

DELEGATE's Corner

Warm greetings and happy New Year Area 09!

Ready or not, Panel 66 is here. I am extraordinarily grateful, excited, scared, and ready to be your Delegate for the next two years. Many of you may be wondering what a Panel is, or what a Delegate is. Welcome to you. Others are excited and scared, like me, to begin their term in whatever Board, Committee, District, or Group position you have been chosen to fulfil. Congratulations to you. And, a few of you, the service veterans; quietly looking over our shoulders ensuring that we stay the righteous path - We need you.

So, here it is. I have been elected to represent Area 09 at the annual General Service Conference in New York. It is I, along with approximately 132 other trusted servants from across the United States and Canada who have been tasked with the responsibility to arrive at informed and thoroughly discussed advisory decisions for the greater good of Alcoholics Anonymous. May our Higher Power guide us. We have some amazing folks serving us, at every level, and I know through humility, grace, and hard work we are going to be okay.

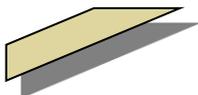
Through our 36 principles; the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts, I will be seeking experience, thoughts, and opinions from all of you and your Groups as I will carry our group conscious to the Conference. Our preliminary Agenda items have been released. Hopefully, you have received a copy, either from our Assembly in January, or through email. Our final Agenda items will be available in February. I will be going to New York in April. Then, with great joy, and over the course of a few months I will report back to all of you what happened there.

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**AREA 09
UPCOMING EVENTS**

- January 10** – Sunday
ASSEMBLY
Area Chair Elections
District 6
- February 14**—Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 22
- March 13**— -Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 21
- April 10** — Sunday
Pre-Conference
District 12
- May 15** —Sunday
ASSEMBLY
District 5
- June 12**—Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 8
- July 10**—Sunday
FORO
District 10 & 24
- August 14**—Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 15
- September 11**—Sunday
ASSEMBLY
District 20
- October 9**— Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 9
- November 13**—Saturday
SERVATHON
District 11
- December 11**—Sunday
Area Service Committee
District 18





Similar to our Area and our 24 individual Districts, the Conference utilizes a committee system. So far, this has proven to be the best solution for discussing the large volume of topics to be decided upon (or not decided upon). My Committee assignment has been selected at random. I will be serving on the Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities Committee along with seven other Delegates. I am very grateful for this opportunity having been through three treatment programs myself.

On a personal note, I would just like to say that I am human. I have strengths and weaknesses. I am an alcoholic. I suffer character defects. I have good days and, well, some not so good days. But, I will have my humblest yet a strong foot forward to do the best job that I can everyday on a day-to-day basis. I am indebted to you and to Alcoholics Anonymous for saving my life and giving me a life worth living. The responsibility for this commitment goes beyond me as an individual. I realize that I can be book smart and understand the alcoholic perspective. I possess some wisdom and experience. But I do not know how to do this. I know through love and service and counsel, the strength to serve this Area and to serve it well will always be there.

Yours in love and service,
Joe C., Delegate
Panel 66 Area 09

PRAASA 2016

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Mention PRAASA 2016 for Room Rate

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March 4—6, 2016

A.A. HISTORY JANUARY

January 1

1943 - Columbus Dispatch reports first Anniversary of Columbus, Ohio Central Group.

January 2

1889 - Sister Ignatia is born in Ballyhane, Ireland.

January 3

1939 - First sale of Works Publishing Co. stock is recorded.

January 4

1940 - First AA group formed in Detroit, Michigan.

January 5

1939 - Dr. Bob tells Ruth Hock in a letter that AA has "to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere".

2001 - Chuck C. from Houston died sober in Texas with 38 years.

January 6

2000 - Stephen Poe dies -- compiler of the *Concordance to Alcoholics Anonymous*.

January 8

1938 - New York AA splits from the Oxford Group.

January 10

1940 - First AA meeting not held in a home meets at King School in Akron, Ohio.

January 13

1988 - Dr. Jack Norris dies. Was an AA Chairman/Trustee for 27 years.

2003 - Dr. Earle M, author of "Physician Heal Thyself" dies with 49 years of sobriety.

January 15

1937 - Fitz M brings AA meetings to Washington DC.

1945 - First AA meeting held in Springfield, Missouri.

January 19

1943 - First discussion for starting AA group in Toronto.

1944 - Wilson returns from first major AA tour which started in 1943.

1999 - Frank M. dies peacefully in his sleep. AA Archivist since 1983.

January 21

1954 - Hank P dies in Pennington, NJ. Helped Bill start NY office.



**“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol
– that our lives had become unmanageable.”**

An often misquoted Step

We sit around in meetings emphasizing the importance of a complete and perfect First Step – and its Step One – that is one of the most misquoted Steps of the 12 Steps. The word “and” is NOT in Step One. I hear it over and over and over again “We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol AND our lives had become unmanageable.” ... this is NOT Step 1.

