



**Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

## More Than I Can Handle

"God never gives you more than you can handle" proclaims an AA slogan. For me, that slogan is misleading and is contradicted by my spiritual growth in the program.

God has given me more than I could handle--several times. And I thank God that I couldn't handle those situations, because my inability to do so left me only one refuge, to turn to my Higher Power with the simple plea, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Being forced to turn to my Higher Power at these desperate times has enabled me to put aside many of my lifelong compulsions to control and manage, allowing me to learn to turn to my Higher Power rather than to one more control scheme.

With four years' sobriety, I couldn't handle a situation in which a severe asthma attack left me unconscious and put me in the hospital in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The last thing I remember before I lost consciousness was saying "Thy will, not mine, be done." The next thing I remember was waking up in a hospital bed in time to see a magnificent sunrise over Colorado's Eastern Plains.

I remember not being able to handle being a hit-and-run pedestrian victim, waking up in restraints in a hospital bed five days after I was run down on a nighttime walk. I couldn't handle the burst of emotions that the accident had released in me. I was forced to admit my powerlessness and to turn to my Higher Power as I began struggling toward emotional sobriety after over seven years of physical sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous.

A few years after my accident, I couldn't handle my first marriage ending, at my then-wife's request, and I couldn't handle my son's slide into heroin addiction. My inability to handle these situations led me to participation in Al-Anon and to psychotherapy, two tools necessary for me to fulfill AA's promises and to emerge "happy, joyous and free."

And I have. My second marriage, the happiest event of my life, is two years old, and my wife and I have returned to Santa Barbara, California, our home, after a sojourn in the Midwest that was a powerful learning experience.

That experience taught me once again that when God gives me something I can't handle, I can take the next right step each day, asking God for the courage to change the things I can. And, as always, I must end my Serenity Prayer as it does in the Third Step of the "Twelve and Twelve," with "Thy will, not mine, be done."

— John M.

Santa Barbara, California

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St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.  
608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

Web Site: [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org)

E-mail: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

Fax: 651-290-0209

Office Hours: Monday through Friday — 9 AM to 6 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 1 PM

**Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.**

### Don't Be A Stranger

"Could you get a card for Bob S.? He's in the hospital and not doing well," a person asked at a recent meeting. I knew quite a few Bob S.'s and I wondered if he was one of them. After the meeting, I looked for the person who'd asked about the card, but he'd already left. I felt as though a chance to be helpful may have gone with him.

For me, anonymity within the Fellowship insures a reduction in my ability to be useful. It's interesting that Dr. Bob is credited with the belief that there are two ways to break one's anonymity. The obvious one is to be identified by name or photo at the level of press, radio and film. The other was not to use full names at meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In my Cooperation with the Professional Community and Public Information work outside of AA meetings, I diligently protect the anonymity of myself and other AAs. press, radio, film, television and new technologies such as the Internet certainly require our complete anonymity. I believe that's the intention of Tradition Eleven.

Introducing ourselves at AA functions isn't mentioned. When I introduce myself, ask for a card, or converse with other members of the Fellowship, I make it clear who I am and about whom I am speaking. In that way, we all know the who, and how we can be of service.

- RICK B., Gahanna, Ohio

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**Concept Eleven: The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.**

To put it very simply, Concept Eleven is a long and complicated way of saying: *PAY ATTENTION TO THE WHO, HOW, WHAT & WHEN OF WHAT IS BEING DONE ON YOUR BEHALF.*

Any person who grew up on a farm, in a large family, knows this lesson well. When chores are assigned, they are assigned using each family members level of competence as the criteria. Often this has to do with age – but not entirely. Unlike an A.A. group, they don't send Joe or Sally out to do a complicated or intricate task – they send them along with someone who can properly train them first. Why? Because they see each task as vital to their own survival. Both **Arrogance** or **Apathy** can make a person or group overlook that fact. Not exactly the AA we want. Not a particularly complicated or profound attitude – simply a very practical one.

-Anonymous

### ***The Lifeline: Purpose Statement***

*The Lifeline* is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Incorporated. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition, or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of our A.A. experience.

Please email your article to [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org), or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 608 Seventh Street West, St. Paul MN 55102. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc.

