



# Seeds of Service

## Our Home Groups—Our Heartbeat!

Jan H., Past Delegate, Panel 57 Area 60 WPA

**H**ow could we live without our heartbeats? Not very well!

Likewise, to live and thrive in AA, I needed to find a place to fit, to grow, to learn, to be honest, to practice being the “new” me, to laugh, to let others help me, and to help me help others. I was encouraged to find an AA home, a home group.



of, about responsibility—“the very spirit that sustains and perpetuates our Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous”, about making our meeting a welcome place, about the joy of having an AA family, and about staying in the middle of AA.

Tradition One states: “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.” I would have never understood the words common welfare or unity without the teachings and examples given to me in my home groups. As many others, I was very “me-centered” when I got to AA. I am grateful that members taught me “how it works”, not only in the Twelve  
*(Continued on page 3)*

## What A.A. Members Are Asking—Part II

Excerpted in part from Box 459, February/March 2008

*Throughout the year, many A.A. members and groups direct questions about A.A. to the General Service Office. Some issues come up time and again. Following are the remaining questions that were not included in the last issue.*

**Q.** Does GSO have information about the history of my home group?

**A.** G.S.O.’s Archives staff may sometimes be able to provide information about the origins and history of a group, depending on the amount of information the group has sent to GSO over the years.

**Q.** We are putting on an A.A. roundup, and some A.A. members are saying that since we are charging a registration fee for attendance, we are not acting in accordance with A.A. Tradition.

**A.** There is a big difference between “no dues or fees for A.A. membership” and a registration fee for an A.A. roundup. There are many A.A. roundups, conventions, and conferences and,

in most cases, registration fees are charged to cover expenses. Organizers may on occasion make special arrangements for A.A.s who would like to attend but cannot afford to.

**Q.** Did I see a commercial for A.A. on television?

**A.** You may have seen one of the A.A. public service announcements (P.S.A.) for television that was approved by the General Service Conference. A.A. has been producing P.S.A.s for over 30 years. These short spots are not intended to promote A.A. or to say that A.A. is better than any other way of dealing with alcoholism, or that we offer the only solution. Their purpose is to share with others that they may find sobriety

*(Continued on page 3)*

## The A.A. Home Group Where it all begins

*Excerpted from Pamphlet P-16 with Permission from A.A. World Services*

*This pamphlet is an essential guide for the A.A. group. It compliments the Service Manual, and other literature, which cover specific group matters at greater depth. It’s noteworthy that the responsibility and unity declarations are both featured on the back cover. Below are two sections that are particularly important for maintaining a healthy group.*

### What is an Informed Group Conscience?

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

On sensitive issues, the group works slowly—discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “yes” or “no” count—precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.

### A.A. Group Inventory

Many groups periodically hold a “group inventory meeting” to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.’s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery.

*(Continued on page 8)*

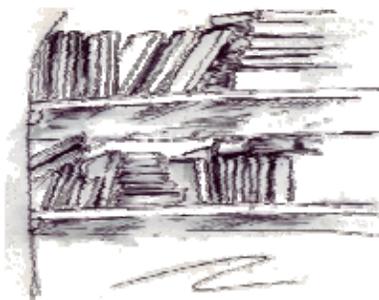
## ON MY BOOKSHELF

Jean M., Past Delegate, Panel 61 Area 60 WPA

I was sponsored to use the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous. At the end of the first meeting that I attended, a woman came over to me, took me by the arm and led me to the Literature Rack. She pulled out some pamphlets and as she handed them to me, she said, “*read these and come back next week.*” I thought that it was an assignment, and was pleased that I had been given a task that I could follow. Since that first meeting, the literature of our program has been very important to me.

Of course, our Big Book and the Twelve & Twelve are the basics of our program of recovery; the Service Manual is essential when we start to learn more about the General Service Structure and the worldwide Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

If you have had the opportunity to attend an Area meeting, you have probably looked at the A.A.W.S. and the Grapevine literature displays. We have pamphlets, history books, booklets and workbooks for our standing committees. We have AA Guidelines, Conference Reports,



Directories and Service Material. And we have a catalogue describing all of these.

I have said, as others before me have, that the answer to any question that I have can be found on my bookshelf. I was pleased that our Newsletter Editor approved when I suggested that I could write an on-going column introducing our literature.

As I contemplated what I would write about our literature, I looked at my three bookshelves. One has A.A.W.S. literature, the second has Grapevine books and the third has “other” literature (*program related but not conference approved*). As long as I have been in the program, I have heard that we only display “Conference Approved” and Grapevine items at A.A. meetings. But did you know that

AA Guideline MG-09 states that a Conference Advisory Action in 1977 suggests that A.A. groups be discouraged from selling literature not distributed by the General Service Office and the Grapevine?

Service Material SMF-29m “Conference Approved Literature” (*available at aa.org*) explains: The term “Conference-approved” describes material approved by the Conference for publication by G.S.O. Conference approval assures us that a piece of literature represents solid A.A. experience, by going through a lengthy process.

The term has no relation to material not published by G.S. It does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about A.A. A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and A.A. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read.

I invite you to join me on a journey through our literature that will begin in earnest with the next issue of the Seeds of Service.



Grapevine Cartoon Contest Winner  
April 2013

*"Maybe a dunking booth for Alanons? They'd love it."*

## A. A. Acronyms

*An addendum to our growing collection ...*

ABC = Acceptance, Belief, Change

ASAP = Always Say a Prayer

ASK = Ass-Saving Kit

CRAP = Carrying Resentments Against People

DRY = Doing Recovery Yourself

ISM = I Sponsor Myself

HOPE = Helping Other People Everyday

PRIDE = Personal Recovery Involves Deflating Ego

SPONSOR = Sober Person Offering Newcomers Suggestions On Recovery

TRUST = Try Relying Upon The Steps.

