

# The Northeast Ohio Recorder

July, Aug, Sept 2017

<http://www.area54.org>

Volume XXV, Issue 3

**"Let us remember that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God."**

*A.A. Co-Founder, Bill W., February 1961, From: "The Shape of Things to Come", I Am Responsible: The Hand of A.A., © A. A. Grapevine, Reprinted with permission*

## A Word From Our Delegate

Hello to all in Area 54:

The 67<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference was truly a learning experience. I arrived at the hotel in Ryebrook Friday evening around 7:00 pm. (It took about 2 ½ hours from the LaGuardia Airport to the hotel!) My conference buddy Linda J. from Maryland called to see if I had checked in my room. She wanted to bring me the water and juices she brought for me. It was great to finally meet her in person after having talked with her on the phone for several weeks prior to the conference. We began with a meet and greet Saturday mid-morning. It was such a pleasure seeing our delegates from the East Central Region (ECR) and being introduced to delegates from the rest of the US and Canada! I met Diana L. and Patrick C. the two new GSO staff members that began in March and April. Diana looked very familiar to me, but I thought how could that be possible? Well after sharing my thoughts with her, I discovered I had actually met her at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Women's International Conference we hosted in downtown Cleveland this past February; she was the speaker for Saturday. Derek T. (delegate from Area 74 WI/Upper Pen. MI, which is in our ECR) opened the session Sunday morning. Greg T. the general manager of GSO did the roll call. That for me was the high spot of the conference, when my name was called and I said "present", tears came to my eyes, I felt so humble and blessed!



My conference committee was Report and Charter, which was one of the committees that began meeting Sunday afternoon. Sunday evening was the Opening Dinner which had five speakers. Jeff W. (GSO staff) was one of the speakers; he wrote the skit we used at our Mini-Conference in April.

I was able to attend a Serenity AA meeting at 7:30 each morning before beginning our conference committee meetings. This was the best way for me to begin my day. After dinner on Monday David M., GSB Treasurer gave a Finance presentation.

Tuesday began with conference committee meetings; Panel 67 delegate area highlights; then there was a presentation/discussion on Participation. Three Panel 66 delegates each had a presentation. After a general sharing session we attended an assigned workshop session.

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I was scheduled to give my Area 54 highlights on Wednesday morning. Wednesday afternoon we had Regional luncheons - in which two regions voted for the candidates standing for East Central Region Trustee and US Trustee at large. Mark E. (Area 56) was our candidate for ECR and he was elected, as our own William (Bill) F. rotated out. The ECR (which consists of areas in Ohio,

*(Continued on page 3)*

## From the Editor...

# THE KEYS TO SUCCESS—COOPERATION AND SPONSORSHIP

*A guest editorial by James B.*

THE KEY seldom recognized in the success of AA in Cleveland was the organizing of a central committee. With the committee they were able to get the drunks to come to AA instead of having to search them out one by one.

Bill W, estimated the success of Cleveland A.A. in letters to be 70% vs 20% in New York. The first forerunner to today's Intergroup / Central Offices, the Central Committee, was established in Cleveland Ohio in October 1939, four years after AA's co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob met. At that time a committee of seven – five men and two women – began meeting in Cleveland once a month. In addition to being the first Central Committee, this is said to be the first example of rotation in AA since one man and one woman dropped off each month to be replaced by the next in line according to seniority.

Cleveland's **Central Committee** was established only five months after Cleveland's first AA group started on May 11, 1939. This AA group is considered group number three, forming as an offshoot of AA group number one in Akron (AA group number two was in New York). Clarence S., along with his wife Dorothy, and a group of about 11 others had previously been traveling regularly to Akron to attend the meetings of AA group number one. This group of 13 began meeting in the home of Abby G. and his wife Grace and by September membership had grown to 38, at which point the Central Committee was formed. "It's really functioning," Dorothy noted in her October 1939 letter to New York. "They appoint leaders, discuss tendencies, and arrange social affairs, and they are thinking of a masked dance for Halloween," she said. ( Dr. Bob and the Good Old-Timers , Chapter 15)

At this point, Clarence S. came across Elrick B. Davis, a reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer and persuaded him to write a five-part series of articles about AA, which appeared in the latter part of October 1939. The articles were printed in the middle of the Plain Dealer's editorial page, along with additional positive articles by the editors themselves every three to four days. The newspaper's switchboard was deluged by requests for information about AA. The requests were relayed to Clarence S and his wife Dorothy and from them to members of their AA group. The volume of 12th step calls was tremendous, and the small group of AA's scrambled to meet the demand.