## Thoughts From Your Board

November is a very exciting time of the year! It's gratitude month for starters. It's a time of year to reflect and think about what we are grateful for. For me, this brings the idea of service work to mind. In the spirit of giving back what has been given so freely to me!

November is also when St. Paul Intergroup has its annual elections. This is my third year serving on the Board. It really has been a privilege and a pleasure to be so involved with St. Paul Intergroup. If you are looking for a unique and fulfilling service opportunity please consider becoming a Board member. As a Board member, you will be directly involved in making important decisions that affect our (AA) community. You will also help with planning and implementing Intergroup events. It really is an experience you don't want to miss! Elections will be held this year on November 21, 2017 at 7:30PM at St. Stans Church. Positions are listed in this edition of the lifeline.

Yours in Service,

Sandy K.

Advisor to the Board

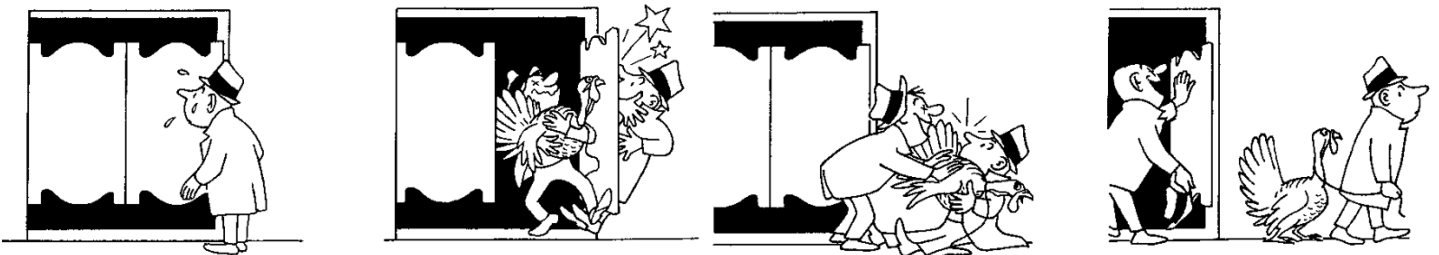
## Notes From Your Office

Twice in September, our Office Volunteers had the opportunity to Twelve-Step a pedestrian while sitting on the Intergroup's back porch. In both instances, the approach came from the pedestrian. The first individual was a young woman who was coming off a binge. Still disoriented, she asked our Volunteer where she was, and then who we were. The Volunteer told her about AA, and she admitted that she might need our program. We gave her a meeting directory and encouraged her to either call us or attend a meeting if she wanted to find out if AA was for her. She thanked us and went on her way, clutching the directory.

In the second instance, a young man was doing laundry in the laundromat next door, and stopped to talk with another of our Office Volunteers sitting on the back porch. He told the Volunteer that he had been to AA before, but had fallen away from the Fellowship and the Program. He acknowledged that in his time away from AA his disease had progressed even further and he wanted to get back. The Volunteer talked to him about the progressive nature of alcoholism from his own experience, and encouraged the young man to attend a meeting that was close by and accessible to him. Grateful for the outreach, the young man effusively thanked the Volunteer. His parting words were. "Ill see you again soon, I hope!"

So, just remember, you just never know when the hand of AA can be there for the still suffering alcoholic! We are so grateful for our Volunteers! If you are looking for service work and have time during the week to spare, please contact the Office. We would be only too happy to give you the chance to be of service here!

- Your Office Staff





# Save the Date!

## One Year Speaker:

John H. - No Time Like The Present, Roseville, MN

## Main A.A. Speaker:

Marti R. - Buda Big Book  
Buda, TX

# St Paul Intergroup's Annual Gratitude Night

Saturday

November 18, 2017

7:00 pm

## New Location!!!

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

285 North Dale St.

St. Paul, MN 55103



ASL Interpreted.



# Announcements & Updates

## HOOTS!

Thank to all the amazing Night Owl volunteers. You are **awesome!!!**

We currently have the following shifts needing an owl:

**1st Sunday, 9 am - 2 pm**

**2nd Wednesday, 10 pm - 9 am  
(overnight)**

**Reminders to all groups! When you get a new Night Owl Coordinator for your group, please send an e-mail to let me know who it is and update their phone number so the committee person making reminder calls is taking to the correct individual.**

Send e-mails to me at [nightowl@aastpaul.org](mailto:nightowl@aastpaul.org)

Thank you!

