

MIRUS

Minneapolis Intergroup: Recovery, Unity, Service

July 2010 Step, Tradition, and Concept Seven

Step Seven

*Suggested readings: page 76 in Alcoholics Anonymous;
Step Seven in The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

"Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

As I look back on my life before A.A., I realize that I had no comprehension of what the word humility meant, or how to practice it. I lived my life in the pursuit of material gratification. I defined my success by possessions, accomplishments, and conquests. I believed that to prove I was worth something I had to succeed in material achievement.

I know today that my striving for material achievement was a direct result of having no real relationship with God. In the absence of spiritual fulfillment I naturally, and selfishly, sought to get whatever I needed to fill the void: money, prestige, sex, control; this list could go on and on. As we all can surely attest, living by a mantra of "what's in it for me?" does not bode well for strong personal relationships.

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. On page 70 of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, we are reminded that attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of A.A.'s Twelve Steps. And that without humility, we cannot live to much useful purpose or be able to overcome adversity. Strangely, Step Seven is the first Step that calls it out directly. I believe it's because it requires that we complete Steps One through Six before we can comprehend humility to the degree necessary for us to ask God for help in removing the defects that have for so long blocked us from Him and our fellows.

Think about it. Step One asks us to admit we are powerless. For a control freak like I was, it was quite humbling to admit that I could not do it alone. Steps Two and Three suggest we believe a power greater than ourselves, namely a God of our understanding, can help us and that we need turn over our thoughts and actions over to Him. Again, a humbling experience for someone as self reliant as I was (or at least thought I was). Steps Four and Five ask us to inventory our grosser handicaps and share them with another human being. If that isn't humbling, I don't know what is. And then Step Six asks us to admit these defects of character and be ready to have God remove them from us. Admitting defects is quite humbling for anyone, not just alcoholics like us.

So there we are. Having swallowed a lot of hard truths about our character we stand before God in a position to humbly ask Him for help. Just as we did in Step Three, we need to place ourselves in God's hands. If there is one thing I have learned in the last 15 years it is that I cannot tackle my shortcomings alone. I don't have the courage, the will, or the strength necessary. I need God's help. It is

here at Step Seven that I ask God to change my life forever. I ask him to remove the selfish behaviors and allow me to live in an honest, helpful, and grateful manner. Putting down the bottle was but a beginning. Trust and faith in God is truly built in Step Seven and it is where I began to have a new outlook on life. Until I humbly asked God to remove my character defects, I was in A.A. to get something I wanted. Living Step Seven elevates us to being in A.A. to do what God would have us do. The Seventh Step prayer makes it pretty clear: "...I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen"

While I'm hardly free of defects, the glaring ones, the ones I used to easily justify, have for the most part disappeared. I rarely lie, I don't cheat on my wife, and I don't take what is not rightfully mine. In general, I do what I say I'm going to do when I say I'm going to do it. I believe I have integrity, and I believe it started at Step Seven. The interesting thing is that my previous strivings for material achievement have not left me. I still try for accomplishments and I desire material possessions. The difference is that I no longer define success by them. I define success as being a good husband, father, son, worker, and most importantly, a good servant for the God who saved my life.

Skip L. Shorewood, MN – for the MIRUS

GREATER MINNEAPOLIS INTERGROUP

UNITY OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY JULY 31, 2010

9AM - 1PM

9AM-11AM DOUGHNUTS & COFFEE * 11AM-1PM HOT DOGS & CHIPS



NEED A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY? LEARN ABOUT...

Night Owls, Early Birds, Group Phones, & Daytime Phones

Southern Minnesota Area 36 Temporary Contact Program

Southern Minnesota Area 36 Correctional Facilities Contact Program

"An opportunity for all AA members to connect into service"



PLAN TO ATTEND OUR 10TH OPEN HOUSE

7204 West 27th Street, Suite 113

St. Louis Park, MN 55426

map & directions at www.aaminneapolis.org

Greater Minneapolis Intergroup • Alcoholics Anonymous®

7204 W. 27th St., Suite 113 • St. Louis Park, MN 55426-3112 • 952-922-0880 • www.aaminneapolis.org • email: info@aaminneapolis.org

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9 am-4:30 pm • Tuesday & Thursday 9 am-7 pm • Saturday 9 am-1 pm

Notes from your Service Office:

“A Vision for You – 75 years of Alcoholics Anonymous: June 10, 1935 to June 10, 2010

After nearly 10 years I have decided to retire as your Office Manager effective December 31, 2010. I advised the Intergroup Board of this decision at the May 25th Board meeting. Since that time the HR committee has met so the Board can proceed with their recommendations on the hiring of the new Office Manager. For a copy of the posting notice and the qualifications needed please email the office and a copy will be sent to you. NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE. The posting notice was not available in time for this issue of July MIRUS.

