

Concepts

Northern IL Area 20 Newsletter Winter of 2018

Thoughts from the Area Chair

As we approach the end of 2018 I wanted to share some thoughts:

First, I'd like to dedicate this issue to Terry Whelan, a past delegate from our Area who died just a couple of weeks ago. Terry served Area 20 as a Panel 58 delegate and was visible at many Area events both before and after his time as delegate. A passionate and vocal advocate for what he believed in, his memory will live on for many 24 hours ahead-

Speaking of long lasting and memorable service I would be remiss were I not to take this opportunity to thank Heather S. for her many years of service as the Area Concepts editor. Since I've been coming to Area the only two Concepts editors that I've ever known have been her and Phil G., and Heather. You've done a great job in preserving both the integrity and purpose of this publication. I know you all share with me when I express my gratitude for a job well done and wish Jessica the best of luck as she takes over the reins.

I NEED YOU.

Hello NIA,

This is Marilyn. I used to be tough. Not anymore. I need you. I need your smiles, friendly handshake and your wisdom.

I used to be a loner. Not anymore. I still enjoy my alone time but I prefer a good laugh at one of our meetings.

When I walked into the rooms I had not laughed in a long time but didn't even miss it.

Then one morning after a very good and funny meeting the night before, I noticed that my face hurt.

I had no idea why. Then it dawned on me. I had laughed and was smiling a lot.

I had used muscles that had not been used in a long, long time.

That is what this sickness does to us.

So, today I am not ashamed to say that I need you.

Thanks for being there.

Big Hugs,

Marilyn F.

Alternate Delegate, Panel 68

Concepts is published quarterly by the Northern Illinois Area of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a form of communication between Northern IL Area, Districts, and GSRs. Subscription is free but generally limited to A.A. members within the NIA geographical area.

All publication costs are paid by A.A. members through their contributions to NIA.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, NIA or the Editor.

Comments, suggestions, subscription requests, and experience, strength and hope, should be directed to the editor:
Concepts@aa-nia.org

All A.A. members are encouraged to see Concepts on-line at:
<http://www.aa-nia.org>

The current address for the NIA Treasurer is:

PO Box 524
Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0524

CONCEPTS is a confidential document. It should be used and distributed within the Fellowship.

Editor's Corner

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen

I have a motion before the Winter Assembly to fund translation services for Concepts. I think this Area is behind in this particular service. We should have been translating Concepts and we should translate our minutes. I am not the secretary. I can only address my responsibility, the newsletter. Please come to the Assembly and support the motion for translation services to be funded by NIA 20.

I would like to thank Chris D. and Marilyn F. for their submissions to this issue. I would love Jessica, the new editor, to have many more submissions. I hope you will all support Jessica in her new position with numerous of submissions. This newsletter is a tool for communication with the Fellowship of Northern IL Area 20. Please use it. Your donations to Area pay for it. Participation seems to be the theme for this edition. I base the theme on submissions. I don't know if you will get the same thing out of the submitted articles as I did. I hope you enjoy this issue regardless of what you feel is the theme.

Thank you for letting me be of service.

Heather S.

Concepts Editor

**Submissions for Spring 2019
are due February 23, 2019**

I've recently returned from Galesburg where the Big Book conference was held. As many of you know, the Big Book Conference is one of two Area sponsored conferences. I would like to thank District 91 for taking on the role as host and congratulate them for well-run event. One exiting takeaway from the conference for me was the opportunity to finally meet Andres D. from Area 87 (Montreal, Canada). For those of you who don't know, Andres read an article in the Jan. 2018 Grapevine which was authored by an Area 20 member. In the article she extolled the virtues of her service when she had served on a prior Big Book Conference planning committee. In addition to relating the positive aspects that conference planning committee experience had provided her, she also briefly discussed the event in general. Andres D. (a GSR in Montreal Canada) read that article and was so affected that he reached out to Area 20 to inquire about the BBC. After many back and forth emails, Andres petitioned his own Area to provide funding for them to put on their own BBC (in French!!). Ultimately, his Area approved his bid presentation and then also paid for him to attend our conference this past November. One exiting quote that I wanted to share with you was

when he said, "I came here with my own ideas, but after seeing the actual event, everything has changed!!" Imagine that, an Alcoholic with "ideas"!! Anyway, at the end of the day Andres was pleased to announce to our Area that Area 87 would be holding it's own BBC on April 6, 2019, and was actively petitioning an Area 20 speaker for its inaugural event. I'm thinking road trip!! That just goes to show how one alcoholic sharing their experiences with other alcoholics is the method for us that works the best...