Cheryl B.  
Night Owl Committee Coordinator

Night Owl Tidbit:  
Do you have an interesting Night Owl story you want to share? Send an e-mail to [nightowl@aastpaul.org](mailto:nightowl@aastpaul.org)!

## Your News?

We invite you to share your AA news here!  
Please send your items to [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org).  
We look forward to hearing from you.

## Group and Area News

**New Meeting:** A new Friday 10:00AM Open, Meditation meeting is being held at the *156 Club* (aka The Forest Lake Alano), 156 North-west 3rd St., Forest Lake 55025. The Meeting is Mix, & All-Ages are welcomed.

**Meeting Change:** The Monday and Tuesday Open meetings of the *Stillwater Morning Groups* are now being held at 7:00AM, instead of 7:30AM in the Library of the Trinity Lutheran Church, 115 4th Street N., Stillwater 55082. Use the 4th Street Entrance. The Monday meeting is Topic/Discussion and the Tuesday meeting reads from *As Bill Sees It*. Both are Mixed, & All-Ages are welcomed.

**Meeting Change:** The *Just for Today Women's Group* is now meeting 6:00PM Mondays at the Christ The King Lutheran Church, 1900 7th Street NW, New Brighton, 55112 in the Lower Level Youth Room. The Meeting is Closed & All-Ages with a Topic/Step Format.

**Meeting Relocation:** The Monday 6:00PM *Silver Lake* group and the Monday 6:00PM *Just For Today Women's* group have relocated to Christ the King Lutheran Church, 1900 7th Street NW, New Brighton, MN 55112. Both groups offer a Closed, All-Ages meeting: *Silver Lake* is a Step group; whereas the *Just For Today* hosts a Women's only, Step & Topic meeting.

**Meeting No More:** The *New Beginnings* group is no longer holding its Tuesday 6:30PM meeting at the Sanctuary Assisted Living facility, 1746 Oakdale Avenue, West St. Paul, 55118.



**Looking for a Service Opportunity?  
Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl!**

Upcoming Night Owl Orientations:  
**Saturday, Nov. 18th, Dec 16th, Jan 20th**

**Every Third Saturday from 10:00 - 11:00 AM**

St. Paul Intergroup Office

608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

**To RSVP please call: 651-227-5502**



## St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes September 19, 2017

Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and the reading of the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.

Minutes from last month were reviewed, Mark motioned and Nick seconded, motion approved.

Treasurer's Report, – Matt R went over the report. The prudent reserve is \$45,019. Total contributions are up, group contributions are up and office sales are down.

Expenses increased \$857. Due to Quickbooks software issues, the Profit & Loss statements have not been including payroll for the last 5-6 months. Financial decisions often being made using that statement, the checking account was brought to a low balance. Funds are being transferred to checking from the Prudent Reserve to ensure operating expenses are cleared. The reports/software are being fixed more to come later. See Treasurer's Report for full details. Contact Matt at [treasurer@aastpaul.org](mailto:treasurer@aastpaul.org).

Office Report, Dennis – Sales has been a little slow this last month but perceived as being cyclical. Good trend of experience volunteers walking in looking to help. The office is considering a software package to enhance volunteer lists and coordination. The new 1-hour parking zone is in place in front of the office. It is neither a handicapped nor loading zone. It seems to be working. Please note in the Lifeline there is the flyer and information including speakers for Gratitude Night. Grapevine has released a new booklet entitled "Voices of Women in A.A..

Night Owl Report, Cheryl B – There are two regular shifts opening up, 5<sup>th</sup> Saturdays 2-7pm and 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays 530-10pm. Seeking fluent Spanish speakers for the Nightowl packet. See additional info in the hoots. Contact Cheryl at [NightOwl@aastpaul.org](mailto:NightOwl@aastpaul.org) or leave a message at the intergroup office.

Website Report, Jonathan gave the report. There are 690 meetings and 277 groups total. Down 2 meetings and the groups remained level. There are 14 service opportunities and one open Night Owl shift per the website. The mobile site is still up for parallel testing, the link is in the corner of the regular site and still accepting feedback. Contact Jonathan & Sergey at [webservant@aastpaul.org](mailto:webservant@aastpaul.org).

