A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to A.A.’s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.

I AM RESPONSIBLE...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. Always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

From Our Area Chair:

“Informed”

In Alcoholics Anonymous we talk a lot about being informed. Bill W. and Dr. Bob went to great lengths to make sure that every member of the fellowship would have the opportunity to know and understand everything having to do with carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic. We were also left with guidelines to properly maintain our existence, and in order for us to protect our legacy and ensure our future we must understand how important it is to be informed.

How many times have you or others sat there wide eyed and confused when others were talking about an issue that was not understood by all, and the conversation continued anyway? The discussion culminated in a sort of a vote and a decision that you really didn’t feel you were a part of.

Being informed is the responsibility of those that are “in the know” and those that want to know. Service work in Alcoholics Anonymous is a never-ending process of understanding issues so that as a group of informed servants we can make the best decisions in support of the fellowship and the drunk who still suffers.

If you are not informed, it is probably because you’ve either chosen not to be or your “condition” has not allowed you to inquire beyond holding on to your ass one day at a time so that you can buy some time since your last drink.
Most sober alcoholics are not deeply involved in service work beyond their home group. This is the path they choose, and they are able to maintain sobriety and live out their days happy and successful. There are however us real sick ones that choose to get involved beyond our home group to ensure that the message gets carried on behalf of all members of Alcoholics Anonymous including the ones who are still suffering and have yet to arrive. I have heard many of those deeply involved in service say that they must get in as deep as they can to ensure their sobriety. Others are serving in order to repay what was freely given to them to make sure that the opportunity for sobriety is there for future generations.

Whatever your level of involvement, you have the right to be as informed as you wish to be. By choosing to be informed and then taking the actions to listen, read, and learn, I have enhanced my sobriety. I’m an imperfect work in progress and believe my sobriety to be a gift freely given by sober drunks that came before me. I want to “know” so that I can understand better so that I can serve the members of Area 76 to the best of my ability.

So please know that there are DCM’s and GSR’s in your home groups or districts that are doing their best to prepare for the opportunity to find out what you think and how you feel about the issues that are part of this wonderful thing of ours. After you have been informed and then get to express your thoughts and opinions, your trusted servant will vote the results of your informed group conscience at the assembly. Then our delegate will represent the informed group conscience of our assembly at the General Service Conference. All of Alcoholics Anonymous is in service to all of the individual home groups, and in order to do this well we must make sure all are informed and their wishes known. It’s an honor and pleasure to serve all of the fellowship in Area 76.

Mel W., Area 76 Chairman
Some Thoughts on the Responsibility Statement

“I am responsible:” That means I have a duty, an obligation to do something, having control over the care for someone as part of my role, a responsibility. This should not be taken lightly. This should be viewed as something important that I need to accomplish to the best of my ability. It is something I owe to those around me.

“When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help:” That means I don't get to pick and choose. So it doesn't matter if it’s the handsome or beautiful professional walking in the door with a good job, money in the bank, a nice car and clothes and clean and smelling good. Or the still half-drunk, unemployed, broke, foul smelling, dirty, possibly criminal character shuffling in the door. If they want to drink, that's their business, but if they are seeking help, that's MY business, as well as my responsibility!

Do I talk to them differently? Do I offer my phone number, rides to meetings, etc. regardless? Or do I stand aside and hope someone else steps up? Anywhere means anywhere. At work, at institution meetings, at my regular meetings or sitting in the park with my dog. Am I always willing to talk about this amazing program if God makes the opportunity possible, or am I too afraid to share, for fear of whatever, what has been so selflessly shared with me?

“I want the hand of AA always to be there:” So once again, I need to remember that it's not MY program. It's the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of THESE steps, we tried to carry THIS message, and to practice THESE principles in
all our affairs." That's about as simple as it gets. So I need to be ready, willing, and able to share these 12 steps and 12 traditions and 12 concepts at every opportunity that God presents to me. Always remembering that it's in His time and His way, not mine. I owe it to AA and I owe it God to be a servant and an active participant in this fellowship, and I have an obligation to pay it forward every chance I get!

Brenda L. Jacob, Area 76 Treasurer

Unity, Responsibility

I have pondered what the Declaration of Unity and the Responsibility statement mean to me, from when I first walked into the rooms, to now being DCM of my district. The short version of what I understand of them is that it is my responsibility to put AA and others before myself, because that's how I was given a chance to live instead of just barely survive.

