new year and volunteer access to treatment facilities remains a challenge across Northern Illinois Area 20. However, these challenges are not without both small and significant victories, thanks to the persistent efforts of trusted servants working together in both Treatment and Bridging the Gap (BTG) Committees.

Treatment centers not associated or affiliated with a hospital healthcare system have demonstrated a wider use of in person volunteers since the state implemented Phase 4 without any mitigation measures at the end of January. Many of these residential inpatient treatment centers are allowing, encouraging, and actively seeking in person volunteers. COVID-19 health protocols for these volunteers vary widely, from temperature checks, screening questions (both written and/or verbal) and signing in and out not only for accountability but for contact tracing. In some hospital affiliated treatment centers, volunteers continue to carry the message virtually where there is online patient access. Others are allowing limited in person volunteer opportunities.

One of the greatest needs is connecting patients with an available A.A. member through BTG opportunities. While treatment centers are working on COVID-19 health compliance protocols and a safe return to bringing back the A.A. fellowship to carry the message to their patients within their facilities, those who are being discharged need to find A.A. It’s not realistic to expect

they are going to find it on their own. If we are not able to be fully available inside treatment facilities to share our experience about A.A. outside of treatment, when individuals leave the facility they are disadvantaged, especially during COVID-19 where the world of virtual meetings can be confusing to a newcomer. There are opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership between Treatment and BTG today like never before. One of these opportunities presented itself recently on a larger scale with an invitation to participate in a virtual US/Canada Treatment Forum involving Treatment and Bridging the Gap Chairs exchanging information and sharing best practices on carrying the message into treatment centers from Brooklyn, NY to Maui, HI. Treatment Chairs in Alberta, Canada addressed Canada’s federal law, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), as comparable in many ways to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States. Also discussed is the use of state supported and funded recovery coaches and their role/responsibility within the context of A.A. sponsorship. The group will meet again virtually at the end of the February to discuss Conference agenda items to better inform district treatment chairs and communicate information back to their respective areas. Following the meeting in February the group will meet quarterly. Both myself and Alternate Treatment Chair Richard H. were part of the inaugural meeting and we look forward to being a part of the ongoing quarterly sessions as well.

In love and service,
Lisa S.
NIA 20 Treatment Chair

Corrections:

While there is not a whole lot to report there is a bit of good news. On October 17, 24 & 31 we were able to virtually facilitate A.A. meetings at Sheridan prison. This was a collective effort on the part of the volunteers and Chaplain McClimans at Sheridan. Using the state's approved provider we were able to hold our meetings via WebEx.

Unfortunately, on November 6, another outbreak of COVID occurred and the residents were once again in lock-down. Hopefully we can get back to these Saturday morning meetings again in the not too distant future.

As far as volunteering at jails go I believe we are going in at DuPage but not in Kane County.

There has also been a slight uptick in the Pen Pal program. I have received requests from 4 or 5 people for information on how to participate in this very worthwhile service work.

As more of us are vaccinated including those behind the walls we remain confident that a restoration to a modicum of normalcy shall return.

That's it for the moment.

Thank you for letting me be of service

Scott

Bridge the Gap:

Hello everyone, I'm Kevin alcoholic

At our area winter assembly, I was elected Bridging The Gap Chair.

I did not have more than a slight knowledge of that position. However, the position had remained open from our last election. If memory serves, we needed it filled. I had nominated a sponsee of mine to take our district BTG chair and figured I better know what he was talking about. I also really was taken by our last BTG chair in the area. Quite a lady.

So now what? What do you do? How can I make an effort to continue the good work already done and perhaps add to it? I don't know. Then something happened, ... Another Area was having a Virtual workshop on ...surprise BTG. An ex delegate acquaintance of mine sent me the link, and on a Saturday morning I find myself at a workshop with a whole bunch of other folks from around the country, all about BTG. God thing! I met someone from our area who is passionate about BTG, we exchanged contact info and talked and emailed. He had info, including a list of A.A.'ers who had previously signed on the be temporary contacts for people coming out of treatment or our prison system. To help them get to their first Six (6) meetings or until they met someone in a group willing to help them get to meetings mask to mask, virtual, or a hybrid.

We don't need to be their sponsor. Just make it possible for them to get one. We don't need to be their best friend. Just

show them a place to find their own best friends You know introduce them around. It's what we do.

I had met someone and made a connection. Found a starting point.

We get to make a Bridge for a newcomer or returning member to stay off the slippery slope, and land on firm ground.