It was soon evident that a scheme of **personal sponsorship** would have to be devised for the new people. Each prospect was assigned an older AA, who visited him at his home or in the hospital, instructed him on AA principles and conducted him to his first meeting. But in the face of many hundreds of pleas for help, the supply of elders could not possibly match the demand. Brand-new AAs sober only a month or even a week, had to sponsor alcoholics still drying up in the hospitals. ( Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pp. 20-21).

The Central Committee was utilized "to coordinate efforts regarding hospitalizations and sponsorship," according to Clarence S. "We met once a month, and then we decided to open an office," Clarence said in later years. "Up to then, we had a post office box and telephone." As Dorothy recalled, "When those articles hit Cleveland, people simply besieged the place. Our phone never quit ringing for about a month, and I did nothing but sit by the telephone and take inquiries." ( Dr. Bob and the Good Old-Timers , Chapter 15).

Cleveland's response over the next year was the first example of how a **service structure** can be effectively utilized when it's impossible for individual groups in an area to handle all aspects of twelfth-step work alone. It also started the shift from individual A.A's seeking out alcoholics one-by-one, as was previously the case in Akron and New York, to one where alcoholics seek out AA in large numbers. The number of Cleveland AA members quickly grew and their meetings multiplied rapidly. In contrast, the membership numbers in New York and Akron remained relatively flat.

"We old-timers in New York and Akron had regarded this fantastic phenomenon with deep misgivings. Had it not taken us four whole years, littered with countless failures to produce even a hundred good recoveries? Yet there in Cleveland we saw about twenty members, not very experienced themselves, suddenly confronted by hundreds of newcomers as a result of the Plain Dealer articles. How could they possibly manage? We did not know. But a year later we did know; for by then Cleveland had about thirty groups and several hundred members. Growing pains and group problems had been terrifying, but no amount of squabbling could dampen the mass demand for sobriety. Yes, Cleveland's results were of the best. There results were in fact so good, and AAs membership elsewhere so small, that many a Clevelander really thought AA had started there in the first place. (Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pp. 21-22)

*(This was part of a string of replies to AAHistoryLovers2 discussion group online concerning early methods of sponsorship, posted May 23, 2017, 6:58 pm by James B. I found it so enthralling that I chose to reprint it here in lieu of my usual rantings/ravings...)*

~Your editor, Jeff

**We welcome your service-related contributions, comments and questions. Send topic ideas or complaints to: [newsletter@area54.org](mailto:newsletter@area54.org)**



## AREA OFFICER REPORTS

Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin) trustee for the last two terms has been from Ohio. Cathy B. was elected Southeast Regional Trustee and Newton P. from N. Carolina was elected as our new US Trustee at large.

Wednesday afternoon we began the conference committee reports and discussions which continued until Friday before dinner.

Each day offered me a new awareness of the value of participating in General Service. The General Service Conference provided yet another level of how service and fellowship coincide with each other. The importance of attending the ECR Forum, the ECR Conference – and other AA events allows us to not only visit with each other but to actually work with one another. I will now view the traditions on another level. I am also getting a little better understanding of the reason for the development of the concepts.

There is so much more to learn about Alcoholics Anonymous which will help me to learn more about myself and continue to carry the message of Alcoholic Anonymous. I am so very grateful to have been a part of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. I love Alcoholics Anonymous!!

**Jamie B., Panel 67 Delegate Area 54 – Northeast Ohio**

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### **Spirituality and Money Mix**

“The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying

any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.”— Tradition Seven (long form)

*Page 3 Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*

“From its earliest beginnings, A.A. has always incurred expenses — whether it be the cost of a pot of coffee or the price of a place to meet. In the early days, these costs were often absorbed by individual A.A.s or nonalcoholic friends who offered their parlors and living rooms for A.A.s to meet in. However, as A.A. outgrew the generosity of these early friends and members, the Fellowship’s need for income became more and more apparent.”

*Page 4 Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*

“With the realization that A.A. must steer clear of outside contributions in order to maintain its autonomy and independence came the understanding that the money necessary for A.A.’s survival would have to come from individual A.A. members and groups. As Bill W. put it in 1957, “Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.”

*Page 5 Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*

“Self-support begins with me, because I am part of us — the group. We pay our rent and

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## AREA OFFICER REPORTS

*(Continued from page 3)*

utility bills, buy coffee, snacks and A.A. literature. We support our central office, our area committee, and our General Service Office. If it were not for those entities, many new people would never discover the miracles of A.A.”

Self-Support starts with each individual AA member and that starts with footing the bill of our service work, on page 5, 12 step work is the “lifblood” of AA.

How can groups participate?