## Our Home Groups—Our Heartbeat!

Jan H., Past Delegate, Panel 57 (Continued from page 1)

Steps, but also in the groups. Service, the third side of our equilateral triangle symbol, begins in the home group. Members of my home group pitch in to open the door, make the coffee, display the AA literature, serve as group officers, greet to make sure those entering feel comfortable, give a Big Book to those that do not have one, offer their phone numbers, gratefully take turns to chair the study, clean up after the meeting, and securely lock the meeting place respecting the privilege of being able to meet there. We practice “a powerful principle in AA, rotation—the passing-it-

on to the newer people” necessary for the group to grow. “AA is not going to preserve itself automatically....The only time that wrong can prevail is when good people do nothing.” Home groups thrive when their members are actively participating—continuing to carry the message of AA.

“By helping insure the sobriety of others to come, we insure our own sobriety today. The best member of Alcoholics Anonymous that one can be is the best member of a home group that one can be.”

## What AA Members are Asking—Part II

Box 459, February/March 2008 (Continued from page 1)

in A.A. Our hope is that an alcoholic, or a concerned friend or relative, who hears about A.A. will know that we offer a solution to alcoholism.

**Q.** Are specialized groups for men, women, young people, gays, doctors, lawyers, etc. a part of A.A.?

**A.** Specialized groups, provided they have no other affiliation or purpose, are part of A.A. and have a long history in the Fellowship. There are specialized meetings for members of certain professions, such as doctors, police officers or airline pilots that are not listed in local directories, since they are not open to the general A.A. population or the public. Provided they have no other affiliation or purpose, these meetings are considered A.A. meetings. Our experience indicates that spe-

cialized meetings can be helpful to newcomers who may initially feel uncomfortable in the general A.A. population. The General Service Office lists specialized groups with the understanding that any alcoholic arriving at one of them will not be turned away without recourse to another A.A. meeting. For example, a women’s group may choose to open their meeting to a man for the evening if no other A.A. meeting is available nearby.

**Q.** What are the criteria for listing A.A. conferences, conventions and similar events in Box 4-5-9 and the Grapevine?

**A.** GSO defines an A.A. event as one put on by A.A.s, for A.A.s, about A.A. These events must be two or more days long. There would not be enough room to list one day events or group anniversaries.

## A Place to Belong

Amanda F., World Famous Groundhog Group, District 15

I want to start by saying my home group is a very important part of my recovery. When I first came to A.A. I did not understand why they called it a *home group*. Now I know it is because the sense of belonging I feel there. Without my home group I wouldn’t have a home in A.A. When I first came into the program I picked a home group right away. I had no clue at the time what a home group was or what it meant to be part of one. I just did it to be able to say I had one, and because I knew it was the

right thing to do. I stayed in that group for a few weeks. The only thing I did was attend the meetings and show up for the group conscience. I felt as though everything was running smoothly and everyone had their place. After being in the program a little while I started to learn more about the home group. I started to see that it was about responsibility, doing service, passing the message to the new comer and much, much more. This is when I started to feel the

(Continued on page 11)

## Welcome Home!

Larry R.L., Jr. SCI Fayette

Hello again fellow A.A.’s! I was asked to describe how the heartbeat of A.A. beats through a home group. I recall a fond memory that started my first introduction to the fellowship in 1985.

When I was no longer welcome anywhere else because of my alcoholism and addiction to drugs, a few A.A.’s from what was to become my first home group told me to “*keep coming back, it works when you work it.*” I was also asked “*am I willing to try a new way of life?*” and “*do I have the desire to stay stopped?* (our third tradition).

Here I was only less than two months sober, getting evicted, broke, a child on the way, a despairing young wife, legal troubles, no utilities besides electric, and going hungry most nights. Joining that first home group must of made me realize just how powerless I was because I finally asked for help. The woman who is now my second ex-wife made me go talk to the speaker that night. He later became my sponsor after six months of attendance.

That cold November night, he asked me “*Are you hungry Larry?*” I immediately tried to deny it, as he invited me out to the restaurant with a bunch of other A.A.’s from our home group. He finally said “*Are you coming to eat with us, we’re ready to leave since the meeting is over.*” I explained I had no money, he said, “*I didn’t ask you if you had any money, are you and your wife hungry?!!*” So we went ...

At the restaurant, the A.A.’s from the home group all had chipped in feed us. I had not eaten in two days. I now know years later, even after several relapses, and now near five years sober, that was the example of love of one alcoholic helping another, when no one else would.

Just to think of how cunning, baffling, and powerful my disease is that I gave all that love up for a drink! My disease cost me my two wives, to boys houses,

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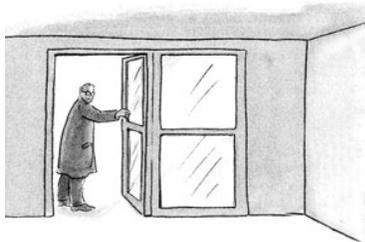
## The Home Group: Keeping AA Alive

Judi M., Saturday AM Wilkinsburg Group, District 6

When I went to my first AA meeting, a little over 31 years ago, I remember hearing these “suggestions”: Don’t Drink; Go to meetings; Get a Sponsor; Get a Home Group; Read the Big Book; Pray.