Later I would get a chance to see the Bridge made. I got an email from our Area Chair about a fella coming out of rehab in Chicago who would need that Bridge. Other folks were also informed and a Bridge was made. Whether or not that person stays sober? We don't know that yet but we can give them a chance at recovery. A chance like the one I got or the chance you took.

God's grace and effort from good folks can be all that is needed to make a beginning.

I look forward to seeing where this part of my journey leads.

Could be fun. There is more to do.

In service

ANSWERING SERVICE:

My first task as chairman was to get copies made of How to find A.A. in Illinois. I got 200 copies made for our first Area 20 event.

My next project involved helping Michelle, new answering service chair for district 70. The service previously handled by their intergroup. The intergroup is now gone due to financial problems.

We discussed different methods of handling calls such as having a cellphone for one person to take all calls, handle them or find someone one can. The second way involved using an answering service. I explained my experiences as district 71 as answering service chair for six years.

Michele's original request was for help writing bylaws for the service. I referred her to the yellow A.A. Guidelines for Answering Service

Respectfully, Tracy Falk

Literature:

A.A. literature is central to my sobriety. I'm a student by nature, and I enjoy learning the "how" and "why" of things. When I was newly sober, I sought out literature-centered meetings. I got sober and found my sponsor at the Sunday morning *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* meeting of Winners and Beginners in Wauconda, Illinois. I also attended Big Book studies to absorb the wisdom of our program, seen through the eyes of its founders and members.

I was taught to bring my own book to meetings so that I could highlight passages. That is how I use a textbook: I engage with the page. My first Big Book, given to me at my second A.A. meeting ever, features highlights overlaying highlights, augmented by underlines and hand-written notes in the margins.

The act of reading literature together, aloud, is transformative. Hearing others recite the printed words helps me to discover things I might have missed otherwise. I recall former District 10 D.C.M. Kevin A. reading from page 98 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* - "Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house." Imagine the word "burn" read with a baritone that conjures a preacher in the midst of Sunday sermon. *Burnnn* the idea. It's visceral. It was seared into my memory, thanks to Kevin bringing this passage to life.

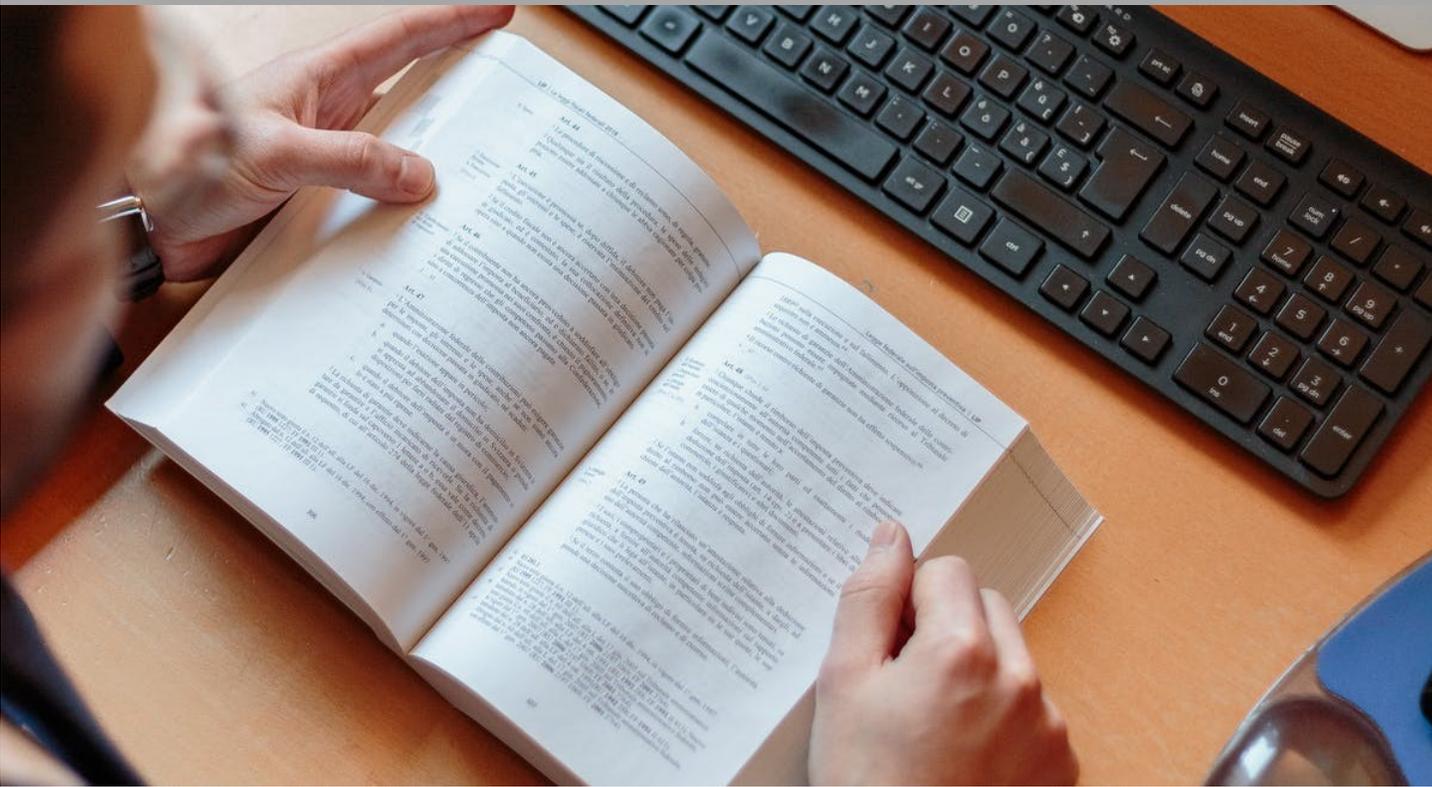
2020 brought the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdowns of face-to-face meeting venues. Hand-to-hand literature distribution was impacted. But the Fellowship sprung into action, accessing digital copies of our literature on aa.org. Groups, meeting via online platforms, displayed pages from the PDFs on the host's computer screen so that all could read along, together.

