



Seeds of Service

VOL. XXX ISSUE 4
FALL 2015
Inventory—Looking
Back to Move Ahead
PLEASE SHARE WITH
YOUR GROUP!

Inventory—Learning to Ask the Right Questions

Patrick B., District 21 DCM

Bill W. imagined the inventory as like that of a commercial inventory of goods. Unfortunately, the first lesson of Step 4 wasn't so much that my goods in stock were stale or rotten, but that I was my best customer.



In all the searching at the bottom of a bottle, I hadn't considered that I was asking the wrong questions. The Delphic warning of "Know Thyself" referred not just to knowing your place as a human, but also that the questions you ask and your interpretations of the answers would equally be influenced by those human limitations.

So, not surprisingly, I was asking any prideful or arrogant questions: Who do

you think you are? and Don't you know who I am? Many others fed by fear: What's going to happen? and, more relevant, What's going to happen to me?

These all followed closely by all sorts of selfishness:

- How can I get all for me and none for you?
- What's in it for me?
- Why me?
- Can't we just agree that I'm (*always*) right?
- Can't you just trust me on this one?
- What do you mean, it's not all about me?

As much as I thought I was "asking" those old questions, I found more and more that I had asked questions in the

forms of statements and demands. It's no wonder that that life was defined by close-mindedness and then isolation. Of course, AA didn't give me better answers to those types of questions, but better questions to ask and patience to wait for the right answers.

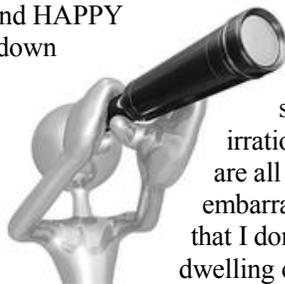
For all that Step Four's inventory revealed, it wasn't without the practice of 10/11/12 that it could be meaningful. Step Four's inventory – to use Bill's analogy – is conducted when the store is closed. I want something more valuable than the Ninth Step promises. I want the 12th step promises: new meaning, the witnessing of others' recoveries, to watch loneliness vanish and be replaced by fellowship, a host of friends, and an experience I must not miss. "We know you will not want to miss it," promises *Working With*

(Continued on page 8)

Looking Back—Moving Forward

Tom C. Area 60 Grapevine Coordinator

Greetings everyone and HAPPY HOLIDAYS! I sat down to write this after I gathered some thoughts together on the title. As it simply states, we do look back and we do move forward. Each day a new mark is set as we continue our journey. When I look back, I have two options to use.



One are the years I spent drinking, which I will dwell on when I am asked to lead. Not to the point of oblivion, just enough to think of what the beginning of my lead will entail. I don't take measurements or stats on the number of blackouts that I think I can remember, times spent driving drunk, things I did that were not statue

worthy, ignoring the wife and kids, dreaming up lies and somewhat worthy-sounding excuses for totally irrational behavior. These things are all stored away, not out of embarrassment or fear, just things that I don't put a lot of time into dwelling on. I did that at the beginning of my sobriety.

Number two are the movements in my life from the beginning of my sobriety, until today. These are the true markings and measure of my life that I pause and smile about realizing all my accomplishments through the good and the bad. I think about how I dealt with situations, how I moved ahead in a better frame of mind dealing with life on life's terms — terms that I was unaware of in the

stagnant part of my life drinking and shoving aside things I could not handle.

So as you read this you might wonder if measuring your life in sobriety is crucial to remaining sober. I think it is 100% absolutely positive to your life in sobriety. I look back over the years in wonderment. Without coming into the rooms, I doubt I would be able to sit here and write this. I doubt I would have a house I call my own. I doubt that there would be a vehicle parked in front to take me wherever I need to go. Most important of all I don't have a clue as to where I would be if my former life continued and if I would even be alive.

(Continued on page 8)

ON MY BOOKSHELF

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

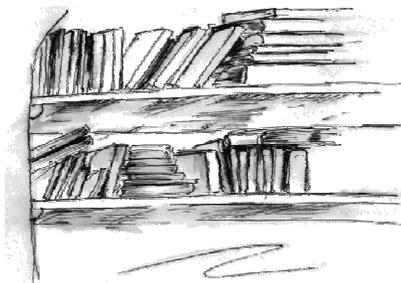
The newest addition to my bookshelf is the **2015 Final Report of the 65th Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.**

The report on the Conference, held in April, was distributed at the Fall Assembly by Area 60's Delegate, George K.

Do you know that each Conference is "color-coded"? This year's report is lilac. Or maybe lavender. Opinions are still somewhat mixed on this. Therefore, this year's Service Manual and the Advisory Actions Report will also be lilac. Or lavender.