At that meeting, I met the woman who became my sponsor... she scooped me up, introduced me to other sober members, and took me to my next meeting. There I was introduced to the group’s secretary, who said, “*Would you like to make this your home group? We are looking for new members. Write down your name and the date of your last drink here...*” and, “*voila*”, I officially became a member to the Highland Park Group, without having a clue as to what that meant, or how important that would be to my sobriety.

At the next group conscience meeting, I was introduced to the group as a “newbie” and immediately given my first “job” in AA... a greeter at the door! As “the new girl,” I learned early on to be willing to follow directions and



take action. That first “service” position keep me in the middle of AA. Later on, with more sober time and experience, I was elected to be the Grapevine Rep, and have held various other service positions over the years.

At my home group, and other meetings I attended daily, I watched AA members with varying lengths of sobriety, take action... not just talking the talk, but walking the walk. They were not “social” members, or “in name only” sponsees... they were finding sobriety and serenity through service and action... in their program, in their home group, in their district, and in other areas of service. This IS a program of attraction, not promotion. That concept ap-

plies to people outside of AA, but also to members inside AA.

Having a home group kept me in the “center” of AA, not hanging around the edge to easily fall away. A home group has always given me a sense of belonging. Being a “people pleaser” I was eager to arrive early at my home group to help set up and fellowship, and afterwards to help clean up. This group of men and women—some of whom have gone to the big meeting in the sky, and many of whom are still around and active—became my core AA family. They accepted me, warts and all, loved me when I couldn’t love myself, and provided me a sense of safety and security for a couple of hours a week. I met sober “classmates” there, with whom I would attend hundreds of beginners meetings, share countless cups of coffee, and spend endless hours in and outside the rooms getting my sober feet on the ground.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

### Warranties 1 and 2

Vaughn H., Past Delegate, Panel 51 Area 60 WPA

As has been explained in the last newsletter, these general warranties — like the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions — can only be changed by a “*written consent of three-fourths of all the registered groups*” around the world.

The Warranties explain the qualities of prudence and spirituality, which Bill explains, the Conference should always possess. They are the permanent bonds that hold our General Service Conference to the Fellowship it serves. We shall see that the Warranties also express spiritual principles that apply to all other AA entities as well.

Jan P., delegate from Washington (1982), once stated in a presentation on the concepts that “*Bill Wilson suggests that ... prudence is a workable middle ground, a channel of clear sailing between the obstacles of fear on the one side and of recklessness on the other.*”

*“Prudence in practice creates a definite climate, the only climate in which harmony, effectiveness, and consistent spiritual progress can be achieved.”*

*If mistaken departures are made, the Concepts provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that might otherwise take years of floundering to rediscover.” The Concepts, in addition to the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, were developed from the hard knocks of experience; to ignore or overlook them is to move against the vital principle of A.A. unity.”*

#### WARRANTY ONE

“The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power.” “... We must use some money and there

must be some authority to serve... But how much? How and where should we draw these lines?

“... No great excess of group contributions over legitimate operating expenses is ever likely to be seen. Fortunately the AA Groups have a healthy reluctance about the creation of unneeded services, which might lead to an expensive bureaucracy in our midst. Indeed, it seems that the chief difficulty will continue to be that of effectively informing the AA groups as to what the financial needs of their world services actually are.

**Note:** The Seventh Tradition protects us against the accumulation of too much money. So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual member’s donations, ‘we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense.’ \*12 Concepts Illus.

“... Long experience suggests that we are

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## AREA 60 CLASSIFIEDS

*The Classifieds are a new format available to highlight service opportunities throughout Area 60. Area Committee members and DCMs are welcome to submit items to help spread the word and fill positions. Special thanks to Registrar Teresa K. for the idea for this column!*

<p>■ <b>Literature Coordinator &amp; Alternate.</b> The Literature Coordinator is responsible for the ordering, display and sales of AA literature at area-sponsored events. They are also responsible for keeping an inventory of conference-approved literature and other service pieces. If interested, contact John K. at <a href="mailto:chairperson@wpaarea60.org">chairperson@wpaarea60.org</a></p>	<p>■ <b>Alternate Corrections Coordinator.</b> The Corrections Coordinator is looking for an Alternate to help bridge the gap between inside and outside meetings. The Corrections Committee sometimes works closely with the Treatment/Special Needs Committee to provide a temporary contact upon release so that he/she will feel more at home in AA. If interested, contact Ed P. at <a href="mailto:corrections@wpaarea60.org">corrections@wpaarea60.org</a></p>
<p>■ <b>Recording Secretary.</b> The Recording Secretary is responsible for Roll Call, name tags, registration and mailing the minutes to attending GSR's and interested AA's at all Area meetings and Assemblies. They also work closely with the Area Secretary to keep the DCM list updated. May help with recording the minutes at Area meetings and Assemblies. If interested contact Richard C. at <a href="mailto:area60secretary@wpaarea60.org">area60secretary@wpaarea60.org</a></p>	<p>■ <b>Treatment Coordinator &amp; Alternate.</b> The Treatment Coordinator assists District Committees, groups and inter-groups in the formation of new meetings in treatment facilities. They also coordinate a "Bridging the Gap" program making information about AA available. They may work closely with the Corrections Committee to provide a temporary contact upon release. If interested, contact John K. at <a href="mailto:chairperson@wpaarea60.org">chairperson@wpaarea60.org</a></p>
<p>■ <b>Alternate Registrar.</b> The Alternate Registrar assists with the duties of the Registrar. They must have good computer skills and database experience. Must also have a willingness to serve and learn the software provided by GSO, as well as fill in for the Registrar at Days of Sharing when they are unable to attend. The Alternate will rotate into the position when the Registrar's term is completed. A minimum of two years sobriety is suggested. If interested in this position, contact Teresa K. at <a href="mailto:area60registrar@wpaarea60.org">area60registrar@wpaarea60.org</a>.</p>	<p>■ <b>Days of Sharing (DOS).</b> Days of Sharing are a great opportunities for a district or districts to host a day for members of A.A. to learn and experience what service is all about. It's also a great way to meet your Area 60 representatives!  If your district is hosting or co-hosting a day of sharing, contact your DCM to volunteer with either planning or helping on the day of the event. You can help in many ways, such as sitting on a panel discussion, registration, setting up, taking down, preparing and serving food, etc.</p>