When a new person calls for help they call Alcoholics Anonymous, they do not call Intergroup Association of Minneapolis and Suburban Area, Inc. Yes our HOTLINE is AA and maintained by AA members for anyone who reaches out for help the hand of AA will be there. If the new man or woman lives in New York City they would not call the General Service Office for meetings; they would call the AA Hotline in NY maintained by New York Intergroup. There are reasons why we are incorporated, just as there are reasons the General Service Office is incorporated as Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Both service offices need to be protected by the laws of the states they reside in so that liabilities can be covered, such as employees, office leases,

and Insurance, and so the integrity of the non-profit status be maintained.

However we cannot incorporate that which is spiritual as found through the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. So while our Service Centers employ special workers they are not paid to do actual 12 Step work. What they provide are the resources for members and groups to maintain our on-going 12th Step Services when that call for help does come in. Our special workers make sure that the ongoing 12 Step opportunities are carried out each day 24 hours a day 365 days per year. This is both spiritually and financially prudent, and still very much about being self-supporting.

Your literature purchase at Intergroup is an important way to contribute to our Vital Services; we purchase literature in large quantities from AA World Services, Inc. Of course the good part is that by design and good planning from our co-founders, AA is its own publisher no one else. We have the total say of what our literature says, through the General Service Conference process. These literature purchases also assists GSO in keeping their costs down and assist us to pay for our Vital Services. It's a win, win situation for all. That all includes every member of AA! Your

Notes from your Service Office continued on page 5

Board Notes

As your Intergroup Treasurer I thought for the July issue of the MIRUS I would put together some of my thoughts about Tradition Seven. Self-support as it turns out remains one of our most cherished ideals, and without it AA might never have survived over the past 75 Years.

The AA Traditions that guide our AA groups and AA service entities can serve us well as individuals. Take Tradition Seven for example, “Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” When I apply principles based on this tradition to my own life, things seem to go better for me.

Live within my means. “AA in action calls for the sacrifice of much time and a little money.” *AA Comes of Age*, pg 141. Given that I have limited amounts of both time and money, it is important to give careful consideration to how I spend each. Recovery from alcoholism demands that I dedicate some time to putting AA in action in my life. Most often that happens by participating in AA meetings. I make it a priority to contribute a little money at each meeting I attend. When I do, I'm counting on the AA group to make the best use of the money I contribute for AA purposes. I also count on the group to

report how the money is used and when more is needed. Groups decide how excess money over expenses is used and the Group Treasurer reports back to the members. Groups choose how time is spent in meetings by agreeing on a format for their meeting.

Be a “thankful giver” rather than a thoughtless “taker.” “Yes, we AAs were once a burden on everybody. We were ‘takers.’ Now that we are sober, and by the grace of God have become responsible citizens of the world, why shouldn't we now about-face and become ‘thankful givers’! Yes, it is high time we did!” *Language of the Heart*, pg 86. One of the miracles that have happened for me is that my general attitude toward the world and the people in it has switched from being nearly always negative to most often being positive. It is one of those paradoxes that defy reason – the more I give, the more I receive in return. It is a treat for me to surround myself with people in AA groups who have experienced the same results and are willing to share with others the actions they took to get those results. This is true for time, money, and experience.

Be self-supporting. “Tradition Seven states that we had best pay our own bills.” *Language of the Heart*, pg 93. I shouldn't expect others to provide for me things I

should work for and provide myself. If I make unrealistic and unreasonable demands of other people, I will most often be disappointed and likely become bitter and resentful. Practicing this principle leads to a responsible and grown up attitude toward my relationships with other people. When I pay my own way, I gain a sense of satisfaction from being a useful, contributing member of society. AA groups demonstrate this principle by paying rent to the facility in which they meet, buying supplies necessary to put on an attractive meeting, and purchasing literature especially for newcomers. It is my observation that healthy groups with active members generally receive more in contributions than the modest expenses it takes to put on their meetings.

Have a plan for my money. AA financial policy is to maintain a balance of funds to meet “bare running expenses plus a prudent reserve.” *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pg 165. When I was drinking, my finances were a disaster. bill collectors needed to be avoided, rent was a chore to make, and my wife perpetually begged for money to feed the kids. There was hardly enough money to buy the booze! Well, since I sobered up the liquor bill went away, my performance at work improved, and my financial amends have been made. I now have

Board Notes continued on page 5

Intergroup Board

Board Officers

Chairperson	Sarah S.
Co-Chairperson	Brian M.
Secretary	Tiffany C.
Treasurer	Steve H.

Board Members

Theresa H.	Linda McG.
Ben N.	Joe S.
Dani St. P.	Carrie J.
Rhonda S.	Ross H.

General Service District Board Liaisons

District 7	Ben N.
District 13	Joe S.
District 14	Dani St. P.
District 17	Dani St.P.
District 18	Rhonda S.
District 19	Carrie J.
District 21	Bucky M.**
District 22	Ross H.
District 24	Linda McG.
District 25	Theresa H.