I also want to take moment to thank our own Area for their increased participation this last year. As a result of volunteers at the most recent assembly we now have commitments from districts to host three of the four assemblies next year. This will mark the first year in many when the Area will be traveling for assemblies. And, I hear we may have a volunteer host for the last assembly very soon...

Speaking of the other Area sponsored conference, one conference that we will not be holding next year is the Spring Assembly Conference. We unfortunately had to vote to cancel this conference earlier this year when it became apparent that we were not going to be able to get a district to host the event. It's ironic that an article published in

Grapevine inspired one Area to begin to plan for their own conference when at the same time we were experiencing our own discord and were not able to find volunteers for our own Spring Conference. We (at the Area) have taken this time to reflect on the reasons why this may have happened and are working hard to remind potential hosting districts of the Area's commitment to assisting the planning and execution of the event as much as possible.

Additionally there now exists an Ad Hoc committee that has been asked to bring suggestions to the Area on what that event should look, and what components (Assembly, break outs, etc.) should be included. It's our hope that the ongoing work will assist a district to soon announce that they would like to step up and host the 2020 Spring Conference!! I look forward to THAT article in a future Grapevine....

Chris D.



Winter Assembly

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen of NIA 20. This will be my last issue as Concepts editor. I would like to thank the Area for giving me the opportunity to serve. It has been a pleasure and privilege. I believe Jessica will be an awesome Concepts editor. I hope you will support her by contributing articles, poems, concerns, whatever you would like to see in your newsletter.

The practice of humility demands that I realize that my impact on the world is not as great as I dreamed as a drunk. But in AA that is not necessarily true. One individual can impact AA as a whole. I'm going to use Larry S.'s popsicle analogy because I have always found it easy to understand as an example of how AA, as a whole, works.

A person decides serving popsicles will help the still suffering get sober. His/her home group takes a group conscience and the group decides to serve popsicles. It works. People are getting sober. So the group takes it to the district. The district decides popsicles are bringing in so many that the district brings the popsicle idea to the Area. The Area Assembly decides serving popsicles is a most excellent idea and sends it to GSO to put on the Agenda for the General Service Conference. The Delegates of North America receive the group conscience of their respective Areas and vote to ask all groups in AA to serve popsicles because they help the still suffering alcoholic get sober.

This is a simplified version of what happens. AA moves slow. Ideas and

experience usually take years to percolate to AA as a whole. But it shows the impact one person may have on AA as whole. We are all part of a world-wide Fellowship. We are no longer an island unto our drunken selves.

At the winter Assembly just such an item that will impact AA as a whole is coming up for discussion and vote. District 22 has made the following motion: "We of District 22 are asking for the Area's support that the delegate write a letter to the GSB to discontinue printing of the Canadian, Eastern, and Western United States AA directory for consideration as an agenda item at the 2019 General Service Conference."

The background material points out the directories doesn't include meeting addresses. Printed directories are antiquated. Faster, more reliable resources are available. Changes are made every year to FNV (which is the system GSO uses to track meetings and trusted servants). The cost for the last batch of 2000 Eastern, 1500 Western, and 750 Canadian was \$19,215. There is also private and sensitive information provided in a print.

The argument for continuation of printing these directories, as needed, is people do not always have internet access to find a meeting, or the location may not have an online listing of meetings. A person who travels, especially to or through isolated parts of North America, probably needs the directory. If it helps someone stay sober then AA should keep printing the directories.

This is an idea that will impact AA as a whole. An AA member no longer lives in isolation. Through the group conscience the individual impacts AA as a whole. But it only works if everyone participates in the group conscience. The person who sits on the side lines bemoaning the state of AA and doesn't bring his/her issues before to the groups is just as responsible for the state of things as the one who actively participates in the group conscience. You don't like the way things are done. Write a motion. Submit it to the Assembly for debate. Don't sit there and complain. The chapter is called "Into Action", not into thinking about it.

I look forward to seeing you at the winter Assembly.

Thank you for reading
Heather S. Concepts editor

Prayer of St Francis

Lord, Make me an instrument of thy peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
Where there is sadness, joy
O Divine Master, grant that I may not
seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it is in dying that we born to eternal
life.

Rule 62

Rent-A-Sponsor

Are you tired of being told like it is?

Do you believe that rigorous honesty is overrated?