■ **Support your District!** A district that sends no one to represent it at area assemblies is said to have gone "dark." This occurs with the breakdown of the process by which GSRs meet to elect a DCM to attend area meetings. When the district goes dark, its members no longer have a voice in Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

There are many opportunities to be of service with your District Committee. Does your district meet regularly? Do you have a GSR who attends these meetings? Currently, Districts 4, 5, 10, 19, 20, 26, 34, 36, 62 are either dark or near dark.

If your group is in one of these districts, you can help to relight it! Contact either Yvette N. at [delegate@wpaarea60.org](mailto:delegate@wpaarea60.org) or John K. at [chairperson@wpaarea60.org](mailto:chairperson@wpaarea60.org) for more information on how to get started!

### Confrontation in A.A. — Is it Necessary Sometimes?

Excerpted from 2008 SE Regional Forum Final Report, Knoxville, TN

*In response to the question, "How far do we go in being confrontational?" the moderator suggested the following guidelines:*

- Does it have to be said?
- Does it have to be said right now?
- Can I say it with love?
- Just because I am right, does it mean that I am the one to give the lesson?

### Longest Standing Area 60 Home Groups

*Special thanks to Past Delegate Jean M. for compiling this list from the Area 60 Archives.*

- 1941 East Liberty Tuesday
- 1942 New Castle Sunday
- 1942 Aliquippa Monday
- 1943 Mt Lebanon Monday
- 1944 Wilkinsburg Wednesday
- 1944 Braddock Friday
- 1945 North Boros Thursday
- 1945 Squirrel Hill Monday
- 1945 Uniontown Tuesday
- 1945 Highland Park Wednesday
- 1945 Hazelwood 12 Step Sunday
- 1945 Crafton Tuesday
- 1945 Butler Saturday
- 1946 Oakmont Saturday
- 1946 Canonsburg Saturday
- 1946 Carnegie Thursday
- 1947 Brookline Tuesday
- 1947 Clairton Saturday
- 1947 Homestead Tuesday
- 1947 Dormont Wednesday
- 1947 Greensburg Tuesday
- 1947 Indiana Friendly
- 1947 Sewickley
- 1947 Washington Wednesday
- 1948 Shadyside Thursday
- 1949 Tarentum Wednesday
- 1949 Friendship Monday
- 1957 McKeesport Thursday

### From the Archives ...

**December 13, 1940.** First AA meeting in Pittsburgh was held at the Hotel Henry Room 152 in downtown Pittsburgh. Attending: Si H., Howell J., Jake H., Arch. K., and Jim K. Outsiders helping: Attorney David J. and TIM O'L. Meeting place changed to the YMCA on Wood Street in 1941. The first anniversary was held in the YWCA cafeteria. Speakers were Bill W. and other early co-founders. There was 35 in attendance.

Dennis M., Archives Coordinator

(Continued from page 4)

unlikely to encounter problems of too much service authority. On the contrary, it appears that our difficulty will be how to maintain enough of it. We must recall that we are protected from the calamities of too much authority by rotation, by voting participation, and by careful chartering. Nevertheless, we do hear warnings about the future rise of a dictator in the Conference or at the GSO Office. To my mind this is an unnecessary worry. Our setup being what it is, such an aspirant couldn't last a year. And in the brief time he did last, what would he use for money.

### WARRANTY TWO

*"Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, should be it's prudent financial principle."*

Although many of us alcoholics were free spenders while drinking, when it comes time to supporting "A.A. Service Overhead, we are apt to turn a bit reluctant." Yet, in A.A., the cost of the service office is relatively low in terms of the number of groups served, and if the need for support is made clear, the contributions are forthcoming.

"To make such a need clear is simply a matter of right information and

education. We see this in the continuous job now being done with good effect for our World Service by Delegates, Committee Members, and General Service Representatives. They are finding that money begging by pressure exhortation is unwanted and unneeded in AA. They simply portray what the giver's dollar really brings in terms of steering alcoholics to AA, and of our over-all unity and effectiveness."

"...It was stated by many that they were sure that the voluntary contributions of our AA groups, supplemented by many modest gifts from individual AA's, will pay our World Services bills over future years..." (The reserve fund should be one full year's operating expenses for the GSO and Grapevine.)

**Note:** from Vincent K., treasurer, General Service Board 2004 Conference Report on Finance: "...a number of years ago the Reserve Fund balance had grown to the point where it was the equivalent to 11.6 months of operating expenses. This is the high end of the accepted range of 9 to 11 months. We needed to do something to keep the Reserve Fund from increasing any further. The course of action chosen was to reduce the price of the Big Book by \$1.00 coincident with the publication of the Fourth Edition. This decision worked

exactly as planned, as our Reserve Fund at December 31, 2003 can now cover only about 9.7 months of operating expenses.