I often find myself checking my motives as to why I am involved in service. I know why I got into it in the first place: because my sponsor told me to. As I reached the 12th step, he had me going to the jails and the treatment centers with him to "carry the message". He told me I had to do these things if I wanted to stay sober. I believe that with all my heart.

As time has passed, I have been given the opportunity to stand up when AA calls, and answer. And as time has passed I have gained experience with service commitments and knowledge of service in AA. At my own expense, I have been prone to gaining a self-righteous and proud attitude about it. "All I do for AA" and other real attractive thoughts and statements. Letting my ego edge in and think that I actually deserve to be
thanked or even praised for my service. And I have also found myself grudgingly doing service. How counterproductive! If I cannot give with a joy, I have no business giving at all. It is easy for me to lose sight of why I do it.

The reality of it is, I am blessed that AA was here when I walked in and that it is still here for me now. It is my responsibility to give my time and efforts to AA. There are alcoholics who need this program just as badly as I do. In and out of the rooms. It is also my responsibility to share my experience, strength and hope with others, even if my experience is a long list of what not to do.

I have those bright spots in my life today that are mentioned in the beginning of chapter 7 of our text. Men who are willing to sit down once a week with me and follow the same suggestions my sponsor gives me. But a new bright spot has emerged, and that is watching these men and other members in my district and area step up to the plate for Alcoholics Anonymous and be of service. And I get to answer questions, and find the answers with someone who does know if I don't know! And those answers are always backed by the hard earned experience of those who came before us. That strongly keeps us unified. The answers are the same.

As long as I am a member of AA, there is no room for my personality. The only way I know how to do that is by following the dictates of a Higher Power as laid out in the steps, traditions, and concepts. I am gratefully indebted to the people who took the time to follow through with this program and carry the message to me. This is the answer I have been given to my death sentence. When I look at it that way, how can I not be filled with a sort of joyful gratitude? Thanks.

In love and Service,

Tanner B., Area 76 District 6 DCM
Room 17

My name is Thomas and I am an alcoholic. I’m from Sheridan, Wyoming. Due to my drinking I am currently in a prison called Southern Desert Correctional Center in Indian Springs, Nevada, about one and a half hours from Las Vegas, Nevada. I would like to share a story with you on my experience in helping get started an AA meeting behind these prison walls. This meeting is now called Room 17.

Let me just start out with saying that this prison doesn’t have much for programs. There is only one meeting a month for the AA group. The way the AA meeting works is a group comes up from Vegas to share the message with us once a month. They bring Big Books and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions books for us to have.

I was very grateful for the meeting and the books, but I was in bad shape at that time of my life and I needed help, and the only help that could help me was God and AA. I knew I needed more than one meeting a month and I knew I needed some help in my life, so I reached out to someone in Sheridan, Wyoming who I knew was going to AA meetings every day and was working the steps and helping others like myself. I started calling this person, who is now my sponsor, once or twice a week.

My phone calls turned into Twelve-Step work and Big Book readings, and these were thirty-minute phone calls. My sponsor told me that I needed to start sharing the message with others. At that time I didn’t know or trust many of the other inmates, but there was two inmates I did know, and I
knew they were alcoholics. One was my roommate K.P., and the other was “Lit-John.”

The very first AA meeting of Room 17 was me sharing the step work and Big Book reading my sponsor and I did on the phone that day with Lit-John and K.P. The very next day, Lit-John came over to my room, which is Room 17, to ask if I was going to do some more Big Book reading and Twelve Step work. Of course I said yes, and asked him to join me.

At this time in my life I was doing my Fourth Step. Lit-John wanted to also do the Twelve Steps, so I did the first three Steps with him the same way my sponsor did them with me over the phone. Lit-John was also working on his Fourth Step along with me. This was good for me as much as for him, because now I had someone I could really talk to at any time, and he did as well. So as time went by, Lit-John and I started doing Big Book readings and some Step work every day in Room 17. And yes, K.P. was also there, but he didn’t share or get into the reading as much. But he was “listening.”

One week I took it upon myself to buy some cookies and coffee for our meeting, and went out to spread the word that Room 17 was having an AA meeting with cookies and coffee. We had a big turnout. The cookies and coffee helped bring six more alcoholics to the AA meetings in Room 17. I was overjoyed with the big turnouts we were getting every new week in the AA meeting of Room 17. I couldn’t wait to share the big news with my sponsor. Room 17 became the group’s name, and thanks to my sponsor and their sponsor, I was given the inspiration, support, love, and all the help I needed to start this new AA group, Room 17.