The Report tells us the "who, what, where, when and how" Alcoholics Anonymous works, and is an example of the transparency of our Fellowship. It begins with a description of the weeks activities and continues through to the end with a list of all voting members (134 this year) and support personnel (the people who make the copies and phone calls, and see that the Conference runs smoothly.)

I encourage you to look at every page of this 96 page book. In the meantime, I am going to recommend several "don't miss" items and a couple of interesting ones. The first "don't miss" item is the Keynote Address, given at the opening dinner on Sunday night of Conference.



This year, the Keynote Address was given by J. Gary L., North East Region Trustee, who rotated at the end of this Conference. You may remember that he was our guest and Saturday Night Speaker at the GAW last year.

He began his presentation with a brief history detailing the progress of AA through the years and went on to list some of the challenges facing our Fellowship today. It was truly an insightful article and pertinent to the issues that we need to look at as we progress.

Also found in the report is the result of the Conference advisory actions and the presentations made by Conference members on the theme of this year's Conference: Celebrating 80 Years Of Recovery, Unity And Service—The Foundation For Our Future.

The second "don't miss" item is the G.S.O. Relocation Study Report. I heard at a meeting recently, "my group won't donate to GSO because they

think it should be moved out of New York to save money". On page 21 is the Report that details, in dollars, just why it is a bad idea to move out of New York. It also lists the subjective implications including our history and heritage connected to New York City. These relocation studies are done every ten years.

The final "don't miss" item is found on pages 88 & 89, the 2014 Contributions from groups, individuals and special meetings, by Area. Area 60 is found just below the fold. This is where I see that 42.3% of the groups in Area 60 contribute to GSO. Did you know that any AA member can contribute to GSO, or to any of our Service entities, for that matter? And if you provide your group service number, your group receives credit for that contribution, which helps our statistics if your group hasn't been able to contribute.

In the event that you are a numbers person, on page 37 you can see how many AAWS books and other publications sold last year, by title, and on page 42 the same statistics for the Grapevine. So get out your highlighters and pencils, maybe some of those sticky flags, and go to work on that Conference Report! Share what you learn with your Group, your District and your AA friends. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be of service. ▲

HEARD AT MEETINGS



HUMOR

It's not old behavior if I'm still doing it.

INSIGHTS

There is (no) magic in A.A. You get what you work for.

THOUGHTS

How many alcoholics does it take to relight a district? 

SLIPS

If you feel like drinking... put a chip in your mouth and when it melts you can drink.



"What we have here are two tickets to paradise; destination AA!"

Grapevine Cartoon Contest Winner
June 2013 — Dee D., Louisville, Ky

Editor's Note: Given the usefulness of the Traditions and Concepts checklists to the health and continued growth of the fellowship, we continue to reprint portions in each issue of our Area 60 newsletter. The last issue started with Tradition One. They can also be found online at www.aa.org for a complimentary single print or to order copies.

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Reprinted with permission from the A.A. Grapevine

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion. Practice These Principles...



TRADITION THREE: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

TRADITION FOUR: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober? 6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

CONCEPTS CHECKLIST

Service Material from the General Service Office

This is a service piece for home groups, districts, areas. Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts or areas, individual A.A. members may find it useful along with our co-founder Bill W.'s writings, a service sponsor if you have one, and reflection on your own service experience. Additional information about the Concepts can be found in The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service and "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" pamphlet. (Concepts stated here are in the short form.)

CONCEPT III: The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

1. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. —the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."
2. Do we understand what is meant by the "Right of Decision"? Do we grant it at all levels of service or do we "instruct"? Do we trust our trusted servants — G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate, the Conference itself?

CONCEPT IV: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

1. Do we understand the spiritual principles underlying the "Right of Participation"?
2. What does "in reasonable proportion" mean? Do we understand when it is appropriate for A.A. paid staff to have a vote at the General Service Conference or in our local service structure?
3. Do we expect that, because we are A.A. members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

2015 General Service Conference Inventory

“Celebrating 80 Years of Recovery, Unity and Service — The Foundation for Our Future”

Excepted from Box 459 Vol. 61, No. 2 / Summer 2015 / Page 4

Taking inventory, in the best sense of the word, is a fundamental aspect of the A.A. program. As cofounder Bill W. reflected in A.A. Comes of Age (page 231), “Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole society do if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well.”

An inventory, then, at the level of general service is a natural outgrowth of that which is done to maintain individual sobriety throughout the A.A. Fellowship. However, as noted in the Keynote Address at the opening of the 2013 General Service Conference, the inaugural year of the General Service Conference Inventory Plan, “Inventory of the Conference and personal inventory in the Steps are not quite the same. At the Conference, the emphasis will be on effectiveness in carrying out the purposes of the Conference, not on ‘character defects.’”