In 2004 we see a different situation developing. As we look out over the next few years, it is clear that the Reserve Fund balance is now dropping and will soon fall below the acceptable range. Now we need to take opposite steps to reduce the annual deficits. As a result, the A.A.W.S. Board has recommended that we restore the price of the Big Book and reduce the deficits, therefore halting the decline in the Reserve Fund balance." Helpful reading in this area is Gary Glenn's October 1994 presentation on "Corporate Poverty" in Oct/Nov. 2004 Box 459, pg 6-7.

The reserve fund comes almost entirely from income from the sale of A.A. literature, which also is used to make up the deficit between group contributions and the cost of group services. The 2012 Final Conference Report for Western PA (page 71) shows 910 groups reported with only 385 contributing (42.3%). Our per capita contribution is \$5.01 for each of the reported 12,229 members. The cost of services provided by GSO is \$6.32; however they provide service to all groups whether they contribute or not.

(Continued on Page 9)

### The Home Group— Keeping AA Alive

Judi M., Saturday AM Wilkinsburg Group, District 6, (Continued from page 4)

The home group is like sobriety "boot-camp", where, if we remain willing and teachable, one can learn to live sober and tackle life's problems sober in all aspects of ones life, one day at a time; first within the home group, then within AA as a whole, and outside of AA in the world - ones family, work place, community, and the world at large.

I continue to be active today, with two home groups that I attend weekly. At both, I honor my commitments: show up early to set up chairs, put out literature and make coffee, stay after to clean up and tear down, attend group conscience meetings, and district and area events when I can. All of my meaningful AA relationships have grown and are nurtured by the "fellowship"

that happens before and after meetings, but especially in my home groups.

Now, as a "long-timer", I strive to do God's will on a daily basis, and part of that is to set the best example of service and action that I can for my sponsees, fellow home group members, and for the newcomer, who will follow in my foot-steps and keep AA alive long after I am gone. I am so very grateful to those who were here when I got here and are still here and active, and who continue to show me by example, their experience, strength and hope. The home group is the Heartbeat of AA, and it is here for all of us if we choose to reach out, grab it, and hang on! May God bless us and keep us sober, one day at a time.

## GRAPEVINE Quote of the Day

July 15, 2013

*"I opened the door and walked into the warmth, the laughter, the acceptance, and the love that is AA. No one asked me who I was or what I wanted; no one asked me how much money I had or what I did for a living; no one asked me where I did my drinking or what my sexual preferences were. The smiling man who greeted me told me that night that if I thought I had a drinking problem, I was in the right place."*

Toledo, Ohio, September 1982  
*"Above All, an Alcoholic"*

**In Our Own Words:  
Stories of Young AAs in Recovery**

# "The Heartbeat of AA—Word Puzzle

*Feel free to send suggested words for the next word puzzle  
to newsletter@wpaarea60.org!*

Y Z C A Y A E B A L L Y F S S  
N T A O N R E E I P T E E E N  
U C I I N G E T F I C I L I O  
H R K L I S E V M F T T L R I  
E E W N I R C Y O I O R O A T  
A T S E A B N I L C E C W S I  
R E H T L O I A E B E H S R D  
T E U O N C N S M N O R H E A  
B R B A M O O E N S C S I V R  
E G Q A S E M M L O Y E P I T  
A S E R V I C E E U P G B N J  
T S E L P I C N I R P S P N O  
U P A C C O U N T A B L E A I  
B E L O N G I N G R O U P R N  
R E M O C W E N S R I A H C R

ACCOUNTABLE  
BEGINS  
COFFEE  
GREETER  
HOME  
MEMBER  
PRINCIPLES  
SERVICE

ANNIVERSARIES  
BELONGING  
CONSCIENCE  
GROUP  
JOIN  
NEWCOMER  
RECOVERY  
TRADITIONS

ANONYMITY  
CHAIRS  
FELLOWSHIP  
HEARTBEAT  
LITERATURE  
PERSONALITIES  
RESPONSIBILITY  
WELCOME



The Victories of Victor E. Reprinted with permission, Grapevine, July 1996

## CORRECTIONS CORNER

Eddie P. Area 60 Corrections Coordinator



There are many men and women who are languishing in jails/prisons around the United States and the world. Many of them do not have a voice or access to the A.A. fellowship. The Area 60 Corrections Committee focuses on prisons and jails located in Western Pennsylvania. We are responsible to provide information to the professional public (*in jails, prisons, probation offices, and criminal courts*), members of the fellowship, and incarcerated members in institutions that are interested in our way of life. Although simple in explanation, the work involved can seem massive at times.

I have personally spent time incarcerated in sobriety. The institutions I resided in did not have meetings. I spent 7-1/2 months between two facilities with no meetings or contact with other members of A.A. All I had was a Big Book and a promise. I made a promise to myself to get involved and extend my hand to fellow AA's in search of the solution. I was grateful and happy to serve the members of Alcoholics Anon-ymous when asked to help with Area 60's Corrections Committee last year.

If you are interested in being of service to the men and women living behind bars who are reaching out to the A.A. fellowship, the position of Alternate

Corrections Coordinator is available. You are also welcome to be a member of the committee. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at [corrections@wpaarea60.org](mailto:corrections@wpaarea60.org), or PO Box 4185, Bellevue, PA 15202. Following are brief descriptions of the work we do.

**“Pre-Release” Contact Program.** The past several months I've focused on communications with inmates of various institutions in our Area. The Central Office in New York sends me vital information on each individual (*full name, inmate number, prison location, future address and a release date within 6 months*). I find out where they are headed, and who will serve as a contact upon release. I hand write each letter so that there is personal care with each individual. A type written letter is like every other letter that they have received from their institution, court, social agencies, etc. Hand writing takes time to let someone know that this work has personal meaning for me.