Outreach Program, Carolyn – Volunteers are still needed for visiting meetings, see Thoughts from the Board in the Lifeline. Refer to the Outreach Info Sheet for full instructions. Contact Carolyn M at [outreach@aastpaul.org](mailto:outreach@aastpaul.org).

Update from the Board, Jenni, We are still seeking an Alternate Treasurer who will take over in January. Don't forget that elections are in the November meeting.

Liaison Reports: District 8 Mike C, Passed proposal to give money to ASL fund for October to pilot 2 meetings in addition to OMD (Firing Line and Rule 62). The Public Info Chair is asking for funds to do a radio PSA. ; District 15 Bob Z, New workshop "Effectively Carrying The Message Into Institutions" Sat. Oct 28<sup>th</sup> in St Paul at Linwood Rec Center 10am-12pm. Flyer on website. District had a booth at the Washington County Fair. Reaching out to High Schools ; District 19 John, Area 36 Public Info rep did presentation on offering info to groups. Area is asking the Districts for funding for ASL, but tabled temporarily.

### Upcoming Intergroup Events

Gratitude Night – Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer at 285 Dale Street North in St Paul. Speaker and flyer can be found in Lifeline or Intergroup website.

Founders Day – Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> at DoubleTree Bloomington Hotel. 7800 Normandale Blvd. Mpls, MN 55439. Lesli is the contact for volunteer shifts.

### Old Business:

### New Business:

Founders Day Presentation by Ed from planning committee. A 77 year tradition. See the orange flyers, plenty of volunteer opportunities still open.

### Group AA Announcements:

OMD Potluck & Sobriety Recognition Friday Oct 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Speaker is Paul J.

Midway Monthly Speaker Meeting and Fellowship Sunday Sept 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Midway Club.

Firing Line Sunday Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Potluck Speaker (Dennis B). Flyer on website.

Recoveryfest Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Recovery Church 4-9pm with Band and Speaker.

Area 36 Archives Workshop – Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2pm-5pm at Dakota County Library. See brown flyer.

Suggestions for next months' agenda: None

Grapevine Report, Dan; Volunteer for September, Lesli

Concept VIII review, Cheryl; Volunteer for Concept IX for October, C.J.

Mock Rep Report, Mark; Volunteer for October, Andrea

Closed with the Responsibility Statement

**Meetings Represented:** Como Park Big Book, Roseville; District 8; District 15; East Side 12&12, St. Paul; Happy, Joyous & Free, Mahtomedi; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Look To This Day, St. Paul; Main Idea, St. Paul; Maplewood Alano, Maplewood; Meeting of the Waters Mendota Heights; New Brighton Big Book, New Brighton; No Time Like the Present, Roseville; Outright Mental Defectives, St. Paul; Pocketing Our Pride, St. Paul; Problems & Solutions, St. Paul; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; St. Paul Speaker Meeting, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Third Edition, St. Paul; Uptown Groups, St. Paul; West End Groups, St. Paul; Women's Basic Text, St. Paul.

### 2017 Steering Board:

Chair:	Jenni S.
Alternate Chair:	Lesli D.
Secretary:	Rob C.
Treasurer:	Matt R.
Alternate Treasurer:	OPEN
Members-at-Large 2017:	J.D. & Carolyn M.
Members-at-Large 2018	Tom S. & Erik M.
Advisor to the Board:	Sandy K.
Manager	Dennis B.

### Office Calls/Visitors—September 2017

Meeting information	96
Inventory/hours	36
12th Step calls	11
Temporary sponsor	11
Speaker request	37
Special events	1
Outside issues	13
Info for professionals	8
Administrative	86
Other	37
Total Calls	336
<b>Average Calls/Day</b>	<b>16.0</b>
Total Visitors	233

**November 2017 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, November 21st @ 7:30 PM**

SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH  
398 West Superior Street; St. Paul, MN 55102

**7th Tradition  
Suggestions for Groups**

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

The Conference-approved pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

**50% St. Paul Intergroup**

608 Seventh Street West  
St. Paul, MN 55102

**30% General Service Office**

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

**10% Southern MN Area 36**

Area Assembly  
P.O. Box 2812  
Mpls., MN 55402

**10% District Committee**

Ramsey County:  
District 8, P.O. Box 131523  
St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:  
District 19, P.O. Box 1466  
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:  
District 15, P.O. Box 181  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