The address continued, “We don’t take inventory simply because it is, in and of itself, a good thing (like kindness, or generosity), but rather because it is an important element of our continued sobriety. The same holds true for our service inventories, including the Conference inventory that we are now undertaking. We are not here to take pride in doing the responsible thing by taking an inventory. We are here to help assure the unity and effectiveness of A.A. in its mission to carry the great message of hope to anyone, anywhere,

who has a desire to do something about his or her drinking problem.”

Year Three—Over the course of the third year of the Inventory, a number of significant issues relating to Conference practices and procedures surfaced. The major topics were summarized to include:

“Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole society do if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well.”

Working Together and Increasing Trust: Three familiar areas were articulated in terms of creating a more balanced working relationship between the trustees and the Conference: a) making sure agenda items are received as far in advance as possible to ensure full participation throughout the Fellowship; b) finding ways to keep the trustees and Conference committees in meaningful contact throughout the yearlong Conference process; and c) cultivating more input from delegates regarding agenda items.

Engaging the Fellowship: Engaging the Fellowship with relevant and ongoing information about the Conference is not a new problem, and a number of reports recognized the historical gap between individual A.A. members and the Conference itself.

“Participation by the average A.A. is blocked by the idea that the Conference is complicated, intense,” noted one report. “Can we simplify communication about our process? Find a way to de-mystify the language?”

Carrying the Message in a Diverse and Changing Society: To be truly representative of the Fellowship, the Conference and the board need to keep inviting diversity by reaching out to members of all ages, races, income, education and language levels, those with special needs, and those with differing professional backgrounds. “Diversity begins with us, one-on-one,” said one report. “We can’t have a democratic organization without having the top of the pyramid fully participating.”

Improving Communication: One common theme expressed through many reports was the importance of listening as a fundamental aspect of good communication. As one report noted, “We can get so caught up in A.A. rigidity, but if motivated by the spirit of listening, our group conscience can result in good decisions.”

Looking Toward the Future: Now that the Inventory is done, it was suggested that the Conference take a similar long-term approach to the Concepts with an eye toward making them more accessible to the Fellowship as a whole. ▲

NERAASA 2016

25th Annual Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

February 26-28, 2016

Hosted by Western Massachusetts, Area 31, in Springfield, MA

Celebrate Our Silver Anniversary in the Golden West

<http://neraasa2016.org/>

Chair's Corner



It is a honor and privilege to come to you all as your new Area 60 Chairperson. In past newsletters, it was customary to have a report or article from the chair. I would like to reconstitute this tradition to let everyone know, in an informal way, what is going on with the Area and with me.

Since becoming chair, I have had to learn a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. We are making an effort to restart the *DCM Liaison Program*, and the *Ask it Basket*. We want to know what your needs are, what you think, and what questions or suggestions you may have.

DCM Liaison Program. Each Area 60 officer and coordinator is assigned three districts, and is asked to contact the DCM. Our purpose is to be a direct resource to the districts and groups.

Ask it Basket — if you have any questions or comments that we can help answer, there are a couple ways to submit. Email myself or drop your questions in the basket at an Area 60 meeting.

From the individual to GSO we all need to take inventory. I just finished reading GSO's inventory which took them three years to complete.

I personally never thought of myself as a writer. When I came into the program, one of the first things my first sponsor taught me was to write it out — be it a step, a problem or whatever the issue was at the time.

Little did I know it was in preparation for an inventory. She had me write this little prayer at the top of each page "*God please guide my pen in Honesty, Open mindedness and Willingness.*" She said, this would let God in and keep my ego out.

We now have an official Area 60 Parliamentarian. Margie S. is the current DCM of District 23, and she really knows her stuff! She will serve in this position through the end of 2016. I am also looking to past Delegates and Chairs for help and advice—as they know better than me.

Also at all Quarterly meetings we will be having presentations from our coordinators and officers. And at the Assemblies we will have presentations on voting procedures, Concepts and Traditions. We do this with the hope of sparking more interest in service at the Area level. We are all here to help you.

Our circle and triangle has three very important words connected with it — Recovery, Unity and Service! Service has been very rewarding to me, and anything I can do for Alcoholics Anonymous is a gift and a privilege. I look forward to meeting each and everyone of you. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know. My best wishes for a safe and sober holiday! ▲

Respectfully Submitted,
Teresa K.

It's Life or Death

Teresa K., Area 60 Chairperson

Our Big Book talks about taking an inventory in Step Four and then again in the Tenth Step. We have to take stock of our assets and liabilities. I had some knowledge of bookkeeping—so that statement made sense to me. In the beginning I didn't see that I had any assets, only liabilities. But with each step I took towards recovery, I was able to see more and more.