“To help support A.A.’s essential services, the General Service Conference suggests that individual groups, through an informed group conscience, adopt a specific contribution plan tailored to meet the group’s financial situation. Once the basic group expenses have been taken care of, for example: (rent, refreshments, A.A. literature, Grapevine literature, local meeting lists, G.S.R. travel expenses to attend service functions), and a “prudent reserve” has been set aside to cover any emergency contingencies that might arise, the group may decide to further carry the message by sending money to the following A.A. service entities. Local District /Area District /Central Office /GSO”

In the back of the pamphlet, there is a suggested break down of how groups can contribute. Regardless of which sample group contribution plan you choose or create, it important for our groups to donate to keep our primary purpose active and that is carry the message.

“Money has never been a requirement for A.A. membership, and to keep it that way all of A.A.’s trusted servants have an ongoing obligation to inform groups and individuals about the value of self-support and the need for voluntary contributions throughout the Fellowship. Many groups in reaching an informed group conscience look to their general service representatives (G.S.R.s) for specific

information about A.A. finances, or to their intergroup representatives or group treasurer. Many find that participation in local, area, and regional A.A. service events provides a good source of information about A.A.’s financial needs. And at the General Service Office, A.A.’s financial affairs are an open book, with financial summaries published quarterly and a full accounting printed each year in the Final Conference Report.”

“While the Fellowship has always faced problems of money, property, and prestige in one form or another, through the wisdom of the Seventh Tradition we have never been diverted from our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers — wherever he or she may be. This is the fundamental work of Alcoholics Anonymous, and to ensure that the hand of A.A. will always remain outstretched, money and spirituality must continue to mix. And for that, we are all responsible.”

*The majority of this information came from the service pamphlet, “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.” Copyright 1995. This pamphlet can also be downloaded from the AA website [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).*

Love and Service,

**Shyrl B., Area 54 Panel 67 Alternate Delegate**

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### ANOTHER LEVEL OF LEARNING

The program tells us to always have Honesty be Open Minded and have a Willingness. These are so important in my program to continue my growth. Having these attributes in my life has enabled me to experience awesome joys and opportunities I couldn’t of dreamed possible. This program has already given me so much in my life and has aided me in the ability to do so much in my personal life as well. So many rewards have been provided to me due to AA. I couldn’t do any of it without my support system both in the fellowship

*(Continued on page 5)*

## AREA OFFICER REPORTS

(Continued from page 4)

and outside it. I could never imagine being of service in the levels that I currently serve AA and then the membership surprises me once again.

While at the State Convention Planning Meeting after regular business was conducted and we were in new business our newly elected East Central Regional Trustee Mark E advised the attendees that he would need to step down as State Archivist due to his new responsibilities will have him very busy effective immediately if possible. The room went quiet, so I spoke up and asked Mark E, for a brief explanation of the position which he did. As I was sitting there I looked at Henry C. from Area 55 and thinking he was going to nominate Christopher C. from his area for the position and I would second it, but when he spoke it wasn't what I had thought at all. He said my name and all I could do was hyperventilate. It was quickly stated to me that I could do this as well as my area position. Once my question was answered and I was reassured by those with me that I could do this, because I really wasn't sure at all. I accepted the position and became the Ohio State Archivist. This is my Higher Power showing me he is there because when I doubt my abilities he steps in with those who see in me what I don't and puts opportunities in my

life that I wouldn't normally think I could do. This opportunity/position is going to take me to a whole other level of service work that I never imagined I could do nor did I think it possible. All Thanks and praise goes to my Higher Power and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Love and Service,

**Tina C., Area 54 Panel 67 Chairperson**

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The longer I stay here, sometimes I can catch a glimpse of the fact that I am finally growing up. Recently, there has been a lot of loss within my family and as I go about performing my duties as Area 54 treasurer, I am astonished that I have been able to trudge the road of happy destiny despite my sadness. Being in general service has taught me discipline and consistency which has transcended into being responsible in my personal life, in ways I couldn't possibly have conceived. "Having had a spiritual awakening as result of these steps...we practice these principles in all our affairs". AA has opened my world up to being of maximum service to anyone that is in need and taken away the opportunity to wallow in doubt and self-pity. I have heard countless other alcoholics talk about such difficulties and witnessed them walk through these situations with a sense of calmness and peace. A

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## Let's Go Green!

Area 54 General Service is inviting you to Go Green! Get your Area flyers, information, and an EXPANDED web-only version of the Northeast Ohio Recorder. All the information that comes to your USPS mailbox now can come to your inbox.

The NEOH Recorder you're reading now is 8 pages long—that's the page limit to keep postage weight within our budget and so that it can be folded to fit in an envelop. But we have so much more Area 54 news for you! The web version of this issue of NEOHR is packed with lots more experience, strength, and hope.