Intergroup Staff

Chuck R.	Office Manager
Steve S.	Staff
Ginny G.	Staff
Claudia S.	Staff

**Past Board Member

Your Intergroup Board meets every month at 7:00pm on the Tuesday before the Rep's meeting in the Intergroup Office

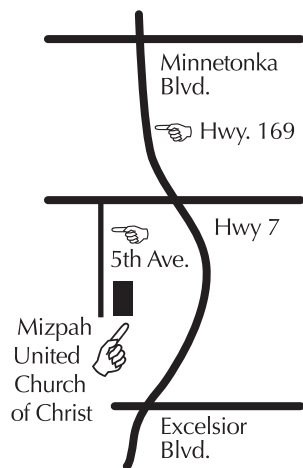
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The MIRUS represents the experience of AA members. Their thoughts, expressed herein, are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does this publication imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or Greater Minneapolis Intergroup.

Metro District General Service Meetings

District 7	Second Monday, 6:30 pm	NEW LOCATION
	St. Andrew Lutheran Church	
	13600 Technology Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55344	
District 13	First Wednesday, 7:00 pm	
	Coon Rapids Civic Center;	
	11155 Robinson Dr. N.W.,	
	Coon Rapids	
District 14	First Monday, 7:30 pm	
	United Methodist Church,	
	609 8th St. NW,	
	Buffalo, MN	
District 17	Second Tuesday, 7:30PM	
	St. John's Lutheran; Plato	
District 18	Second Wednesday, 6:30 pm	
	First Christian Church; 2201 1st Ave. S., Minneapolis	
District 19	Second Wednesday, 7:00 pm	
	Rosemount Community Center, Room 210	
	13885 S. Robert Trail, Rosemount	
District 21	Fourth Tuesday, 7:30	
	Pilgrim United Methodist Church;	
	4325 Zachary Lane, Plymouth	
District 22	Second Wednesday, 7:30 pm	
	St. Paul's Lutheran Church;	
	13207 Lake St., Minnetonka	
	(N.W. corner of Baker Rd. and Hwy. 7)	
District 24	First Monday, 7:00 pm	
	St. John's Lutheran Church;	
	8th and Fuller, Shakopee	
District 25	Second Wednesday, 7:30 pm	
	Woodlake Lutheran Church,	
	7525 Oliver Ave South,	
	Richfield, MN 55423	

NOTICE • NOTICE



**Intergroup
Reps
meeting**
Thursday,
July 22nd
6:30 pm

At Mizpah
United Church
of Christ:
412 5th Ave. N.
Hopkins, MN
55343.

Intergroup A.A. Orientation Open Meetings

The Saturday Orientation Open Meeting takes place every week at 10am at the Mizpah Church, located just west of 169 and just south of Hwy 7 in Hopkins.

7/03	The History of AA and it's Founders Her Story
7/10	Step Six / Tradition Six His Story
7/17	AA Literature: The Grapevine Her Story
7/24	Step Seven / Tradition Seven His Story
7/17	Self Support and AA's Vital Legacies Her Story

NEW LOCATION

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NEW LOCATION

July 2004

Vol. 61 No. 2

The Meaning of Money

It's about participation, not cash

Within a week of having my last drink, I found my way into a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Because of chronic alcoholism, I had lost my teeth, my ability to read, and control over most of my bodily functions. I couldn't stop shaking. I was at the end of the road; I had nowhere else to go, and despite my best efforts, I couldn't die.

I was welcomed at the doors of AA by a man who several years earlier had asked me to leave a rather shoddy bar because of my inappropriate behavior. I figured if it was all right with him, then I would probably be allowed to stay. I don't remember much about that meeting except that I was given hope that maybe I didn't have to drink again. No one told me to believe in God or tried to sell me anything. I was encouraged to just show up and use what I wanted. It had been a long time since I'd felt welcome anywhere; here were people who understood where I had been and where I was now. I did what was suggested, got a sponsor, and started on the road of recovery. My life changed.

During the initial meeting with my first sponsor, he asked if I had a Big Book. When I said no, he bought me one. I told him I'd pay him back, and he said he expected nothing less. The day I received my first paycheck from a not-so-good job, I did pay him. I also started contributing to the Seventh Tradition basket. I really wanted to be part of this thing. That first night, he told me I couldn't keep what I didn't give away and that I couldn't give away what I didn't have. He started me on my journey through AA's Twelve Steps of recovery and got me into group service as the greeter for the eight o'clock meetings.

Shortly afterward, I went to my first steering committee meeting and was astonished to learn that our treasurer had lost a great deal of the group's money. He had bought a new car and left the group. We were in severe financial trouble, but no one felt it was appropriate to seek legal recourse. The group members were concerned he might drink. They realized that they needed to be more careful when electing trusted servants. They believed that they had let the man down by putting too much pressure on his short-term sobriety and had let the group down by not having the foresight to see potential problems. I thought they were just nice people; I had no idea that what I was witnessing was a greater understanding of a Higher Power at the group level. I came up with the incredibly wonderful idea of seeking help from a local charitable organization to get us through this dilemma. That's when my sponsor began teaching me about our Twelve Traditions. Once again, my life changed.