Contrary to what is popularly quoted – and, I believe its fuel that feeds the resistance and confusion about Step One – Step 1 is NOT a “two part” Step. Step One is an admission of alcoholism. (Pg. 30 – A.A.) It’s an acknowledgement that we have become convinced to our innermost selves that we were alcoholic. I made the error, also – thinking that “Step One is a two part Step.” And, it isn’t.

When I read the descriptions of “what an alcoholic is” in the Big Book – I have yet to find any reference that “and an unmanageable life” has anything to do – with whether or not a person is alcoholic or non-alcoholic. It just isn’t there. As a matter of fact -- the Dr.’s Opinion, clarifies this where it is written:

“Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people.” (Pg. xxviii Dr.’s Opinion - A.A. 3rd Edition)

For me – when I was new in A.A., part of the reason I was confused and could not become convinced that I was alcoholic – was because I was not convinced that “my life was unmanageable” – like I was hearing about it in A.A. meetings. Therefore, I concluded that if my life is not unmanageable – then, I must NOT be an alcoholic.

So... what did I do? I continued drinking and letting my life get progressively more screwed up, and allowing my alcoholism to progress without treating it – until I could say “my life is unmanageable.”

Had I known the proper description of an alcoholic – and realized that the “and my life had become unmanageable” was not part of the description of an alcoholic – I might have had a better chance of grasping the concept of alcoholism. I might not have had to reach a lower bottom in life. Perhaps, my bottom could have been raised.

Why is this important?

If we, in AA are not trying to ‘help RAISE the bottom’ for new members -- all we will have done was to keep the doors open for those who reach the utterly bottomless depth of pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization -- that many of us experienced. Had I known “what” an alcoholic was -- I could have easily observed that I had become alcoholic in my early teens.

Here are a few reasons why I believe it's important:

What about all the teen alcoholics out in the world today? Do we want to at least attempt to reach them early? Or, assist them to continue to the gates of insanity and death -- before they can become “convinced” that they are already alcoholic?

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A.A. HISTORY JANUARY ... continued

January 24

1918 – Bill W. marries Lois Burnham in the Swedenborgen Church--Brooklyn Heights.

1945 - First black group St. Louis

1971 - Bill W. dies in Miami Beach.

January 25

1915 - Dr. Bob marries Anne Ripley.

January 26

1971 - New York Times publishes Bill W.'s obituary on its front page --January 30

1961 – Dr. Carl Jung answers Bill's letter with "Spiritus Contra Spiritum".

January without specific dates:

1929 - Bill W. wrote third promise in Bible to quit drinking.

1939 - 400 copies of manuscript of Big Book circulated for comment, evaluation and sale.

1940 - Akron group moves to new home at King School.

1944 - Dr. Harry Tiebout's first paper on the subject of "Alcoholics Anonymous".

1944 - Onset of Bill's 11 years of depression.

1946 - Readers Digest does a story on AA.

1948 - First A.A. meeting in Japan.

1951 - AA Grapevine publishes memorial issue for Dr. Bob.

1958 - Bill writes article for Grapevine on "Emotional Sobriety".



Under the lash of alcoholism, we are driven to A.A. and there we discover the fatal nature of our situation. Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us.

-- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 24

And, what else?

- It's wrong. And, it's confusing.
- Using the word "and" is adding a "condition" to alcoholism that just isn't there.
- If we are ever to succeed in helping the still suffering alcoholics to "raise their bottom" the easiest way to do that — would be to admit to our error and correct it.
- We can better understand the meaning of Step One — by looking at it as it was written.

From *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition — Dash: a punctuation mark (—) used to indicate a sudden break in thought, to set off parenthetical material, or to take the place of such expressions as that is and namely: "He's running for reelection — if he lives until then"; "Very few people in this class — three, to be exact — have completed their projects"; "She joined the chorus for only one reason — she loves to sing."

So, here it is. Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable." This, then means that "my life had become unmanageable" — regardless if I was drinking or sober — because of myself, I cannot manage to leave alcohol alone.

-Anonymous



"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward." _____

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility—that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are --"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition One can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally.

NOTE: Excerpt from Editorial by Bill W.
A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947

"Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole."



The structure for AA is all designed to provide that the direction taken by AA is that of the group conscience of the whole fellowship, not the dictates of a few.

Individual AA members come together to form Groups. Groups are arranged in Districts, and Districts are arranged in Areas. There are generally several Areas in a State. Several states are arranged in each Region. AA in the United States and Canada is under the General Service Board. The United States and Canada send two delegates to the World Service Board that has world-wide responsibility.

Groups elect GSR's (General Service Representatives) which attend District meetings. The GSR's in a District elect a DCM (District Committee Member) to lead the District meetings and to represent the District at meetings of the Area Committees. Meetings of GSRs in an Area are called Assemblies. Area Assemblies send delegates to the AA-wide General Service Conferences that are held every two years. The General Service Conference determines matters of AA policy, and the General Service Board operates the day-to-day business of AA.



"I think he may be hitting bottom."