Let Justin S., your Area 54 Mailing Secretary, know that you would like to save a tree or three (and save the area some \$Green\$) with a message at [mailingsecretary@area54.org](mailto:mailingsecretary@area54.org)

Please note: if you do nothing, you will still get your Area mail by USPS and by email (if we have your email address) as you always have.

**Expanded Content (16 pages!) and a Color-Enhanced version of this newsletter is now online at <http://area54.org/NEOHRecorder.html>**

## AREA OFFICER and COMMITTEE REPORTS

peace that had surpassed my understanding.... until now. Thank God for AA and Thank God for all of you.

In Love and Service,

**Dawn J., Area 54 Treasurer**

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I am starting to get a handle on my position as recording secretary. It is however not getting easier but I am figuring out all the particulars. Having said that I did confuse myself greatly at the Mini-conference. I wasn't sure when or where to record or if I needed to take notes or not. I never realized how much was involved with this position. I have heard it said that by the time I figure it out it will be time to rotate. I truly believe that. I think the panel I got chosen to sit on is the best. They are always there to help me when I have questions and tell me when I am not quite doing it right. I am so grateful for the people that my HP has blessed me with. I hope I can continue to grow within myself and be of service to the fellowship.

Love and Service,

**Rea J R., Area Secretary**

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### DOING A GROUP INVENTORY

I've been around the rooms a few 24 hours. I have also visited a lot of groups in my travels as a DCM. I've been asked a lot of off-the-wall questions and I have gotten a lot of serious ones too. My go-to answer when I can't find one is "All groups are autonomous." A group can do whatever it wants to do, and no AA police will show up to tell them to stop. In the rare case that a group may come to the conclusion that it may or may not be sending the right message to the newcomer there are precise instructions on how to take a look at exactly what a group's message may look like to someone on the outside in the

pamphlet "The AA Group: Where it all begins" on page 29.

I bring all this up because I have a home group that is starting to ask some questions related to principles before personalities and I was in a position to suggest doing a Group Inventory. I've never done one, nor had I talked to anyone who had. So I decided it's time to blaze a trail. The group has already consented to doing this so the hard part is done. Next I called the literature chair for a bunch of copies of "The AA Group: Where it all begins". Now I figured I'll get out of the way and see what a group conscience can do. By next publication we should be done and I will share our experience on this matter.

**Dustin S., Area Mailing Secretary**

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Imagine \$7.84 from each member of A A... which would help AA as a whole to become self-supporting. When I think about how to express my gratitude, I express it by helping another sick and suffering alcoholic, which helps me stay sober too. I can take all that God is restoring in me to help keep the doors of AA, open through my contribution. Continue to listen to a God of your understanding.

With Gratitude,

**Beverly F., Area 54 Finance Chair**



## UPCOMING DATES FOR THE AREA AND BEYOND

# NOTE THE DATE

**July 16**  
Area Assembly

**GV Lit sales**  
2:00 pm

**July 21-23 – Merrillville, IN**  
East Central Regional Conference

**July 28-30—Columbus, OH**  
61st Ohio State Convention

**August 20**  
GSR/DCM Workshop

2:00 pm

**September 17**  
Area Assembly

2:00 pm

**October 15**  
Area Assembly

**GV Lit sales**  
2:00 pm

**November 4 — Columbus, OH**  
Ohio State Convention Planning Meeting

11:00 am

**November 12**  
Gratitude Sunday

**GV Lit sales**  
TBA

**November 17-19 —**  
East Central Regional Forum, hosted by GSO  
and Area 21 (Springfield, IL)

**November 20**  
Gratitude Sunday

**GV Lit sales**

TBA

**January 14, 2018**  
Area Assembly

**GV Lit sales**  
2:00 pm

**January 28 and February 25**  
Mini Conference planning meetings  
Holiday Inn Strongsville

2:00 pm

**February 9-11 —**  
Conference of Delegates Past and Present

**February 18**  
GSR School Workshop

2:00 pm

**March 18**  
Area Assembly  
(and MC planning snow date)

2:00 pm

**July 2020 — Detroit, MI**  
85th Anniversary International Convention



**Unless otherwise noted, Area Assemblies & Workshops are held at The 12 Step Recovery Club, 1480 Pearl Rd., Brunswick, OH (on 42 about 1/4 mile south of route 303)**  
**Phone: (330) 273-7216**

## RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

These are the Three Legacies of our A.A. experience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern. God, expressed through our group conscience, is our sole authority. World Service is the heart of our Third Legacy. Our meetings are informative and educational. They are held so that the Committee Members, GSRs, and all interested members may be better equipped to carry the message of World Service back to their home groups and individual members, thus giving a better understanding to our purpose, our hopes, and our work.

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Visit us at <http://www.area54.org>