While studying the Seventh Tradition, I learned that self-support is more than money in the basket. It's the participation by individual members within the group as well as group participation by elected members in local service work and in AA as a whole. I found out that he who pays the bills calls the shots. At first, the most important thing to me was that our group was autonomous and made all our own decisions. As my mind cleared, I realized that with freedom there is responsibility, and that if the group didn't pay its way, no one would.

The Seventh Tradition became very important to me; it meant that I could belong. I could be a small part of a great whole, something I had never been before. It also meant that I could earn a living and

start making financial amends in order to pay back the many debts that had built up through the years. It meant that I had a chance to be free one day.

I became involved in my home group and did service with our local Hospitals and Institutions Committee. I went to places I'd never dreamed of going to help carry a message of hope to the hopeless. The history of Alcoholics Anonymous became very important to me, as did serving this sober group of drunks that had given me life. I started to put Alcoholics Anonymous in front of my own wants and needs.

In addition to giving much of my time, as I was able to secure better jobs I began to put more money in the basket at meetings. Sometimes, I was rather showy in my contribution. However, maturing through service and living within the principles embodied within the last three Steps, I realized that if the Seventh Tradition were just about money, the haves could, and certainly would, support the have-nots. Then we would likely become a society wracked with perilous wealth and power, and the voice of Alcoholics Anonymous would not be heard through group participation but only through those who, in Bill's words, "paid the freight." The Fellowship had to be supported through a broad base of groups, and the group had to be supported through a broad base of individual members. Therefore, I should give my fair share but not more.

I learned that I would serve best as an example of leadership, not as someone filled with the false pride that comes with carrying the group, either financially or through self-appointed positions of importance. I came to realize this was a Fellowship made up of the dregs of society who have found freedom and happiness in a power greater than themselves through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Serving it and trying to carry its message would be the highest goal I ever attempted.

In the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous, the groups of newly sober men and women came up with all kinds of ideas to bring money into the Fellowship. Most ideas involved relying on ways to squeeze even a few pennies from former spendthrifts who became miserly once they got sober. Great amounts of money were dreamed of and sought after, so that the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous could be spread as quickly as possible.

It took time and wisdom for Alcoholics Anonymous members to see that the Fellowship must be self-supporting or the entire movement could be lost forever. As AA grew in numbers and maturity, it became apparent that what we had was truly a gift from God. One of the surest ways to maintain the existence of our marvelous Fellowship was to ensure that it remain self-supporting and refuse outside gifts, no matter how compelling the need or how loving the offer.

In 1937, during discussions concerning possible financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, Albert Scott, an early friend of Alcoholics Anonymous, asked, "Shouldn't we be most careful not to do anything, which might lead to a professional or propertied class within your ranks?"

This profound statement is one of the cornerstones that has kept our Fellowship in the unique position of actually practicing corporate poverty, out of harm's way. When all was said and done, the Rockefeller Foundation had helped in a very minor financial way, but its spiritual contribution was immense. It became evident that we would have to make do with our own efforts. As we know, shortly afterward the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous was published,

Tradition Seven continued from page 4

and our life as a Fellowship changed. When members of the media saw that we ex-problem-drinkers were making self-support part of our foundation of recovery, they became some of our most valued friends.

Throughout those early years and after the inception of the General Service Conference, discussions of the wise use of funds have continued. These talks have offered us some of our greatest opportunities for spiritual growth. Sales of literature have always been key in paying for needed services. Occasionally it appeared that group contributions would support all our services except for the cost of publishing. There have been times when we have gone to great lengths to accomplish that goal, but the concept has thus far stayed out of our reach. Maybe it should remain that way since literature pricing can be the throttle that keeps us on an even keel while we attempt to maintain a balanced operation of the Reserve Fund. We need to encourage groups to continually contribute to our various service entities, not only to ensure that those services will be adequate, but also to afford the freedom of each group the benefits of our Second Legacy.

Notes from your Service Office continued from page 2

Service Office has the largest and most complete stock of all conference approved pamphlets and books between Chicago and Los Angeles. Each AA Group or General Service District would be hard pressed to maintain such a large selection of AA literature. So when the need arises for that special 12 Step call whether it's a newcomer, a professional, a family member, or someone from the Hmong community we have it in stock, this includes all 50 copies of the non English language Big Books and nearly 80 languages of various recovery pamphlets. Just a month ago we received a call from a professional in immediate need of a Big Book in Vietnamese, and an hour later he came by the office to pick it up. He would have been hard pressed to locate a group or a District to find one or to wait a week for one to be shipped from GSO.

When considering our AA literature, let's not just consider where we buy it or at what price we paid for it, let's keep in mind that our

Board Notes continued from page 2

enough money to meet basic living expenses plus a little left over. A simple plan has been essential to make this happen. Each payday set aside funds to meet basic living expenses. Then divide what's left into three funds: 1) emergency fund, 2) funds for long-term goals like retirement, and 3) money for play and fun stuff. The key for me is that I know where to put the money the money before I get it. That way I don't need to make a decision with a big check in my hand. I learned this in AA with the help of a sponsor and watching how my home group made decisions about money in the business meeting.