**Professional Community.** Corrections service work is not limited to providing

information to inmates. There are also opportunities to communicate with the professional community. Not everyone understands the benefits of our way of life. There are jails/prisons that do not have meetings, or stop having them because of indiscretions of individuals, safety concerns, and most importantly NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION. Lack of information can cause fear and reluctance to allow a meeting to get off of the ground. Although not always successful, at least we can help with education. There are also areas of law enforcement and the court system that could ask us for information on the A.A. program.

**Inmate Correspondence.** The Central Office in New York will provide the name and address of an inmate who is interested in our fellowship to any willing member who is willing to write on a regular basis. Corresponding with an inmate can create fear in some of our members. Education about the importance of this type of service work is the best response. You can also request someone incarcerated in another part of the country to alleviate this fear. Most of the inmates are serving lengthy sentences and are just reaching out for the hand of AA. Thank you for allowing me to serve you, Area 60 and AA.

I look forward to hearing from you!

### **The A.A. Home Group: Where It All Begins.** (Continued from page 1)

Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles. The following questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience. Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own:

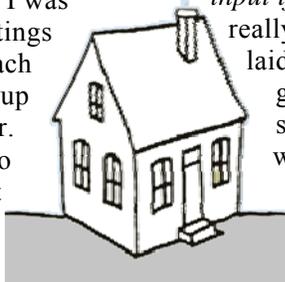
1. What is the basic purpose of our group?
2. What more can our group do to carry the message?
3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross section of our community, including those with special needs?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do to retain members?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind?
7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?
8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?
11. Does our group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A.—as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?
12. What has our group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community—the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators, and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
13. How is our group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

## My Home in A.A.

Maresa S., Waterworks Group, District 12

I began my journey in the rooms of AA by entering an in-patient program at a nearby facility. When I went to out-patient, I was told to get a sponsor, a Big Book and most importantly, a home group. I was required to attend five meetings per week. One by one, at each of these meetings, I signed up to be a home group member. There was no guidance as to the numbers, but I did what I was told.

I was given a home group member list for each of the meetings so that I could get in touch with members on an “as needed” basis. I was told I needed six months sobriety before I could “hold a position”, let alone chair a meeting for those particular groups. So I was all set and ready to go! I was permitted to help set-up and tear-down after each meeting. It was like I had gone to heaven. I thought, “*Look at me, I belong!*” I still



remember going to the Ross group and they called a “group conscience.” *Now what was that?* I asked. I was told “*That is where the group makes plans and you can have input if you are asked.*” Now I really thought the goose had laid the golden egg! This group in particular, really stood out to me. I know I was very nervous at the time but I listened.

One by one, each of my seven home groups had a group conscience, at one time or another. I would take suggestions from the ladies, and report to my “rehab” group about the benefits of having a home group. After a month or so I found a sponsor. She was there to guide me. When I told her I had seven home groups, she couldn’t believe it! I could only have ONE. Never tell an alcoholic they can only have ONE of anything, let alone a home group.

*(Continued on Page 10)*

**Welcome Home!** Larry R. L., Jr.  
*(Continued from page 3)*

cars, and my freedom. Working with a sponsor honestly and doing step work on paper has made it worth living again. The groups of friends in my home group are unparalleled.

The heartbeat of the home group beats with love when the group members stretch out their hands and say “*Welcome, join us on a road to a better life—better than could ever imagine, for you are finally home, your imagination will be fired and your heart inspired.*”

Stay Sober ... one day at a time ... and keep coming back!

**Donations to Area 60 are always welcome and appreciated!**

Make check payable to...  
Area 60 Treasurer, P.O. Box 152  
Conway, PA 15027

**HEARD AT MEETINGS**



HUMOR	SLIPS
Alcoholic: I may not be much, but I'm all I think about.	The worst of all deceptions is self-deception.
INSIGHTS	THOUGHTS
Before I came into AA, I was dead, but I did not know enough to lie down.	I have a very high pain threshold and a very low fear threshold.

## Warranties 1 & 2

Vaughn H. Past Delegate, Panel 51 Area 60 WPA  
*(Continued from page 6)*

**Applying the Warranties at the individual and group level — things to think about:**

- Does my home group have a “Regular Contribution Plan?” Does my group contribute to the area committee? To G.S.O? To Inter- group or Central Office? To my District?
- Do I encourage my group to maintain a “Reserve Fund.” Or do I believe we should take care of today’s expenses only and trust in God to take care of the future?
- How do we practice prudent use of our Seventh Tradition contributions and literature revenue?
- Every time the price of the Literature is raised in New York, what happens to the stockpiled Big Books that the Inter-groups already have?

## The Home Group

Lou P., Friday Morning Ross, District 3

The term home group comes from the Oxford Groups because they had their meetings in each others homes. When I hear the word home I think of hospitality and comfort and I think that's the way I should feel and try to make others feel, especially the new people.

I hear some people say that their group is "*the best group in A.A., and that if you don't feel that way about your group, you should get a new group!*." I find it hard to believe these folks went around the world critiquing all the other groups ☺. An alternative might be to try to make your own group better?

So, how can we make our groups better? First, get involved. We (A.A.) have been downsizing since there has been "no smoking" in most public places, and we have lost the ashtray jobs. The best way to get involved, without stepping on anyone's toes, is simply to ask if there is something you can do.