SE Ramsey County:  
District 26, P.O. Box 75980  
St. Paul, MN 55175

**SEPTEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Number of Group Contributors	31
Total Group Contributions:	\$3321
Number of Faithful Fivers:	22
Total from Faithful Fivers:	\$784



**District Meetings**

**District 8 (Ramsey Co.)**

Fairview Community Center  
1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 108  
Roseville  
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM

**District 15 (Wash. Co.)**

Christ Lutheran Church  
11194 N. 36th St.  
Lake Elmo  
4th Mon., 7:00 PM

**District 19 (Dakota Co.)**

Rosemount Community Center  
13885 South Robert Trail  
Rosemount  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

**District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)**

Grace Lutheran Church  
1730 Old Hudson Rd.  
St. Paul  
2nd Sun., 7:00PM  
[www.district26-area36.org](http://www.district26-area36.org)



**Thanks to all the Groups  
that contributed in September**

11th Step FINE Group

Anoka Day By Day

Children of Chaos Plus

Cottage Grove Groups

CRC Friends of Bill W.

Dakota Alano SAT 11 AM

EBS - Sat Speaker

Fairview Riverside Group

Fellowship Club AA

Forest Lake Alano

Gratitude in Action

Hampden Park Group

Highland Park Groups

Hole in the Doughnut Group

Hudson Alano Society

January 6th Group- Roseville

Lakeview Group

Live and Let Live

North Branch Community Groups

River Falls Monday 6:30

Rosemount Groups

Saturday Morning PS Meeting

Spiritual Awareness Group

St. Croix Alano Mon. 930am

St. Croix Alano Tues AM

St. Paul Sun Night Speaker

Summit Hill

Third Tradition Northfield

Una Luz en el Camino

Uptown Club

White Bear SAT AM Women's Group



**Thanks to all of the FANTASTIC Office Volunteers who helped in September:**

Becky L., Bill S., Bob P., Chrissie S.,  
CJ M., Debbie C., Felicia A., Frank D.,  
Henry O., Jake B., Jeff K.,  
Jimmy D., John O., Marc S., Marshall B.,  
Peg F., Selena E., Suzanne B., Ty K., Woody W.



**Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!**



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# St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup 2017 Board Elections

for Board Members & Officers  
**Tuesday, November 21st, 7:30pm**  
at the Group Representatives Meeting

St. Stanislaus Church  
398 West Superior Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102

## Open Positions:

### **Alternate Chair**

(3-year commitment—become Board Chair)  
(Sobriety Requirement—3 years)

### **Alternate Treasurer**

(2-year commitment—become Treasurer)  
(Sobriety Requirement - 3 years)

### **Secretary**

(1-year commitment)  
(Sobriety Requirement - 3 years)

### **Two Members-at-Large**

(2 year commitment)  
(Sobriety Requirement - 2 years)

*Nominations will be accepted at the Intergroup office, or at the October and November Representative Meetings. Please submit a service resume with relevant AA and non-AA experience:*

*lifeline@aastpaul.org*

## **For more information**

please visit the Intergroup website:  
<http://www.aastpaul.org/?topic=14&article=28>  
or call us between 9:00AM – 5:30PM, M - F

**651-227-5502**

*We will be happy to answer any questions!*



## AAWS – Working on Self-Support

*“...that the irresponsible had become responsible, and that by making financial independence part of its tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous had revived an ideal that this era had almost forgotten.”*

This quote comes from AA Comes of Age. These are words that came from our friends at a newspaper, based on AA's decision to decline outside gifts, thus ensuring that financial independence would be part of our tradition. Today, AAWS is working towards that goal in a variety of ways, with group contributions taking the lead. This could and would never even be considered feasible in current times if group contributions were not trending so positively in whole dollar amounts. In recent years, group contributions jumped from seventy percent of contributions-to-expenses to around eighty-five percent in the current year. AA has not seen such a substantial increase in group contributions since the late eighties “Challenge of the Seventh Tradition” campaign.