The newcomer packet, filled with A.A. pamphlets, has gone virtual. Groups post links to the pamphlets housed on aa.org. A.A. World Services' Content Use Policy permits these links (it's suggested to please read the entire Content Use Policy for accurate guidance).

For me digital literature supplements do not replace, printed literature. At certain conferences, a Big Book is stationed near the registration table, for all to sign and write notes to the newcomer who will identify themselves in the sobriety countdown that weekend. The signatures show the newcomer that a lot of A.A. members are rooting for them.

Today, we can still carry the message through literature distribution. We can order Big Books from A.A.W.S. and distribute them

ourselves to those in need. We can gift literature to our spouses and A.A. friends. When my soul is injured, reading A.A. literature is like applying a tourniquet, immediately stopping the bleeding to allow me to get further help via the voice of another alcoholic as soon as I am able. I keep literature in my spiritual first aid kit. I hope you will, too. Kim



GRAPEVINE CORNER

The Grapevine Connection - Being a Part of Something Greater Than Ourselves

The Grapevine, the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) offers many ways to get involved with the Grapevine Community (as noted on the Get Involved Page of the A.A. Website). Reviewing a few of those opportunities in this newsletter may spark your interest.

Of course, the first thing is for the A.A. member to realize that there is a Grapevine journal, and it has printed monthly since June 1944. Many newcomers may be unaware of the existence of the Grapevine for months or years into the A.A. program. Let new members know about the Grapevine. Give them yours. A subscription is cheaper than a night of drinking. Reading back issues at a meeting place or online is a great way for a newcomer to encounter shares and explore A.A. members' experiences from around the world. The Big Book is our textbook and the Grapevine is our journal of relatable current events for our recovery.

Why read the Grapevine? It is a compact 64-page bonanza (in my humble opinion) of varied opinions, shares, and news updates regarding sobriety. My awareness about the members of the fellowship has expanded since reading the before and after adventures published in Grapevine. The willingness to go to any length to get and stay sober is described in the many articles by A.A. members. The Grapevine is by and for A.A. members.

What are the topics? Well, looking at the December 2020 issue regular columns include:

- ◆ Welcome – From the Editor
- ◆ Dear Grapevine – Letters to the Editor
- ◆ If Walls Could Talk – Photos of Meeting Rooms (indoor and outdoor from around the world – no faces for protecting anonymity)
- ◆ Special Section (topical each issue) – Remote Communities
- ◆ At Wits End
- ◆ Traditions
- ◆ Our Personal Stories
- ◆ Emotional Sobriety
- ◆ Preview of next Issue
- ◆ Printed Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions on the back inside cover and opposite page
- ◆ Serenity prayer on the back cover



Other features sprinkled throughout the year, include the Concepts, The Steps, Alcoholism at Large (research news briefs), Sober Holidays, Travel and Sobriety and many others that are timely – such as the growth of online meetings and the effects of the 2020 pandemic. I always look forward to open the new issue every month.

Become familiar with the Grapevine and you too may wish to share a part of your story such as; an 'aha' moment with your sponsor, amends with a friend, what you love about sobriety or how you got to the rooms of A.A. Stories are selected six months in advance, so the following are the topics for the rest of 2021 that you can write for. Anything you send will be saved for potential use in a future issue.