Dr. Bob talked about cleaning house, and mine was a hot mess. I had nothing to give, so there was no experience, strength or hope. I felt like a raw nerve until I sat down opened the book and got started. However, procrastination was one of my biggest character defects... I allowed fear of the truth of who I really was stop me from completing my task. What would

GRAPEVINE Quote of the Day

September 25 2015

"I have often seen our Society timid and fearful, angry and prideful, apathetic and indifferent. But I have also seen these negatives fade as the lessons of experience were learned and gladly applied."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., July 1965
"Responsibility Is Our Theme"
The Language of the Heart

August 25 2015

"My job is to achieve enough humility to see myself in others and to accept both myself and others, by identifying. The willingness to make amends will grow from this act of love."

Bowling Green, Ky., October 1986
Best of the Grapevine, Volume 2

people think of me? Would they accept me for who I really am? I am sure now that a lot of us think this way when we first come into the rooms. An old timer back then explained the Fourth Step very simply. He said "*You all ready did it, so what is there to be afraid about? Now you are just putting down on paper.*"

I have seen people die from our disease and the sad part is that it didn't have to happen. If only they had sat down to work on this vital step. In one year three sponsees died after going back out. One of them had flat out refused to do the Fourth Step. She didn't want anyone to know anything about her—despite numerous attempts to schedule her Fifth Step.

To me, this program is life or death.

"During this holiday season, we at Area 60 are filled with love and gratitude for those who have gone before us and shown us the way; and for those we pray will join us as we "trudge the Road of Happy Destiny." Have a safe and sober holiday season!

Warmest regards, Area 60 Officers and Coordinators

Mario
John
Barb
Margie
Meredith
Marianne
John
Barb
Margie
Meredith
Marianne

It's Life or Death Teresa K., Area 60 Chairperson (Continued from Page 5)

I've learned a very powerful and valuable lesson from these experiences. I can't force anyone to save their own life. I don't have that kind of power — only God has that. And the program is laid out just fine in the Big Book — in black and white. I have taken several Fourth Steps in these past years. I have literally felt the difference with every one that I've taken.

When I came back in to AA this time, my sponsor said to inventory from the time I had relapsed to the present. Well that was short and sweet... I didn't feel that it was enough I still felt empty inside, I still felt that something was missing. It came time to find another sponsor—and she said nothing but thoroughness counts!

Well, procrastination reared its ugly head again. I stalled and stalled. Whenever a speaker talked about the Fourth Step—and my sponsor was there—an ink pen came flying my way. She has a great sense of humor ☺. So I finally got started (*after my house work was finished - I took the whole house cleaning thing literally*). I began by opening my Big Book and by writing my little prayer at the top of the page. I worked for an hour or so each time, and then stopped.

Until I felt in my heart that it was finished. nothing but thoroughness counted. When I was finished, even before I read it to my sponsor I felt that big huge weight lifted off of me. I finally felt free inside. Today I still do a daily inventory before I go to bed. I

review my day and make sure that if an amends is needed, I make an effort to do it right away. I have to keep my ego in check, because I know I am nothing without this life giving program — I have set my self up before because of my ego. I can't do that again! I don't think I would make it back.

The rewards of inventory, are that I can look people in the eye today. I know myself a little better. I can sleep with out the pain of fear, embarrassment, uselessness and self loathing. Today I can step up to the plate, so to speak, and do what is needed for my recovery, my home group and now the Area. I have been graced with sobriety, and I am blessed to be able to give back. ▲

AREA 60 CLASSIFIEDS

The Area 60 Classifieds are intended to highlight service opportunities available throughout Western PA. Area Committee members and DCMs are welcome to submit items to help spread the word and fill positions. Send information to newsletter@wpaarea60.org.