Another reason that the achievement of self-support is conceivable in the near future has been a continuing effort on cost controls and reduced expenses incurred in providing services to the groups. A dollar decrease in expenses is just as good as a dollar increase in contributions. As your West Central Regional Trustee, I've become aware of many changes taking place at the General Service Office that have improved business processes – and hence, the services to the groups – while simultaneously controlling or even decreasing costs. For example, at the most recent AAWS meeting in September 2017, it was reported that a change in hosting for cloud computing services will save AAWS in the neighborhood of \$100k next year.

Another example is a change in paper that we (AA) purchases for the printing of the Big Book. Again, there will be a six-figure saving annually because of a change of paper that is both of better quality and lower in cost.

Greg T., the General Manager of the General Service Office, has instituted a comprehensive “Request For Proposal” (RFP) process that provides for clear, competitive bidding from multiple vendors for a variety of products and services needed by AAWS. Overall vendor account management has garnered savings and cost reductions that have many expenses coming in under budget, which once again helps us move towards the elusive benchmark of being self-supporting.

Another area of focus by AAWS has been managing the contributions process more effectively. In past years, AAWS spent upwards of one million dollars to process 5-6 million dollars of contributions. Today we process well over 7 million dollars at a much lower cost. In addition, there is a continual trend towards electronic contributions, which have a dramatically lower cost to process. In recent months, this has risen to over 9% of total contributions.

With all this good news and great statistics, there is one statistic that is a bit dismaying. Only a bit over 40% of the groups send any amount of support (contributions) to the General Service Office. I recall when I began general service work in 1987, my home area was at about 58% of the groups contributing, but in recent years that has decreased about 20% to the mid-40% range. I also recall reading in the Grapevine archives about a person in Ohio lamenting that their area (in the 1950's) was at the lower end of areas contributing, and his area was around 60% (what we'd give for “the good ol' days”!).

*(Continued pg.3)*

## AAWS – Working on Self-Support (con't)

But rather than focus on the problem, let it become an opportunity. If we all work together to provide information to the almost 60% of the groups that do not contribute and gain only a portion as contributing groups that are all obtaining services from our General Service Office, and couple that with the beneficial changes that AAWS management is making, self-support is quite possible.

How will we know that we achieve it? Fortunately, the finance department has clear reporting of revenues and costs. Revenues that we are concerned with, of course, are the contributions from individuals and groups that are sent to the GSO. Expenses are broken out as to services associated with the group services effort and those that are related to the publishing operation. The former is the aggregate number that we as a fellowship should be covering with our contributions. Publishing costs are covered by the sale of literature as part of the manufacturing process.

AAWS has re-started a Self-Support committee, and I have the privilege to be a member. We are intent on being an asset in the process of helping AA to achieve self-support through contributions. First and foremost is developing and assisting in a clear communication of the principle of self-support. All the information shared with you in this article plus more will be part of our work in serving the AA groups to possibly for the first time ever, help to bring AA to a sustainable financial position that is also the soundest spiritual position we can be in, both with respect to the corporate poverty that John D. Rockefeller recommended to us in 1937 and Bill codified in the Seventh Tradition and AA formally adopted in 1950.

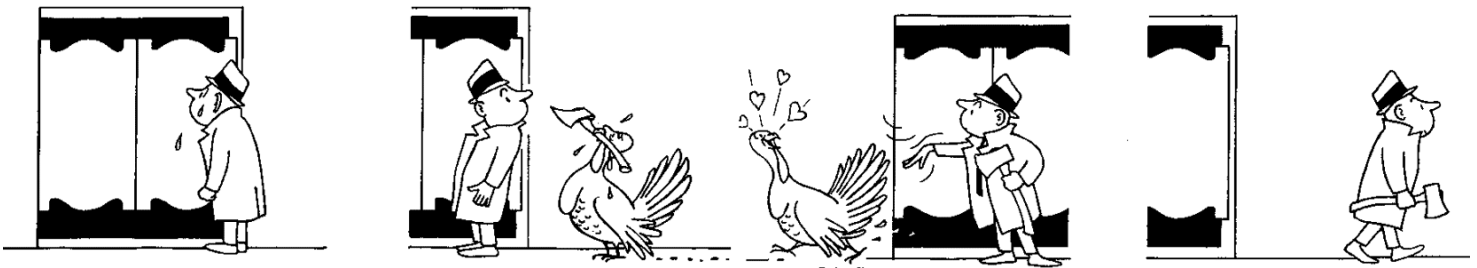
Bill clarified our financial policy with the Seventh Tradition, that we would never accept money from an outside entity. Over the next twelve years, between the fellowship's adoption of the Traditions in 1950 to the acceptance of the Concepts in 1962, a bit of refinement took place with regard to literature profits. The reality was group contributions were insufficient for the continued rapid growth of AA both in the services to the groups in the U.S. and Canada (which included the initiation of the annual General Service Conference in 1961) plus incredible expansion globally. The vast majority of the books were being sold to AA members and AA groups (including Intergroups), and Bill addressed this profit of non-commercial sales in Concept 12, Warranty Two.