Meet my responsibility to the fellowship that saved my life. "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 AA as whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid....when we are generous with the hat we

In November 1957, Bill wrote in the Grapevine that "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 AA Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid."

With this commentary, Bill makes it clear that the Seventh Tradition is money in the basket, but it's also participation at the group and area service levels.

Self-support is the very essence of Alcoholics Anonymous. As the result of paying our own bills, the Fellowship will be here for all the years to come when hopeless drunks walk into AA meetings looking for sobriety and a new way of life.

Jim M., Shingletown, California

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literature carries the life saving message on how we can live life without drinking. So, when we discuss our literature let's discuss how we can use literature to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Keep in mind that Greater Minneapolis Intergroup sells literature at cost; that cost includes our ability to pay for the expense of maintaining your Service Office. So, the next time you purchase a Big Book at Intergroup you are essentially purchasing it from yourself.

The AA spiritual principle of self-support enables us to pursue our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic with a shared sense of responsibility. The AA literature purchased at Greater Minneapolis Intergroup is just one example of self-support that we best not overlook.

Yours always in Service,
Chuck R., Office Manager

give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer." Language of the Heart, pg 221. Some can contribute a little and some can contribute a lot. I make it a point to contribute regularly. I put more money in the basket at my home group than I do at other meetings because I am part of the group conscience and I know where the money excess goes. At my home group, our group conscience is that we want to be an active, contributing group to AA as a whole now and for those who are yet to come. What is your group conscience regarding the contributions put into the basket at your home group?

Yours in Service,
Steve H., Intergroup Board Treasurer

Annual Board Elections
Thursday September 23, 2010 – 7:00PM
Annual Representatives Meeting
Four new board members to be elected

Group Contributions – May 2010. Thank you all, in the Spirit of Hope.

8 to 80 Group	Desire Speaker Meeting	New Hope Alano Sq. 30	SOS Group (Sober on Sat. Group)
A Baffled Lot	Fairhaven Friday Night AA	New Hope Alano Squad 62	Southwest Women's Group
All Saints Men's Group	Foxhall Chapter 7 Group	Normandale AA Group	Steps to Serenity Group
As Bill Sees It Medina	Freedom Seekers Sq 2	Nowthen AA Group	Sunday Night Step & Speaker Meeting
Back to Basics Coon Rapids	Fridley Alano Squad 49	Peculiar Mental Twist	Temple Monday Big Book 615 pm
Basic Twelve	Good Samaritan Group	Polaris Group	Third Tradition Group of AA
Belle Plaine AA Group	Groveland Group	Practical Experience	This Simple Program
Bloomington Hyland Group	Happy Hour Sq 27	Practical Experience	Three Legacies
Bridges-Shakopee	Health Care Professionals Wayzata	Rich/Blmngtn Alano Sq 2D	Thursday Night Grace
Bryant Lake Group	Hope AA Lakeville	Rich/Blmngtn Alano Sq 4E	Thursday Night Speaker Meeting
Cavalier West Mens Thurs	It Might Have Been Worse	Ridge Runners II Group	Tradition Five
Central Pacific Group	A New Freedom - Plymouth	Ridge Runners III Group	Tuesday 4 pm AA at HCMC
Chunks & Measures Sq 88 at 2218	Lost & Found Step Group	Rosemount AA Group	Tuesday Night Grace AA
Colonial Way Group	Zimmerman	Rule 62 AA	Twin Lake Alano Sq 4
Common Solution Big Book Study	Lucky Sq at West Suburban Alano	Savage Unity AA Group	U.R.S. Tuesday Nite A.A.
Complete Defeat AA Group	Mainstreeters AA Group	SDSG	Unknown AA Group
Coon Rapids Alano Sq 2	Monday Non-Smoking AA Group	Seeing is Believing	Wed Night Big Book (Mpls)
Coon Rapids Alano Squad 6	Mound By Grace Group	Seeing is Believing	Women's Big Book Anoka
Cornerstone in Buffalo	New Hope Alano Sq 1	Sobriety Society Group	Womens Serenity Group Thurs. 10am
Dakota Alano Sunday 8 pm Group	New Hope Alano Sq 10	Solution Seekers Salvation Army	
Desire Speaker Meeting	New Hope Alano Sq 7	Solution Seekers Salvation Army	

Every AA Group that sends a group contribution is sent a receipt along with a "Thank You" letter from the office. It is the responsibility of the group treasurer or trusted servant to share the receipt and "thank you" letter with their respective group. Every AA Group that sends a contribution will be listed in the MIRUS. On request your AA group can request a contribution summary.

Concept Seven

This Concept is all about balance of responsibilities and power. It is based on trust in a very big way. We trust our trusted servants. The first Concept gives the fellowship as a whole the final say in all matters affecting A.A. policy as a whole. This is done via our elected Delegates at the General Service Conference.