<p>▲ Alternate Chairperson. Five or more years of continuous sobriety with experience as a GSR suggested. Should be able to attend all area meetings and events; and be well informed on the Steps, Traditions, and The AA Service Manual. May need to assume the duties of other Area Officers, and be familiar with the duties of the Area Secretary and Area Treasurer. Is custodian of the PA system, the Area's Banners, various maps, etc. Also serves as the liaison to the PA State Convention, reporting to the Area Committee.</p>	<p>▲ CPC/PI Coordinator & Alternate. The CPC/PI Coordinator assists AA members, groups, and Districts to inform the general public about the program of recovery and what AA does and does not do—whether it is through a community awareness event, a media interview or other non-AA gathering. They also set up displays at Area-60 sponsored events, such as Days of Sharing, and group activities when asked; and respond to requests from GSO . If interested, contact Teresa K. at chair@wpaarea60.org</p>	<p>▲ Corrections Coordinator & Alternate. The Corrections Coordinator recruits AA contacts to Bridge the Gap between inside and outside meetings by introducing newly released alcoholics to local meetings; encourages AA members to participate in AA's Correctional Correspondence Program; and offers assistance in the work of those members who carry the message through AA meetings in correctional facilities. If interested, contact Teresa K. at chair@wpaarea60.org</p>
<p>▲ Alternate Treatment. The Alternate will assist the Treatment/SN Coordinator with their duties, including but not limited to: assisting District Committees and groups in the formation of new AA meetings in treatment facilities, coordinating a "Bridging the Gap" program. They also assist and educate groups and districts with special needs members; and attend Area events, helping coordinator to staff Treatment information table. If interested, contact Meredith D. at treatment@wpaarea60.org</p>	<p>▲ Alternate Registrar. The Alternate will assist the Registrar with their duties. Must have good computer skills, database experience and a willingness to learn the software provided by GSO. Also attends Area events, helping the Registrar to answer questions, collect information and staff their table. It is hoped that the Alternate will rotate into the position when the Registrar's term is completed. If interested, contact Walter G. at area60registrar@wpaarea60.org.</p>	<p>▲ Alternate Website. Alternate will assist the Web Site Coordinator with their duties, including, but not limited to: communicating with the Webmaster to insure accurate transfer of information to the site, insuring the site is being published following Area 60 guidelines and AA Traditions, answering e-mails, and routing inquiries to appropriate Officers/Coordinators, and attend Area events helping coordinator to staff Website information table.</p>
<p>▲ FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED to assist the Alternate Treasurer with the decision making process for budgeting in Area 60 and with the self-audit at the end of each year. If interested in being part of the committee please contact Barb D. at Treasurer@wpaarea60.org</p>	<p>▲ NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED to assist with the gathering of articles and other material for publication in the Area 60 Newsletter, The Seeds of Service. Will help to increase awareness of and contribution to the publication, and may contribute to content and formatting. If interested please contact Barb G. at newsletter@wpaarea60.org</p>	

SAVE 24TH ANNUAL AREA 60
GET AWAY WEEKEND MINI CONFERENCE
THE "Our spiritual way of life: steps, traditions and concepts"
DATE! Workshops & Presentations—Registration Only \$20
 Friday Dinner \$25 • Saturday Lunch \$12.50 • Banquet \$30
April 1~3 Saturday Night Banquet features a speaker from GSO
 For more info contact: John K. 814.688.3219 or Mario D. 412.952.8397
2016 Or email them at gaw@wpaarea60.org

Others, and the greatest joy is to see resentments against AA and reservations about AA disappear as newcomers find *this* is where they want to be. My continued inventory – the recognition of limitations and the

discarding of bad habits – with openness to new merchandise from my great Supplier has ensured that I am always looking at the door waiting for newcomers in the freedom of daylight unencumbered by as much resentment,

fear, guilt and shame as possible. All of that old life could now be made valuable by how I use it to help others. Looking back to go forward made it possible for me to be ready to ask, How can I be of maximum service today? ▲

Looking Back...

Tom C. Area 60 Grapevine Coordinator

If I sat down and wrote a list of negatives from the past and a list of positives from sobriety, the positives would overtake the negatives. I wouldn't have to be a rocket scientist to calculate what I would lose if I went back out.

When I go to meetings, I listen to the speaker. I focus in on their life in recovery, absorbing and retaining what they share. Once in a while something in the drunk-a-log grabs hold of my thought process. It leaves me thankful that I was fortunate enough to dodge some major bullets. They are bullets that hit home during the lead, listening to how their life moved after these periods of tragedy and insanity. I listen to accomplishments and goals reached that were not given any serious thought before.

So in conclusion, I think it would be a great part of anyone's sobriety to move forward each day. And yes there are things that come up that take time to settle in and time to deal with. That is a normal part of life. Keep in mind, though, that in our other lives we were not normal. So give some thought and reflection on where your feet, heart, and soul are planted today. And keep in mind that what you did before sobriety — in my opinion — should not creep in and overwhelm where you are today.

It's not real complicated and full of quiz's and tests. It's just one day at a time, one step at a time and one move forward at a time. Life is very complex when you really think about it, the rewards though are spectacular and worth keeping and working for. ▲

Inventory — A Personal Journey

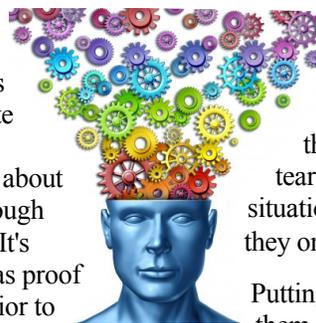
Leslie E., District 23 Alt. DCM

Being that all or nothing kinda person that we alcoholics can sometimes be, I wrote two articles for this newsletter. The first was about my personal journey through the Fourth Step process. It's pretty good (lol). As I was proof reading one final time prior to submission — I realized the article was something I *needed* to write — not necessarily something everyone needed to hear.