Another way you can be helpful is just by being there. The only excuse for missing your home group is death, and even then they prefer that you didn't die on home group day! ☺ I belong to a group that meets on Friday mornings. Anyone looking for me knows where to find me on Friday mornings!

The term "speaker-seeker" is used in reference to someone who tries to get speakers with a good message for conferences. When it's your turn to chair your home group, you can do the same thing. When you pass out the readings, give them to someone you know is a member in good standing. It hurts when I see the readings handed to someone who was drunk the night before. Imagine the effect this has on a person's first meeting.

Remember that person at the podium represents your group. Your language should be appropriate, and the "F" bomb has no place. It is a program of change. We don't need to talk like we're still sitting on a bar stool. Give us some credit for being able to fill in the spaces without using foul language.

If you used drugs, say that, and move on. We know what you mean. A.A. has helped millions of people before you came along, and it doesn't need to change now. If you don't feel comfortable at your home group, maybe it's time to move on. That may be the way God has to put us where he wants us. Don't start a new group, just look for a group that could use your help and go there.

## Where It All Begins!

LaMar F. SCI Greene

I am currently incarcerated at the SCI in Greene County due to a technical parole violation. I've had a problem with drugs and alcohol since the mid 1970's. I've attempted time and time again to bury my addiction for good, only to have several relapses.

Now, finally, I've had a spiritual awakening and I can feel the difference from within. It all makes so much sense. I do not feel like a fish on dry land anymore. I feel like a fish in a beautiful blue ocean. However, this feeling is only manifested when I attend my home group on Sundays here at SCI-Greene. I must admit that Mondays through Saturday's are a struggle being in such a wicked environment. Knowing



that Sunday is coming and I'll be attending our home group keeps my sanity... and I can honestly say, there hasn't been a dull meeting yet. In fact, just the opposite, I always find myself yearning for longer hours and more days.

I recall one holiday that fell on a Sunday and I was saying to myself, "*My God, we're going to be waiting two weeks now for a meeting!*" Then all of a sudden the guard announced that there would be A.A. meetings that day. It was like the sun breaking through the clouds on a gloomy day. I walked in the meeting and asked Ms. Sue, "*Why are you here? I thought you'd be home with your family being that it's Mother's Day.*" Ms. Sue replied, "*You all are my*

## My Home in A.A.

Maresa S., *Continued from page 9)*

I couldn't let any of these groups down, they needed me! What was I to do? I had "jobs," minor as they were, and there was "service work" to be done at those all of those meetings.

However, I finally chose the Waterworks Group. I had begun my steps to sobriety there many years prior to surrendering. It has been my home group ever since I had to make that choice. I learned so much from the members.

At six months, my first "job" was Grapevine Rep. I grasped that job with both hands, and made it a point to call New York and tell them I was a new representative. I would receive a packet! Then I got to chair my first meeting. Nervous was my middle name. I grew in the program, and was invited to do my first lead. I chose Mount Royal as a second home group and immediately was offered the "job" of secretary.

I felt like I truly "belonged." There is no greater experience in A.A. than to call a meeting "home."

With Gratitude, Maresa S.

*family.*" I felt that in my heart and as always, it was a very heart warming and truly meaningful meeting. Now, I understand why the summer 2013 theme is "*The Home Group—the Heartbeat of A.A.*" Sharing, caring and understanding and so much more.

I honestly believe that if there were no meetings in these prisons, I'd be in a mental ward. A.A. has truly made the difference in my life, as well as for millions of others. So as long as my heart beats, I'll attend and give it my all and then some. This is where it all begins, God has showed me the way. I am so thirsty for groups, to share, to care and to help others. I thank everyone involved for allowing me to share. Thank you all for your time and concern. God bless . . .

## The Home Group

Yvette N., Delegate, Panel 63 Area 60 WPA

**H**ome is defined as a place that is safe and comfortable. It is very often filled with provisions- the things we need on a daily basis to survive, and these do not come without some responsibility. I have to contribute. To maintain my home I have some things to do...pay the bills, clean up, restock, and I must support my family members with my love and my prayers.

Home is defined as a place that is safe and comfortable. This is the first place I learned what unconditional love is, though I didn't know it at the time. I learned to love and be loved, and through that love I learned what it means to love myself. I will admit to not doing it perfectly, I "will have to settle for patient progress."

Home is defined as a place that is safe and comfortable. It doesn't mean it is without conflict. Don't get me wrong, I didn't always like everything and everyone all the time. I cannot choose my family members, and I can't just move out every time I have a problem with one of my brothers or sisters. This small microcosm of a larger world is a place where I can learn acceptance, tolerance, and conflict resolution as I "grow up."

How do these characteristics apply to my home group? Am I getting what I need to survive one day at a time? Am I supporting it with my prayers, sharing my experience with other members, contributing to

**A Place to Belong** Amanda F., World Famous Groundhog Group, District 15  
(Continued from page 3)

need to contribute more. Sure enough God gave me the perfect opportunity to do just that. I was attending the World Famous Groundhog Group on a regular basis and felt a complete sense of belonging there. I was also becoming close to the members.

Then one night a home group member was talking about making one of their meetings a Big Book study. He mentioned that he would need more help in order to do it. I knew right then this was the opportunity God was giving me to be of service. I called my Sponsor and talked with her about changing groups. Once she

its financial stability, and do I love that seemingly unlovable individual who has yet to learn to love himself and others? Have I learned to let myself be loved? I came to my first home group an infant in recovery and in my journey toward spiritual growth. I've seen drama, and I've seen 'the rules' be broken over and over again. Have I been part of the problem or am I willing to endure a little discomfort in order to become part of the solution?