**Room 17’s First Birthday Meeting**
Let me just start out with saying that the birthday meeting was a big hit, and we got even more newcomers to Room 17 meeting that day. Little John was turning one year sober, so K.P. and I planned a birthday meeting for Lit-John, and boy yes, he was surprised.

We made burritos for the party, because cake was going to be too tricky to make. We also made him a one year coin, because you can’t have real coins in this prison. I spread the word about the “AA One Year Sober Birthday Meeting” in Room 17 that day, and to my surprise that room became plumb full of men/newcomers just to listen to Little John’s story. And boy, did Little John love to tell his story :)

When he was done I talked a little about my story and then about the meetings that all are welcome to, that we have in Room 17 every night. Then we shared burritos. Room 17 became a group of ten men that night. The spirit/message of AA was spreading all through the unit I lived in, and soon the whole prison yard would hear of the AA meeting in Room 17 in Unit 7.

**Growing the Room**

As time went by, I saw that soon either Room 17 was going to have to grow bigger in size, or we were going to have to have a bigger room for our meetings. Room 17 is an eight foot by ten foot prison cell. It’s the room I live in. And ten men have a hard time fitting in the room.

So I started the process of writing to the Associate Warden about being able to use the activity room in Unit 7 to have an AA meeting. The activity room can fit up to forty people in it. We needed that room! My request was denied from the Associate Warden, but I didn’t stop there. I knew I had to follow the proper chain of command to get to the one person that I knew would say yes, and that person was the new director of prisons.
To make a very long story short, we got the yes we needed from the director, but first I had to get twenty signatures stating that they will go to this AA meeting. I got forty! Now we have an AA meeting in Unit 7’s activity room three days a week, and that group is called Unit 7. We still have Room 17 group, and a meeting in Room 17 three days a week. I’m getting all the AA I need now and loving it.

Room 17 and Unit 7 believe in the Twelve Steps of Recovery from Alcoholics Anonymous. We also practice the Twelve Traditions. My sponsor and I are now talking about the Concepts, and I share all I get with Unit 7 and Room 17. Whenever we decide on anything for our group, we use the group consensus. I talked with my group about writing this, and they’re all for me sharing this story with you.

Thank you for letting me share a part of my life with you.

Your friend in sobriety, Thomas

“Mano Vardas”

Mano vardas Laurie, as esu alkoholikas. My name is Laurie, I am an alcoholic (in Lithuanian). I had the pleasure of visiting the country of Lithuania this summer with some family members. My mother was born there and I am half Lithuanian. It was a great adventure finding the farm where my grandmother was born, the family cemetery, and the house she bought when she moved back there at the age of 87 years old!

It was also an adventure finding an AA meeting in Lithuania. This journey started in the United States with my older sister who lived in Lithuania for
2 years. She and my sponsor helped me research AA meetings online. But actually finding a meeting and a way to get there once in Lithuania was a whole other story. The village we were staying at was several miles from the nearest town, Pasvalys, and that town only had a meeting on Wednesday night. The farm was also a working farm, and it didn’t seem right asking the family to stop their daily work and drive me to town. I couldn’t seem to figure out when and where the nearest bus would be, especially since I do not speak or read the language.

However, my sister back in the States was diligent about sending me whatever information she could find on the nearest meeting and when it was happening. I almost made it to one on a Saturday in Panevezys (50 miles away), but suddenly everyone at the village who was helping me research was needed to help catch thirty chickens for transport to another family member’s farm. Eventually, prayer and open and honest communication paid off. We set out to Vilnius, the capitol, about 150 miles away. I had the address of the meeting, the date and meeting time, and two Lithuanian family members as guides and translators (my nephew’s wife and her father). With some persistence and asking various passers-by for directions, we found the place!

The meeting was Monday at noon, in an alley entrance, downstairs in an old building. There was not the circle and triangle on the door, but a drawing of an owl and a meeting schedule printed in Lithuanian. Inside the meeting room the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions were hanging on the wall, written in Lithuanian. There were also some nicely framed scenic pictures of Lithuania hung carefully on the brick wall. There were some cozily arranged rows of chairs and a little table and chair up front for the chairperson. The table was covered with a linen tablecloth. The room was actually quite lovely.

There were five men in attendance, and my sister and I. The chairperson lit a candle precisely at noon and rang a little bell. Most everything was
spoken and read in Lithuanian. My sister was asked to read the 12 Steps, but “in English”. I put 2 euro in the can on the desk up front, signed the book that was passed around, and bought a few pamphlets. After the meeting was over they offered us coffee. I was relieved to have gotten to an AA meeting. Although I didn’t know what was said, I knew I was in the right place.