Our General Service Board (Trustees') have the legal power to act on the behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous and manage the day to day operations and decisions that need to happen without consulting the Conference. We trust that they will follow through on these obligations. They actually have the legal right to make decisions on their own and can actually veto any recommendation put forward by the General Service Conference. This has not happened yet.

Today the Conference Committees and the Board of Trustees communicate on a much better level than in the past and the communication is on an on-going basis. Conference delegates are starting to be involved in the year round process just as the Trustees are obligated to do. Committees involving delegates, trustees & staff are working together on projects. That's a great way to see balance of power in action.

If, therefore, in the years ahead, the Conference will always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities, and legal status of the General Service Board, and if the Trustees in their

The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.

deliberations will constantly realize that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority, we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to make a "rubber stamp" out of the other. We may expect that in this way grave issues will always be resolved and harmonious cooperation will be the general rule.

Scott A., Panel 59 Delegate from Plymouth, MN for the MIRUS

Editors Note: Each conference delegate shares on their own experience they do not speak on behalf of all conference members.

Calendar of Events

Deadline for publication of notices is the 10th of the preceding month.

Open Speaker Meetings

Thursday:

Central Pacific Group, 7:30 pm
Central Lutheran Church, 333 South 12th St.
Foxhall Chapter 7 Group, 7:30 pm
Wooddale Church, 6636 Shady Oak Road, Eden Prairie

Friday:

Edina Open Speaker Meeting, 7:30 pm
Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Blvd., Edina
Three Legacies, 7:30 pm
Cross of Glory Baptist Church, SW Corner Excelsior Blvd and Shady Oak Road, Hopkins
A sign language interpreter is provided each week.

Saturday:

Saturday Night Open Speaker Meeting, 8:00 pm
2218 1st Avenue South
Saturday Night Open Speaker Meeting
7:30PM every Saturday
St. Lawrence Catholic Church
1203 5th St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414, (near Dinkytown)
Saturday Night Live Open Speaker Meeting, 7:30
Basilica of St. Mary's School, third floor
16th & Hennepin (behind the church)
Handicap accessible
Tradition One, 7:30 pm
Pilgrim United Methodist, 4325 Zachary Lane, Plymouth

Sunday:

Step & Speaker Open Meeting; 7:00 pm
First Baptist Church, 10th & Hennepin, Minneapolis

Special Events

July 1, 2, 3, 4, 2010
13th International AA Convention of AA
"A Vision for You"; San Antonio, TX
Registration and Information: www.aa.org

July 11, 2010
9 am to 5 pm
Archives Open House
Lake Marion AA Club
19867 135th St
Hutchinson, MN

July 31, 2010, 9-1
Unity Open House at Intergroup

August 19, 20, 21, 22
Cornhusker Round Up
Omaha, NE
www.AA-Cornhusker.org

August 20, 21, 22, 2010
Wild Rice Round Up
Mahnomon, MN
www.wildriceroundup.com

August 28th, 2010
32nd Old Timers Reunion, 1PM to 6PM
2218 Founders Groups
2218 1st Ave So., Minneapolis, MN

September 3, 4, 2010
29 Annual Al-Anon/Alateen Fellowship Weekend
Doubletree Park Place
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
www.mnfellowshipweekend.com

Sept 10, 11, 12, 2010
20th Heartland Round UP
www.heartlandroundup.com
Northern Pines Assembly Grounds, Park Rapids, MN

February 10 -13, 2011
47th IWC
Anchorage, AK

General Service

August 14, 2010
Area 36 Committee Meeting, 9am to 5pm
Best Western, North Mankato, MN

September 10, 11, 12, 2010
20th Annual Bridging the Gap Weekend
Airport Hilton, Bloomington, MN 55425

October 16, 2010
Area 36 Election Assembly
9am to 5pm, AmericInn Mankato, MN

December 4, 2010
Area 36 Committee Meeting, 9am to 5pm
Best Western, North Mankato, MN

Please note: most Area 36 events have a map on how to find the location; go to their website www.area36.org for additional information.

Open Speaker Meetings are listed for the convenience of members who wish to bring newcomers and non-alcoholic friends. Listing in the Mirus should not be construed as any endorsement on the part of Minneapolis Intergroup. Call Intergroup if you need directions to any of these Open Speaker Meetings. Roundups, Workshops and Special Events are not endorsed by Minneapolis Intergroup and listings are provided for informational purposes only. Flyers for these events are available at the office.

AA Pamphlet of the month:
Frequently Asked Questions About AA

AA Book of the month:
AA Comes of Age

Grapevine Book
of the Month
Spiritual Awakenings

About AA

Self-Supporting Through Our Own Contributions

- Members of an A.A. group realize that their group bank account has accumulated more money than they need to cover expenses for the next couple of months. The chairperson calls a special meeting to discuss getting rid of the excess cash.
- A local A.A. office receives a donation of \$2,000 from a nonalcoholic relative of a member. The manager declines it with gratitude, explaining that A.A. does not accept outside contributions.