So I checked out the topic again, and sure enough, I read what I wanted to read. Inventory, that's all I saw. Not the looking back and moving ahead aspect. Which reminds me of the promises “we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.” So here we go again, new thoughts, new perspective.

The first time I heard the promises I thought it was pure hogwash. Absolutely no way could I ever forget what has happened to me. And I have not, nor will I. It is a part of me, the good, the bad, and the ugly. But through the process of Steps one, two and three. I was able to lay down a very solid foundation. I had a strong “WE.” I had a wonderful loving “God of my understanding.” I had a great support system with my sponsor and my sponsorship family.

Since then, my “WE” has grown, and wow has the “God of my understanding” grown. My foundation is still in tact, even after the 4th step process. The process of my inventory was very thorough as our book suggests. It was also painful, tearful, hair pulling, agonizing, and the most freeing experience of my life. I finally had the



opportunity to get out all the garbage I had been collecting for years. I dumped it all out, and left it there. My blood, sweat, and tears were all out on paper. Those situations no longer had the power they once did.

Putting the pen to paper brought them down to their right size, and they were smaller than me. Not bigger like I had imagined them to be. They were now manageable. I poured my heart out, my story, my pain and suffering real or imagined or exaggerated. I could see the future, the past no longer obstructed my view.

For me to get to that level in my program was honestly the first time I truly felt God's presence, I felt peaceful and serene for the first time in 37 years. It was amazing, breathtaking, energizing, PRICELESS. This was the first of many spiritual experiences I have and will have in my sobriety with God's grace.

By the time I got to this point, I already had my first service position. I cannot express to anyone how much that has helped me in my sobriety. To stay in the middle. To be involved. To learn and continue to learn the how and why of such an amazing program. To be of service to my fellow alcoholics, in and out of the rooms. To know that all my experiences in life can and will benefit others. All of this is the basis of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is the dream Bill W. and Dr. Bob had for each and every one of us. One alcoholic talking to another. Suit up and show up, you never know who you may help. ▲

Inventory — One Step, One Day at a Time

Fred., SCI Fayette

My name is Fred, and I am a recovering alcoholic. Before I began to attend AA meetings, I believed all I had to do was to stop drinking. Easier said than done.



First, I had to find a way to do it. I did not have the courage to admit my addiction to anyone. But then I attended one meeting, and then another, and I began to understand one of AA's many ideas and how to begin applying those words of encouragement to my life—one step and one day at a time.

Of course, we must never believe that we are capable of judging another's efforts. But we can, by example, inspire someone to believe and then to realize that life can get better in our hearts and in our minds as we ask the God of our understanding to heal our souls.

Each time I attend an AA meeting, I truly feel that I am learning how to reflect on each day's events, so that I can make better decisions tomorrow. Each drink I took was actually a cry for help. I realize now that my despair was only noticeable to those who cared; or to those who had experienced the same depths of addiction that I had allowed myself to sink to.

My attitude going to my first meeting was probably not unlike anyone who seeks help. With no direction on how to do so—or even how to receive such help. AA has and will always be very important to my sense of direction, as well as my continuous growth. ▲

Inventory — Working Toward a Solution

Michael C., SCI Greene

In our active alcoholism, we were prepared to compromise everything we believed in just to get our hands on more alcohol and drugs. Some of us are not too keen on writing out our Fourth Step; we discover everything there is to know about why we were — the way we were.

We need to do this step because only then can we make amends for the destruction we caused others in acting out on those defects. Only then can we begin to experience the freedom of an awakening spirit. "Using alcoholics" are a confused and confusing bunch of people. It's hard to tell from one minute to the next what they're going to do, or who they're going to be. When we used, our behavior was dictated by the needs of our alcoholism.

Solution



Today, we don't have to be the people we once were. Shaped by our alcoholism; recovery has allowed us to change. We can use the Fourth Step inventory to see past the needs of the old using life, and find out who we really want to be today. This is the beginning of who we really are today. If we want to find out who we are, we will need to look at who we have been, and who we want to be today.

Do we sometimes impose our standards on others? Yes. Are we sometimes down right intolerant? Yes. That is why we need to take an inventory of ourselves, and share this inventory with another human being. That way we get some needed perspective on our part in the problem, and how we can work toward a solution, so that we can start enjoying our relationship with others. ▲

Group Inventory Worksheet

Our newsletter focused on the topic of inventory just a year ago (2014 Q4). However, it would be remiss not to reprint this list given the importance of our Home Groups to the health of the fellowship. The questions may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience; but groups may wish to add questions of their own.