We returned to the scene of the crime, in Vilnius, one week later on a Monday. This time we knew how to get to the meeting place and decided to attend the 7:00 p.m. meeting instead of the noon meeting. In attendance at this particular meeting were fourteen people, five of whom were women. In fact, a woman was chairing the meeting.

She lit the candle precisely at 7:00 p.m. and rang the little bell. I’m not sure, but I think there may have been a newcomer, because at the beginning they said some things and then everyone clapped and they gave him some literature. As I listened to the people sharing in Lithuanian, it suddenly occurred to me that it didn’t matter what they were saying, because I was part of something much larger right then in that instance and everything was the same and I was part of a spiritual entity.

After the meeting, we discovered a few people spoke a little English, and we were able to purchase some literature written in Lithuanian. Among the available literature written in Lithuanian were the Big Book, the 12x12, and Daily Reflections. They were not prepared to make change, so I told them to keep it for the group. They seemed a little surprised at my awareness of a group, but seemed appreciative. Also, one of them was helping us to find a way to contact them next time we were there so they could arrange an English speaking meeting. This opened up a whole conversation about the Traditions!

I definitely felt a part of at this meeting and shared the language of the heart. I still remember their faces, enthusiasm and warmness. In fact, I
kind of like to think of this place as my Lithuanian home group. Next time I hope to visit their GSO office which is located in Vilnius. This experience has given world services a new meaning to me. I will hold this AA group in my heart until I return, and I am very grateful that I got to attend AA meetings while traveling.

Laurie J., Area 76 District 2 Alternate DCM

From Our Past Delegates:

I’d like to share a quote from page 276 of Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age for your consideration:

“Three conditions are necessary for true fellowship: The possession of a common ideal involving a complete release from selfishness and division.
The discharge of a common task big enough to capture the imagination and give expression to loyalty. And the comradeship, the “togetherness,” thus involved as we find out the joy and power of belonging to an organic society and engaging in a whole-time service. We can find it at its fullest extent where the ideal is highest and most exacting, where the task extends and integrates every ounce of our strength and every element of our being, where the comradeship is so solid and deep that we respond one to another without conscious effort, realize the unspoken need, and react to it spontaneously and at once.

Under such conditions, all the vitality that we usually waste upon our jealousies and our vanities – upon keeping up appearances and putting other people in their proper place – becomes available for creative use.”

My sponsor first shared this quote with me as an assignment: that we would go through this description of a fellowship and see if we could find any connections between it and the Traditions. Many hours later, we had listed out all of the Traditions – and some Steps and Concepts – that tied into the quote and, in fact, made a true fellowship amongst alcoholics like us even possible.

In a discussion we were having today, he remarked that it would be nice if this quote could be read at the opening of General Service Conferences. Moreover, we agreed it might be beneficial to go into our groups, districts and areas carrying this beautiful understanding of a fellowship with us.

For me, the quote highlights the importance of continuing to take the Steps and practice the Traditions – a solid path to Unity wherein we can best carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Twelfth Step work easily takes on the above description, but it has been a long trudge for me to learn how to bring that into my group and all my service activities!

Brooke C., Area 76 Past Delegate

To submit an article, story, joke, or cartoon to the Tributary, email to anna_zeuss@yahoo.com, or send to Suzanna T., PO Box 111, Parkman, WY 82838. Deadline for next issue is October 9, 2016.
Uncle Lyle’s Corner:

Asking Prayer

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might humbly learn to obey.

I asked for health, that I might do greater things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.

I asked for power, that I might have the praise of man.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing I asked for, but everything I hoped for. Almost in spite of myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I among all men am most richly blessed!

In Memory of Lyle B., Beatrice, Nebraska, My Friend and Sponsor

Lou R., Yoder
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

“Embracing a New Freedom” - 2016 Fall Convention, Casper, Oct 21-23

West Central Regional AA Service Conference (WCRAASC)
Cheyenne, WY March 3-5, 2017

2017 Area 76 Winter Business Assembly, Green River, 2017

“We Saw, We Felt, We Believed” - 2017 Area 76 Spring Convention, Sheridan June 2-4 Holiday Inn ~ Contacts: Kathy L (406) 580-5809, Matt J (307) 763-6503, Brenda J (307) 689-0666 ~ Info and flyers at aa-wyoming.org

2017 Area 76 Summer Assembly, Evanston
2017 Area 76 Fall Convention, Gillette