The AAWS Self-Support committee is committed to a goal of AA being self-supporting through its own contributions, and with the fellowship leading the way with their contributions, the fellowship will have their office and services becoming independent of the literature profits – a true independence, a freedom and the greatest opportunity for the “power of the purse” to be effectively heard.

.. ...may we all work together, unified, to reach the highest ideals of AA Tradition.....

Tom A.,

WCR Trustee and AAWS Director



## The Third Step Contract: Why Service Works

The Third Step Prayer on page 63 of our Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, has been a regular part of my daily life in A.A. for many, many years. It is a simple morning ritual, an anchor, and an inspiration. But I am not sentimental about it. I consider it a contract between myself and my Higher Power. I see it in very practical terms.

With most contracts, one party provides a good or a service and the other party provides some sort of payment in return. While those are not concepts we normally use to describe prayer or spirituality, in my case looking at the Third Step Prayer as a contract explains a lot.

One of the great ah-has I've had in A.A. is when I realized that I am terrible at NOT doing things that I know (or have been told) I'm not supposed to do. This includes drinking. I was terrible at NOT drinking. But I tried NOT to drink over and over again. Maybe because I grew up in an alcoholic family. Maybe because I experienced some traumatic events involving my alcoholic father. For whatever reason, before I came to A.A. there were periods in my life I would try very hard NOT to drink. I was desperate not to appear or act in any way that made me look like my father. He had ended up dying of his alcoholism. As long as I could prove I wasn't like him, I would be okay or could at least tell myself I was okay.

But every time I tried hard NOT to drink, I always, eventually, drank again. The sense of failure was overwhelming. I was an alcoholic as described in "The Doctor's Opinion" in the Big Book, always "emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again." Even though I got the relief alcohol provides us alcoholics, it was nearly always followed by shame.

When I finally ended up in A.A., I was not confident I would stay sober. My experience told me that I would surely drink again. I always did, no matter my intent or resolve. I was terrible at NOT drinking.

Fortunately for me, my sponsor and other members of my home group guided me to take actions other than trying NOT to drink. Instead I was brought through the Twelve Steps. Early in the process, at Step Three I was provided an alternative to NOT drinking. Rather than setting me up for failure again by asking me NOT to drink, the prayer doesn't mention drinking at all. What it does suggest is that I do some things that are not my idea – that I follow the will of a Higher Power instead.

Luckily the prayer makes doing God's will look very attractive. If I offer myself to God, my Higher Power builds something with and does something with my life. In exchange for doing my Higher Power's will, I get relieved of the bondage of self. In exchange for being an example to others of the power of a spiritual life, I get to have my difficulties taken away. As far as contracts go, the terms seem pretty positive.

In its simplest form, the contract I make with God in the Third Step Prayer is that if I am willing to help others, my problems get taken care of. So instead of trying NOT to drink, all I need to do is offer myself to help others. Then my drinking, like all of my problems, gets taken away.

This is why service at all levels of A.A. works so well for us. When we serve, we are fulfilling our part of a contract with a Higher Power. The "payment" we receive is sobriety. A rich and purposeful sobriety, relieved of the bondage of self. Those are terms I can live with.

Thanks for all your service,

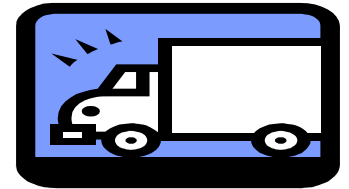
Curt K.  
Panel 67 Delegate  
Area 36 – Southern Minnesota  
delegate@area36.org

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup  
608 7th Street W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3010

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