The upcoming topics you can submit something for the rest of 2021 are:

OCTOBER - Cooperation with Professionals (CPC) (**stories due April 15, 2021**) Have you participated in CPC service (providing doctors, therapists, clergy, lawyers, parole officers and other professionals information about AA)? Share your experiences. Did a professional help you find your way to AA because of CPC service work?

NOVEMBER Classic Grapevine Our favorite stories from the AA Grapevine Story Archive.

DECEMBER - Remote Communities Experiences (& Staying Sober through the Holidays!) (**stories due June 15, 2021**) Do you live far from AA meetings? Are you a loner? Stationed far away? Do you have a language or cultural barrier? Are you homebound? Is it difficult to find AA meetings where you live? Tell us how you stay sober. Are you involved in Remote Community service? Share your experiences. Also, December is a great time of year to reach out to alcoholics and help others. What are the ways you stay sane and grateful during the

holidays and New Year's? How do you navigate holiday parties and family gatherings? Share your best sober holiday stories!

What is a Grapevine Representative? will be the topic of this column next issue.

Visit www.aagrapevine.org/contribute for

A complete editorial Calendar

Writing Guideline

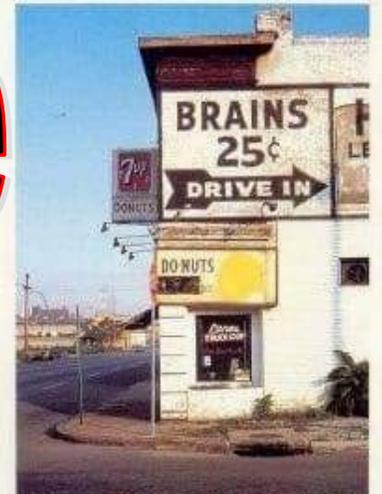
Submit an Article

Happy Reading,

Your NIA 20 Area Grapevine Chair



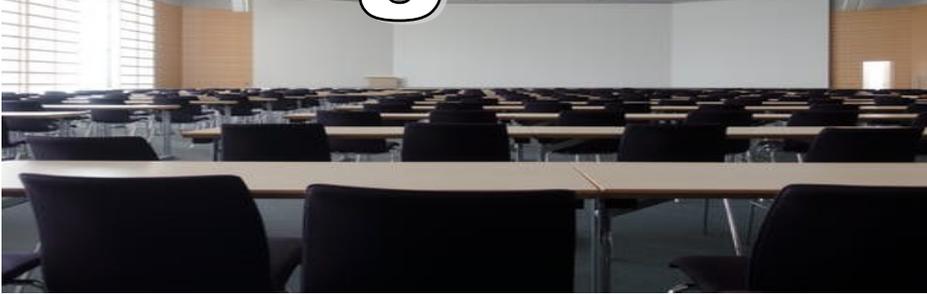
On The Lighter Side



The moment you realize you speak 14 languages



Delegate's Corner



Accessibilities may be an Issue

I am serving on the Treatment/Accessibilities Committee for the 70th and 71st General Service Conference.

I met with the 71st Treatment/Accessibilities Committee last week for an informal meet and greet virtual meeting. We are not allowed to discuss agenda items in between conferences. We met to get to know each other a little bit and saw what our tentative agenda items will be.

We will be Reviewing the contents of Treatment Kit and Workbook and Accessibilities Kit and Workbook. One of the members of the group put together a checklist that would help us review the kits and workbooks very thoroughly. This is not a sanctioned checklist but just a guide for our committee to use this year.

I attended an Accessibilities Workshop this week and listened to many other areas talk about their area's accessibilities issues. One of the things that was mentioned was; "what does a person do when they don't know the PASSCODES to a virtual meeting?" What if the passcodes have changed?

One comment that I heard on the workshop was that many newly sober or not sober yet individuals do not have the ability to access the virtual meetings. They may not have a cell phone or a computer. How do they get the help that they need? If you can't go on-line how do you find a meeting? A community on the West Coast, I believe in the State of Washington, have started collecting old computers and cell phones to help the individuals with this problem however they didn't go into much detail on how they are going about this.

Another instance mentioned is that some meetings are not willing to share their passcodes. They are happy with their 5 to 6 attendees and do not want any "outsiders" to be able to come to their meeting. Concept Four is clearly not being considered here, which is the Right to Participate. And this also violates Tradition 5 which says "Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers". If someone wants to recover, they have the right to recover. We need to make sure that the Answering Service Committees

have the virtual meeting ID numbers and passcodes and are willing to help the callers looking for help.