Are you interested in taking the elevator instead of the steps?

Have you determined that you are terminally unique?

Would you rather try the easier, softer way?

Do you find old timers boring?

Do you think the Big book is 164 pages too long?

Then Our Rent-A-Sponsor Service is perfect for you

No Reading! No Writing! No Deadlines!

No effort whatsoever is required!

And we can absolutely guarantee you will not stay sober! (or your money back)

SOME OF OUR STANDARD FEATURES INCLUDE:

- *Listening to your problems without providing you with solutions!
- *Allowing you to blame others for all your problems!
- *Teaching you all the AA lingo so you can impress other newcomers!
- *Allowing you to decide if and when you want to work the steps!
- *Staying sober is all the amends you need to make!
- *Why "walk the walk" when you can just "talk the talk?"
- *The only resentment you really need to worry about is the resentment you have against yourself!
- *Why save your ass at the cost of losing your face?
- *Learn the secret of giving it away without actually "getting it."
- *We also have expert sponsors for those who would like the special "relapse" program."

Note: the cost of this program is based on the number of relapses you would like to have.

AND NOW FOR A LIMITED TIME YOU CAN PURCHASE OUR FOURTH STEP INVENTORY SERVICE FOR A SMALL FEE!

We are experts at understanding alcoholics, their uniqueness, and all the things they aren't willing to deal with. Leave your fourth step inventory in our hands and you will be extremely pleased with the results. For further information, please call **1-888-SPONSOR**.

If you are interested in references, we have clients in rehabs, asylums, jails, and graveyards. In addition, we have some clients living on skid row. We would be more than willing to hook you up with one of them.

**Give the Gift of Grapevine
Carry the message.**

Each Subscription to Grapevine has the potential to travel far beyond the subscriber.

Share sobriety with your friends and sponsees. Give a gift subscription to Grapevine Magazine.

Experience. Strength. Hope.

Like the personal stories heard in meetings, the stories cover a wide range of experiences— from getting and staying sober to problems solved, to emotional and spiritual healing. Many focus on “what it was like, what happened, and what we are like now. Others focus on the Twelve Steps, and the tools of AA.

- 16 additional stories each month.
- For each print gift subscription you purchase, you will receive 57% off a second one.
- For each online gift subscription you purchase, you will receive 57% off a second one.

Order Today.



Or

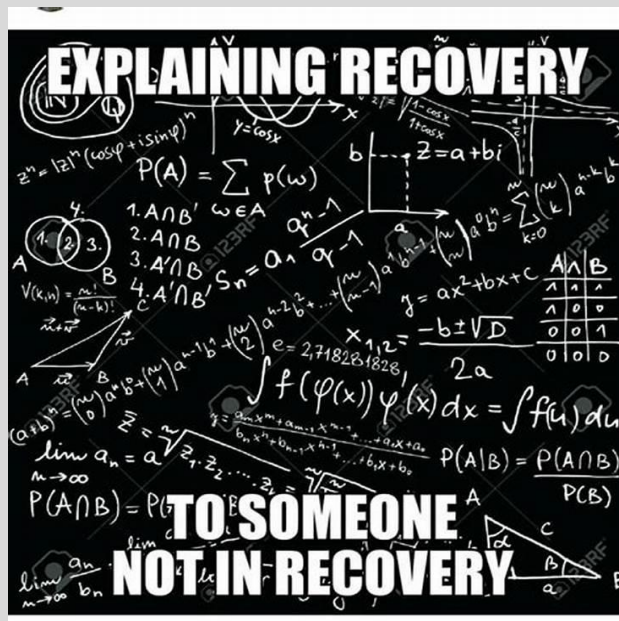


<https://store.aagrapevine.org> or the order form in magazine.

“How do you know when you’re at an AA meeting? When someone spills their coffee and everyone jumps up to clean the spill.”



“Allow me to describe the 13th step to you... ‘My life has become unmanageable and I have come to share it with you!’”



“What’s that new fellowship called for people who obsess about talking too much? They call it On-and-On-Anon.”
Get it? Not to be confused with Al-Anon.

AA News
World Service Meeting, October 7-11



Delegates representing AA from around the world will gather for the Fellowship's 25th World Service Meeting (WSM) at the Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel in Durban, South Africa, October 7-11, 2018.

Hosted by the General Service Board of AA of the U.S. and Canada, the event will bring together over 60 delegates from more than 40 different countries or linguistic zones around the world. Our two trustees-at-large, Scott H. and Newton P., serve as WSM delegates representing the U.S. and Canada. The International assignment at the General Service Office in New York City is coordinating the event.