My home group has changed a couple of times because circumstances in life have prevented me from participating and contributing fully, and I'm now in a group that is convenient to my schedule and location. Is it perfect? Do I want to run away from home because things are not exactly as I want them? More importantly, am I doing all I can to make it as safe and comfortable as possible? These are questions for me to ask myself, perhaps you could ask yourselves the same. I have to remember that this program is a gift from a Higher Power, and one for which I am incredibly grateful. I did not choose it, it chose me. God puts me exactly where I need to be. I turned "my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understand Him."

I often wonder why people who live in flood-ravaged or tornado-ridden areas of the world continue to return time after tragic time. Who am I to question? The answer is simple...because it's *Home*.

agreed that it would be a good idea I changed my home group to the World Famous Groundhog group. I made myself available in anyway I could. We started working on the Big Book Study meeting right away. We now have a meeting every Wednesday night at 8pm. I started to help opening up the meeting and cleanup afterwards I was learning responsibility for the first time in my life. I was building self-esteem and true loving relationships with other people. I was working the 12 steps without even realizing it. I know that could never do enough service for my home group to repay them for what they have done in my life.

# AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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## Introducing Grapevine Audio Project

<http://www.aagrapevine.org/audio-instructions>

Grapevine is now collecting up to 7-minute stories from the Fellowship in the form of audio recordings.



Beginning in mid-January 2013, Grapevine started collecting up to 7-minute stories from the Fellowship in the form of audio recordings.

The recorded stories will go through Grapevine's editorial process just like the stories published in the magazine and online. If your story is accepted, Grapevine will publish it online and/or transcribe it for the magazine or website.

**Record Your Story.** Tell us about an amend you made. Or a newcomer tip that helped you. Or how you got to AA. Share your experience. It's easy. The recorded stories will go through Grapevine's editorial process just like the stories published in the magazine and online. If your story is accepted, GV will publish it online and/or transcribe it for the magazine or website.

**How to Share Your Story With Us.** Call our audio project voicemail system **559-726-1216**. You can also use a digital recorder, Smartphone or other mobile device. WAV and MP3 files will be accepted.

*Note: Grapevine will not be collecting nor recording speakers at AA meetings.*

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**THEME FOR FALL 2013**

“The Spirit of Rotation” Deadline 10/24/13

**THEMES FOR 2014**

*Next year’s newsletters will follow the 2014 General Service Conference theme (GSC), “Communicating Our Legacies – Vital in a Changing World.” Presentation topics will be Living in the Heart of A.A. Deadlines TBA.*

- A) Recovery, Unity and Service – Our Responsibility
- B) Passing It on Through Sponsorship
- C) Participating in Our Common Welfare through Contributions
- D) Inventory – A Guiding Tool to Our Future



Flyers for Days of Sharing, the 2013 calendar and much more information (including pamphlets, flyers and service documentation) are available on the Area 60 website at [www.wpaarea60.org](http://www.wpaarea60.org)

**2013 Calendar of Events**

*Area 60 meetings are held at the Comfort Inn, 699 Rodi Rd. Penn Hills, PA*

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sunday Aug. 18	8:30 AM - Registration 9:00 AM - Workshop 10:15 AM - Area Assembly	Area 60 3rd Quarterly Meeting
Saturday Sept. 14	9:00 am - 3:30 pm	Dist 19 Day of Sharing Jefferson DeFrees Center 207 Second Ave., Warren, PA
Sunday Sept. 15	9:00 AM	Officer and Coordinator Meeting Comfort Inn, Penn Hills
Saturday Sept. 21	8:30 Registration 9:00 Program 2-3:00 Wrap-up	District 6, 8, 28 Day of Sharing St. Robert Bellarmine School Rte 148 & off Rte 30 East McKeesport
Saturday Oct. 12	9:00 am - 3:30 pm	District 15 Day of Sharing Christ Lutheran Church 875 Sunflower Drive DuBois, PA
Saturday Oct. 19	9:00 am - 3:00 pm	District 23 Day of Sharing St. Vincent College 300 Faser Purchase Rd. Latrobe, PA
Sunday Oct. 20	9:30 AM - Registration 9:00 AM - Workshop 10:15 AM - Meeting	Area 60 Fall Assembly
Sunday Oct. 27	9:00 AM	Officer and Coordinator Meeting Comfort Inn, Penn Hills
Saturday Nov. 23	TBA	District 3, Day of Sharing Place, PA
Sunday Nov. 24	8:30 AM - Registration 9:00 AM - Workshop 10:15 AM - Area Assembly	Area 60 4th Quarterly Meeting
Sunday Dec. 15	9:00 AM	Officer and Coordinator Meeting Comfort Inn, Penn Hills

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Suggested length is 500 words or less. Material should be generally relevant to the theme, and may be edited for clarity and length. All material submitted on time is reviewed, selected by topic and appears on a space available basis. The newsletter does not publish song lyrics, tributes to individuals, prayers, plays, or anything unrelated to AA or that violates the principles of AA. Please include first name/last initial, home group and district. Submissions may be emailed to [newsletter@wpaarea60.org](mailto:newsletter@wpaarea60.org). This newsletter may be printed from the Area 60 website: [www.wpaarea60.org](http://www.wpaarea60.org).

*The WPA Area 60 newsletter, Seeds of Service, is published quarterly by the Area Committee. It is for A. A. members only and is distributed to D.C.M.'s for redistribution to A.A. groups through their G.S.R.'s. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily that*