1. What is the basic purpose of the group?
2. What more can the group do to carry the message?
3. Is the group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeking 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?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship How effectively? How can we do better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside meeting rooms? Do we also leave the confidences they share at meetings behind?
7. Do we take the time to explain to all members the value to the group of keeping up with the kitchen/housekeeping chores and other essential services that are part-and-parcel of 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 the 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 the 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? ▲

Our Neighbors in Service—District Answering Services & Websites Within Area 60

Editor's Note: One of the best rewards of Area service is getting to know people across the Western part of the state. Every where I go—I see someone I've met before, either from a Day of Sharing, an Area meeting or an invitation to attend a District meeting. My world is made larger. We include this list and map to give you a quick at-a-glance look at the resources our neighboring districts offer to those recovering in their communities. What a great list for a road trip! Thanks to Leslie E. Alternate Newsletter Editor for gathering this information from the Area 60 Website www.wpaarea60.org. Click on the Districts Tab. ▲

District 1 724-679-5647 www.butleraa.org	District 17 814-946-9002 888-202-9042	District 24 & 25 412-471-7472 www.beavercountyaa.com	District 52 866-309-1090 www.wpadistrict52aa.org
District 5, 11, & 21, 27, 28 412-471-7472 www.pghaa.org	District 18 866-309-1090 www.wpadistrict18aa.org	District 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 814-452-2675 www.aeriepa.org	District 61 -724-923-0236
District 14 724-225-4188 www.district14.info	District 19 866-839-3401	District 41, 43, 44 814-533-5907 www.district43.com www.district41.johnstownpa.com	District 62 412-471-7472 Allegheny Twp 724-679-5647 Butler Twp.
District 15 800-400-2346 www.district15wpa.org	District 23 866-851-8459 www.aa.swestpa-dist23.org	Butler Township 724-679-5647	
District 16 800-227-2421 www.tricityaa.org	Pgh. Area AA Central Office 412-471-7472 www.pghaa.org	Please send your current meeting lists & answering service/ website information to Hubert at website@wpaarea60.org	

County Map for Districts in Area 60 Western PA



- Allegheny 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 70, 71
- Armstrong 65
- Beaver 24
- Bedford 17
- Blair 17
- Butler 01
- Cambria 41, 43
- Cameron 40
- Clarion 16
- Clearfield 16
- Crawford 51
- Elk 40
- Erie 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36
- Fayette 26
- Greene 14
- Indiana 42
- Jefferson 16
- Lawrence 61
- McKean 40
- Mercer 18, 62
- Potter 40
- Somerset 44
- Venango 16
- Warren 19
- Washington 14
- Westmoreland 23



FORMING TRUE PARTNERSHIPS

How AA members use the program to improve relationships

ANNOUNCING A NEW BOOK FROM GRAPEVINE!

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When we were drinking, many of us had, as the Step Four chapter in the AA book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* puts it, a total inability to form a true partnership with another human being.

Forming True Partnerships is a collection of Grapevine stories that show the many ways members use the Twelve Steps, sponsorship, and the tools of the program to improve and repair relationships, old and new. With candid and colorful stories on families, friendships, marriage, divorce, dating, romance, coworkers, sponsorship and pets, *Forming True Partnerships* covers a wide range of experience from sober alcoholics on how we form true partnerships with others. For yourself, or someone you know, each page in this book, offers an inspiring passage of experience, strength and hope to bring into your life. ▲

Moving Forward Through Inventory

Donnie F. SCI Fayette.

When I first started my journey into sobriety, my past haunted me. Today wasn't pretty and I feared tomorrow. I came in beaten into submission, and others loved me until I could love myself.

As I began to work my steps with my sponsor, I began to experience freedom from the fear of tomorrow and gained hope. Life wasn't pretty; however, it was no longer a continuous disaster.

As my sponsor guided me into my Fourth Step, I was filled with fear and trepidation. As I thoroughly worked this step, I became aware that my old behaviors did not work any longer. Awareness that I received during my Fourth Step allowed me to move



forward with an understanding of my behaviors. They say those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. My past makes me the man I am today. As I examine my past, I became aware of my short comings and defects; and I asked my higher power for help in removing them. This helps me relieve the guilt and fear that I have battled with for so long. It also helps me to move forward and begin to recognize the people I have hurt through my drinking.