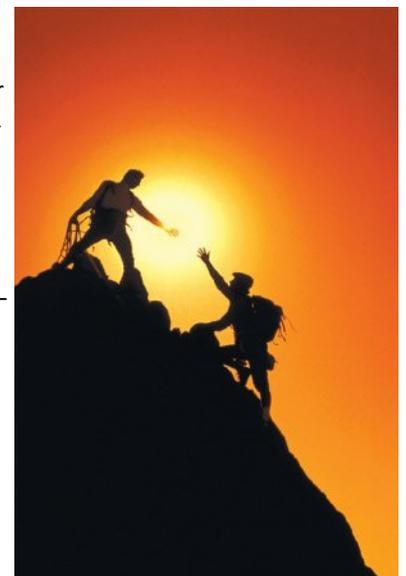
And what about the "not so sober" individual person who is unable to dial into a virtual meeting?

Extending the hand of A.A. to older alcoholics can offer hope to a population that is all too frequently isolated and fearful. The support and recovery the membership in A.A. brings can be the doorway to a new life – regardless of one's age. Many of the elderly are afraid of new technology. In California's Area 09, they have a Service Committee named "Cooperation with the Elder Community". I heard about it on the workshop that I attended. I went to their website and the links did not work. I contacted them to let them be aware of the non-working links.

Most of us are still using virtual/on-line means of getting to meetings. Having listened to people, I think that these meetings are not going away. Even when we are able to go back to meeting in person, there will be people who are unable to physically get to meetings, and the virtual meeting helps those who are house-bound.

For some individuals a six-inch step can be an insurmountable obstacle. A locked access door, a blocked ramp or parking problem can make it impossible to get to a meeting.

Accessibility challenges apply to all alcoholics who have difficulties participating in Alcoholics Anonymous, whether those are mental, physical, geographic, cultural, or other factors that vary among people. Let's look at who is not in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous both virtual rooms and in person rooms. Our 12th Step Responsibility – Let's go to any length!





Is A.A. For You

Only you can decide whether you want to give Alcoholics Anonymous a try—whether you think it can help you. We who are in A.A. came because we finally gave up trying to control our drinking. We still hated to admit that we could never drink safely. Then we heard from other A.A. members that we were sick. (We thought so for years!) We found out that many people suffered from the same feelings of guilt and loneliness and hopelessness that we did. We found out that we had these feelings because we had the disease of alcoholism. We decided to try to face up to what alcohol had done to us. There are some of questions we tried to answer *honestly* (www.aa.org, search “Is A.A. for you”). If we answered YES to four or more questions, we were in deep trouble with our drinking. See how you do. Remember, there is no disgrace in facing up to the fact that you have a problem.

What is NIA?

The principal function of Northern Illinois service Area 20 is to be a forum for effective communication between the Groups and the General Service Conference through its Delegate. In addition to counseling its Delegate about the collective Group Conscience of the Fellowship in Northern Illinois, NIA will assist its Districts, Groups and members to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers in a broad variety of ways, including but not restricted to conducting workshops, sharing sessions and seminars in all fields of general service.

NIA Statement on Self-Support

Our Seventh Tradition states that “Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” Northern Illinois Area 20 wants our fellowship to endure, and be ready for the still-suffering alcoholic to come. NIA makes this possible by taking care of its essential services such as website. The groups and districts in Area 20 fund this website thru their continued contributions and support. For additional information see the A.A. pamphlet regarding self-support.

NIA Statement on Singleness of Purpose

Our Third and Fifth Traditions state that “The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.” “Each Group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. And as a Fellowship we do one thing only: “- share our program of recovery.”



2020 Events

All Areas Open Meeting for Accessibility Committee Members @ Virtual via Zoom

- March 8th** All Areas Open Meeting for Accessibility Committee Members [Flyer and Zoom Link](#)
- March 11th** NIA20 Monthly Grapevine Workshop [Flyer and Zoom Link](#)
- March 13th** NIA20 Spring Assembly and Board Meeting - Registration details to be posted on Area website
- March 19th** Annual Rhode Island Convention [Flyer for more information](#)
- March 27th** Pre-General Service Conference Workshop - Details to be posted on Area website
- May 1st** Spring Committee Meeting - Details to be posted on Area website
- June 26th** Summer Assembly and Board Meeting - Details to be posted on Area website
- Aug 20-22** East Central Regional Conference [Save the Date Flyer](#)

The Winter Committee Meeting, Pre-General Service Conference Workshop, and Spring Conference dates have not been finalized yet. The Committee Meeting happens in January, the PGSCW happens in February, and the Spring Conference in March.

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