Since its inauguration in 1969, the WSM has provided a continuing international forum for shared experience and ideas on carrying the AA message of recovery from alcoholism. The event alternates biennially between New York and other locations around the globe, and has convened in such diverse cities as Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; Oviedo, Spain; Malahide, Ireland; Mexico City, Mexico; and Warsaw, Poland.

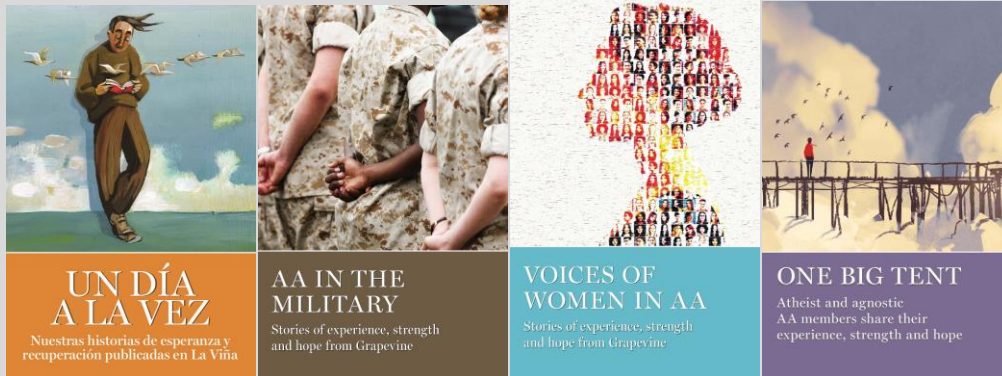
Described as a living and growing exchange of experience responding to the needs of AA worldwide, the theme of the 2018 WSM will be "Our Twelve Traditions: AA's Future in the Modern World." Over the past four decades, the WSM has succeeded in bringing together far-flung AA service centers and reflects a final vision of AA's cofounder Bill W., who believed there could be "one world of AA" to assure that help would always be available for sick alcoholics wherever they might be or whatever language they might speak. It was Bill W.'s belief that AA membership on other continents would someday exceed that of the U.S. and Canada, and the growth of the WSM is proof that the Fellowship will continue to thrive and grow wherever the need for recovery exists.

Today, AA has a presence in over 180 countries, with an estimated total of 118,300 groups and more than 2 million members worldwide. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* has been translated into 71 languages. Visit the AA Around the World page on www.aa.org to read the Final Report of the 24th World Service Meeting that took place in October 2016.

copyright©(Oct. 2018) AA Grapevine Inc. reprinted with permission

AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



AA Grapevine is pleased to announce **FREE SHIPPING*** for the U.S. and Canada. Hurry! This special offer is available for a **LIMITED TIME ONLY**.

Here are some items available with this offer:

- 2019 One Day At A Time Calendar
- 2019 One Day At A Time Pocket Planner
- AA in the Military: *Stories of experience, strength and hope from Grapevine*
- One Big Tent: *Atheist and agnostic AA members share their experience, strength and hope*
- Voices of Women in AA: *Stories of experience, strength and hope from Grapevine*
- Forming True Partnerships: *How AA members use the program to improve relationships*
- Our Twelve Traditions: *AA members share their own stories of experience*
- Un Día A La Vez: *Nuestras historias de esperanza y recuperación publicadas en La Viña*
- Making Amends: *Finding a new freedom*
- The Language of the Heart: *Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings*
- Sober & Out: *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender AA Members Share Their Experience, Strength and Hope*
- One On One: *AA Sponsorship in Action*
- Young & Sober: *Stories from AA Grapevine*
- Beginners' Book: *Getting and Staying Sober in AA*
- Grapevine Daily Quote Book
- CDs, Artwork, Commemorative Special Editions of Grapevine and much more

Now is the perfect time to order a gift and something for yourself, the cost of shipping is **"FREE"***. **FREE SHIPPING*** discount on this promotion is automatic – no need to use a coupon code.

The Big Event

Chairing a what? A mini-conference? Oh no, how do you do that? She was about to find out

A couple of years ago, I got an email from Carmella, who was the chairperson of the Washington Area General Service Assembly. She asked if I would serve as the chair for the mini-conference that would be held at a nearby hospital.