Situations like these, which occur regularly throughout Alcoholics Anonymous, highlight the tremendous importance A.A. members, groups, and service entities place on Tradition Seven: "Every A.A. group should be self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

Clearly, the question of money and how to handle it is answered very differently in Alcoholics Anonymous than it is in most organizations, and that answer has profound implications for Alcoholics Anonymous, past, present, and future.

A Slice of History

Like all of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, the Seventh emerged from trial and error, often in spite of the efforts of those who shaped it. In the 1930s and '40s when the fate of the new movement looked shaky at best, many of the founding members were convinced that a large infusion of cash was absolutely necessary if A.A. was to survive and grow. The Akron and New York groups were well grounded, while other groups were just getting off to an uncertain start. In 1940 a small central office was opened, to provide literature and Twelfth Step assistance for alcoholics and their families. But millions more suffering alcoholics needed the message of recovery, and the newly sober drunks felt an urgent need to reach them.

The "promoters" among the early members had big ideas: publishing a book, building hospitals and rehabilitation centers, sending out missionaries. The "conservatives," though, advised caution. Finally, a meeting of the Akron alcoholics was called, and "by the barest majority, and over the most strenuous objections" they decided to go for "the whole works — the missionaries, the hospitals, and the book." Bill W. went back to New York to get the ball rolling, and many of the New York A.A.s fell in with what he later called his "grandiose notions." (*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, pp. 145-46)

The Alcoholic Foundation (now A.A.'s General Service Board) had been established in 1938, to handle the huge amounts of money expected from the operation of hospitals and rehabilitation centers around the country. They began soliciting funds, but no one was too excited about helping a bunch of drunks. Then Bill's nonalcoholic brother-in-law, Leonard V. Strong, introduced the alcoholics to a close associate of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Mr. Rockefeller and his friends took an interest in the budding movement, but like the conser-

vative A.A.s, they too questioned the need for all that money. Finally, on the evening of February 8, 1940, Rockefeller gave a dinner for A.A., with some 75 of New York's rich and influential citizens in attendance. Nelson Rockefeller, present on behalf of his father, praised the movement, and as Bill tells the story in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, said, "Gentlemen, you can all see that this is a work of good will. Its power lies in the fact that one member carries the good message to the next, without any thought of financial income or reward. Therefore, it is our belief that Alcoholics Anonymous should be self-supporting so far as money is concerned. It needs only our good will." Whereupon the guests clapped lustily, and . . . the whole billion dollars' worth of them walked out the door." (*ibid.*, pp. 184-85)

Rockefeller subsequently donated \$1,000 to A.A., and the favorable publicity generated by the dinner gave A.A. a generous boost in the public eye. Over the next four years, small contributions solicited from the dinner guests helped keep the tiny office functioning.

Only one of the original "grandiose" projects ever came to fruition: In 1939 the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, came off press, and though initially it failed to generate the hoped-for record volume of sales, it was then, as it is now, A.A.'s best tool for carrying the message, as well as a source of income. Wisely, A.A. decided to publish its own literature, and thus has always been free to make publishing decisions on the basis of A.A. principles alone — never worrying about "what will sell," or "What will appeal to readers."

With the help of articles in national magazines, the efforts of traveling members, and the new central office, A.A. began to grow and thrive. After four years, the A.A.s were able to let Rockefeller and his friends know that no more help was needed — the A.A. groups had begun supporting the headquarters office.

Self-Support and the Individual Member

The principle of self-support affects every member of every group. An A.A. who got sober before the Traditions were officially adopted wrote in the October 1970 Grapevine: "On my first approach. . . already A.A. had effectively declared itself independent of all handouts. It was managing, somehow, to pay its own way. . . If it had turned out to be a government-financed project or a charitable branch of some church, my feelings about it could not have been so instantly warm and comfortable. The fact that it was just us drunks. . . lessened my shame at having to ask for help." (*Best of the Grapevine*, Vol. I, p. 114)

Sober members were able to demonstrate that an alcoholic is not always someone who must be helped. One A.A. reflected: "When I arrived at the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous, I had no job, very little money, and a life that was rapidly turn-

ing into a shambles. Even so, I contributed 25 cents at every meeting I attended. This was my first step back to regaining my self-respect and responsibility.” The Tradition allowed A.A.s to be givers, not takers, and went far to build public confidence in the movement. As Bill W. commented in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, “When a society composed entirely of alcoholics says it’s going to pay its bills, that’s really news.” (p. 160)

While no A.A. group requires contributions from those who attend its meetings, the return of self-respect, an awakening sense of responsibility, and gratitude for sobriety spur even the newest A.A. members to contribute whatever they can. Some also send contributions to local or national A.A. offices to celebrate their sobriety date each year. Contributions are as important to the giver as to the recipient, for they allow the giver to participate in carrying the A.A. message around the world.