Making amends, directly or indirectly, shows others that my life is changing; and I am getting better one day at a time. Today I treat my life like a car ride, glancing in the rear-view mirror to know where I have been, looking forward to where I am heading. ▲

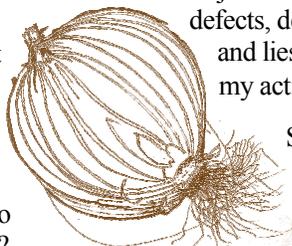
Inventory—Peeling Back the Layers

Scott A., SCI Fayette

When I was on Step Three, my sponsor said "You just wait until you get to the inventory step, it's the true test." He told me it took him a while to get through his inventory; so I was a little worried at first. I figured if I did it, and can remember it, I should be able to write about it. What is my fear? My bad deeds were done long ago – just do it. My guilt and shame seemed to go away. I may not tell everyone, but I had no problem telling my sponsor. I can't change my past — unless I lie about it and I can't do that. So I felt comfortable about doing it.

I found my problems came from child abuse and a strict father, not from alcohol and drugs. I was running from my demons, issues and problems by using. I used alcohol and drugs to escape reality; and this using made me feel good, so I used more and more. My escape went from using a little, to an obsession, and on to an addiction.

I read this analogy a while ago that peeling the layers of my life back is like peeling an onion. Some layers stink, some will make you cry, but eventually



I'll get to the core. The core is the pure me. I just shed away my character defects, deceitfulness, manipulation and lies - all the hurt I caused in my active addiction.

So to write about all this is an actual cleansing process. When I was done, I felt much better about myself and my life. I used what I found in the Steps Five, Six, Seven and Eight. But my sponsor left, and I'm still looking for a new one. I realize now if I would have just dealt with my problems early on, I might not be in prison wasting 30 plus years of my life, using and hurting my family and others as a result of my addictive actions. But I ran from my problems.

Now being honest, open and willing are some things new to me, and that has come as a result of working the Steps. So for me, I've looked back to where my problems started and to where my using began. I've admitted I was powerless and that my life was unmanageable. Now I'm beginning to learn from my past and not repeat it. I thank that unknown guy who suggested that I go to AA six years ago in County prison. ▲

AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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NEWSLETTER THEMES & DATES:

The 2016 theme for the General Service Conference is “Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts.” SOS quarterly themes will be:

Due	Theme:
Jan 4	Q1. Connecting With the Newcomer
April 25	Q2. Connecting With Each Other
July 25	Q3. Connecting With A.A. as a Whole
Nov 14	Q4. YOU choose! _____

WEBSITE:

There are many resources on the Area 60 website, including: back issues of the newsletter, flyers for Days of Sharing, the Area 60 calendar, Area 60 Guidelines, pamphlets, service documentation, and more. Direct questions or suggestions to the Website Coordinator at website@wpaarea60.org

DONATIONS TO AREA 60:

Support from groups and individuals is always welcome and appreciated! Make check payable to:

Area 60 Treasurer
 P.O. Box 266, Monroeville, PA 15146

2015—2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
*Area 60 meetings are held at the
 Comfort Inn, 699 Rodl Road Penn Hills, PA*

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sunday Dec. 6	8:30 AM - Registration 9:00 AM - Workshop 10:15 AM - Meeting	AREA 60 4TH QUARTERLY MEETING
Sunday Dec. 20	9:00 AM	Area 60 Officer Coordinator & GAW Planning Meeting
Sunday Jan. 10	9:00 AM	GAW Planning Meeting
Sunday Jan. 17	8:30 AM - Registration 9:00 AM - Workshop 10:15 AM - Meeting	AREA 60 1ST QUARTERLY MEETING
Sunday Feb. 7	9:00 AM	Area 60 Officer Coordinator & GAW Planning Meeting
Fri-Sun. Feb. 26-28	All Weekend	NERAASA – Springfield, MA
Fri-Sun. March 4-6	All Weekend	NERD
Sunday March 13	9 am	Officer/Coordinator Meeting & GAW Planning meeting
Fri-Sat. April 1-2	Friday & Saturday	Getaway Weekend
Sunday April 3	8:30 am, Registration 9 am Workshop, 10:15 am Meeting	Pre-Conference Assembly
Sunday April 10	9 am	Officer/Coordinator meeting
April 17–23 2016	All Week	General Service Conference, NYC
Sunday May 15th	8:30 am, Registration 9 am Workshop, 10:15 am Meeting	AREA 60 2ND QUARTERLY MEETING
Sunday June 5	9 am	Officer/Coordinator meeting
Sunday June 26	8:30 am, Registration 9 am Workshop, 10:15 am Meeting	Post Conference Assembly

Seeds of Service. The WPA Area 60 newsletter is published quarterly by the Area Committee. It is for A. A. members only. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily that of the Area Committee or AA as a whole. The newsletter is a useful reference for GSRs reports.

Newsletter Distribution. Paper copies are distributed to DCM’s at each quarterly meeting for redistribution to A.A. groups through their GSRs. A digital copy (PDF) of the newsletter is available at www.wpaarea60.org; and **will also be sent to DCMs and GSRs, if the Registrar has a correct email address.**

Newsletter 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.