Without even knowing what was involved, I said yes. After I sent the email, I said to myself, Get honest, Lynette. You have no idea what you've gotten yourself into. You don't even know what a mini-conference is! But I couldn't tell Carmella that. I wanted to act like I knew what I was doing.

In the beginning, the only thing I had to do at the mini-conference was present a report on the status of the area at the GSR meetings. That should be easy enough. Then I had to inform the group that the meeting co-chair had a prior commitment and that we'd fill that position soon. I could do that too. That's when I got an email from Carmella that included dates and tasks to be accomplished.

She told me that as chair, I got to participate in NERAASA, (the Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly), which would be in New York. "Get out of here," I said. What an opportunity. I had been to NERAASA before. It was a wonderful experience. This time I got to spend time with people I already knew from the Washington, D.C. area, but in a different capacity. I got to learn things I hadn't known and, as always, I also got to meet lots of new friends in AA. While we were in New York, I realized there were lots of things I didn't know and that I would need to ask for help. I began by asking Carmella to be my service sponsor.

When we returned from NERAASA, we started planning our mini-conference. I met with Carmella and Ricardo, our area delegate at the time. We selected four topics to present. I would need to look for presenters and moderators for

our panels and communicate with the hospitality committee, as well as the hospital. The work required me to get outside myself and to draw upon the experience, strength and hope of other members.

One of the biggest struggles I've always had is being honest enough to say I don't know and can you help me, please? Being chair of the mini-conference forced me to face this fear. Luckily, every time I asked for help, it was offered. How amazing. Why did I used to pretend to know what I was doing?

As the months passed, I learned that it wasn't *my* mini-conference but *our* mini-conference. I learned that those who had served in this capacity prior to me had left a set of instructions for me to follow, and once again, that if I didn't know what to do next, call somebody, email somebody—ask!

Finally, after months of planning and work, the day of the mini-conference arrived. Outside it was a gray, rainy Saturday, but inside the sun was shining. All the panelists showed up. There was such a spirit of unity. Nearly 70 people were in attendance. What a learning experience!

First, I learned that I am never alone. Second, I learned that a closed mouth does not get fed. Whenever I let somebody know I needed help, it was always there. Finally, I learned that I don't have to be perfect.

I remember working on posters to go on the doors and I not liking the way they looked, so I decided I wasn't going to use them. Carmella came up and said, "Where are your posters?" I told her I was not going to put them up. In a loving yet stern voice that she has, she said, "Put the posters up, Lynette. Nobody said you have to like how they look." Truth be told, they looked just fine. We all had such a wonderful day that Saturday.

Opportunity for growth always comes when I do things I don't think I can do. It's always good to remember that the first word in the First Step is *we* and not *me*. -- L.D. Washington, D.C.

Copywrite © (Aug. 2018) AA Grapevine Inc. reprinted with permission

Announcements

Have a joyous, prosperous, and happy 2019

Dec 8 Winter Assembly @ Lord of Life Lutheran Church. 40W605 Il Route 38, Elburn, Illinois. 8 am registration

Jan 12 Winter Committee meeting Lord of Life Church 40W605 IL-38 Elburn, IL 60119

Jan 26 @ 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm Hinckley Big Book – 22nd Anniversary Pork Chop Dinner @ Hinckley First United Methodist Church 801 N Sycamore St Hinckley, IL 60520. Contact Scott 630 917 3757 or Kay 815 970 2704.

March 23 Spring Assembly. District 22. More information TBA

April 13 Spring Committee meeting Lord of Life Church 40W605 IL-38 Elburn, IL 60119

May 4 Pre-General Conference Workshop. District 40. More information TBA

May 19-25 69th General Service Conference. New York

June 22 Summer Assembly. District 12. More information TBA

July 12-14 East Central Regional Conference. Romulus MI

Aug 3 Summer committee meeting

Aug 9 – Aug 11 2019 AA Illinois State Conference @ Sheraton Lisle Naperville Hotel 3000 Warrenville Rd Lisle, IL 60532

Sept 15 Fall Assembly. TBA

Oct 12 Fall Committee Meeting Lord of Life Church 40W605 IL-38 Elburn, IL 60119

Oct 18 – Oct 20 East Central Regional Conference – Area 75 @ Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport 6401 South 13th Street Milwaukee, WI 53221 For more information contact Nancy H. 414-801-5184 nanch268@gmail.com

Nov 2 Big Book Conference. District 23 & 40. More information TBA

Dec 7 Winter Assembly. District 11. More information TBA