Where Money and Spirituality Mix

Yet speaking of money and A.A. in the same breath makes some members nervous—A.A. is a spiritual program, they feel, and should not concern itself with money at all. More pragmatic alcoholics contend that without enough money, it would be impossible to provide the services essential to carrying the message. Bill W. saw the resolution of this dilemma in “the hat” (the group’s collection basket), where money and spirituality mix, and the familiar announcement “We have no dues or fees, but we do have expenses” is an integral part of virtually every A.A. meeting.

By paying its own expenses — rent for the meeting room, the cost of A.A. literature and local meeting lists, coffee and refreshments, support of local and national service entities — the group ensures that meetings will be there for the suffering alcoholic, literature and information will be available, and the message will be carried around the world. Each group treasury keeps on hand a “prudent reserve” (amounts vary, but generally enough to cover one or two months’ expenses), and distributes any cash beyond that amount among local, area, and national A.A. service entities.

Fulfilling its financial responsibilities with members’ contributions alone allows the group to steer clear of influences that might distort the A.A. message. Occasionally, a generous and well-intended outside organization or individual will seek to help the Fellowship by offering a meeting place at no cost, or perhaps free printing of newsletters or flyers. In such situations, the Tradition suggests that — to avoid any possibility of outside influence or pressure — the group decline with thanks. If for some reason a landlord cannot accept money, groups can respond by providing services, such as painting the meeting room or buying furniture that can be used by others as well as the A.A.s.

Ideally, group contributions would support all A.A. service entities. In practice, however, not all groups do participate through contributions to either the General Service Office or their own local entities. So from the earliest A.A. days, when survival sometimes depended on the level of Big Book sales, a portion of the profits from the publication and sale of A.A. literature has made up the difference between expenses and contribution income.

Corporate Poverty

The trustees established the official policy on gifts and donations, in 1948, after a lively discussion triggered by a proposed \$10,000 bequest to A.A. At the time, the office and the Alcoholic Foundation were hard up for money, and some of the trustees were in favor of accepting the bequest. Once again, the conservatives stepped in and carried the day. Bill W. described the discussion in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*: “. . . like the alcoholic’s first drink, [the bequest] would, if taken. . . set up a disastrous chain reaction. . . . Whoever pays the piper is apt to call the tune, and if the A.A. Foundation obtained money from outside sources, its trustees might be tempted to run things without reference to the wishes of

A.A. as a whole. . . .” Bill continued, “Then our trustees wrote a bright page in A.A. history. They declared for the principle that A.A. must always stay poor.... Difficult as it was, they declined the ten thousand dollars, and adopted a formal, airtight resolution that all such future gifts would be similarly declined. At that moment, we believe, the principle of corporate poverty was firmly and finally embedded in A.A. tradition. . . . To people familiar with endless drives for charitable funds, A.A. presented a strange and refreshing spectacle. Approving editorials here and abroad generated a wave of confidence in the integrity of Alcoholics Anonymous.” (*ibid.*, pp. 164-65)

The fundamental principle that A.A. money belongs to the Fellowship as a whole guides the financial operations of the board of trustees and its two operating entities, A.A. World Services, Inc. (which oversees the General Service Office) and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. (A.A.’s monthly meeting-in-print). These two corporations annually turn over any year-end profits to the General Service Board Reserve Fund (the “prudent reserve” for U.S./Canada A.A.), keeping only enough for current operating expenses.

British A.A. Goes to Parliament

A.A. service offices all over the world have made the decision to turn down outside gifts, and at times it has been necessary, in the words of the Big Book, to “go to any length” to uphold the principle of corporate poverty. In 1986, an action of Great Britain’s General Service Board provided a dramatic example of how far A.A. is willing to go. Faced with national laws that prohibited organizations from turning down certain kinds of gifts and legacies, the board went to Parliament for relief. On July 25, 1986, Parliament passed an act empowering A.A. in Great Britain “to disclaim all or parts of property donated to it in certain circumstances.... May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted, by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons. . . . The Company [A.A.] may it if it thinks fit disclaim all or part of the property comprised in any relevant disposition.”

Into the New Millennium

As Alcoholics Anonymous prepares to meet the challenges and changes of the year 2000 and beyond, the importance of the Seventh Tradition in strengthening the Fellowship to withstand temptations from without cannot be overstated. As early as June 1946, a Grapevine article by Bill W. sounded a warning that holds true today: “We must never let any immediate advantage, however attractive, blind us to the possibility that we may be creating a dangerous precedent for the future. Strife over money and property has too often wrecked better people than us temperamental alcoholics!” (*The Language of the Heart*, p. 31)

Today, with widespread public awareness of A.A.’s recovery program and the proliferation of alcoholism and substance abuse agencies, Alcoholics Anonymous faces all the problems and temptations of its own prosperity and success. Grounded firmly in Tradition Seven, the Fellowship can hold firmly to its essential principles and continue to do what it does best — carry the message of recovery through the experience, strength, and hope of individual A.A. members — while allowing others the freedom to use *their* unique strengths for the benefit of the suffering alcoholic.

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