

The TRIBUTARY

Area 76 Newsletter

Spring 2016



Throughout the entire world today we are witnessing the breakdown of “group conscience.” It has always been the hope of democratic nations that their citizens would always be enlightened enough, moral enough, and responsible enough to manage their own affairs through chosen representatives. But in many self-governing countries we are now seeing the inroads of ignorance, apathy, and power-seeking upon democratic systems. Their spiritual resources of right purpose and collective intelligence are waning. Consequently many a land has become so helpless that the only answer is dictatorship.

Happily for us, there seems little prospect of such a calamity in A.A.

*From “Twelve Concepts for World Service,
Concept 1,” by Bill W., 1962*

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From Our Area Chair:

Appointed vs. Elected

I want to take an opportunity as Area 76 Chairman to discuss the process of appointing trusted servants at the area level. Through the trust and confidence that all of you have placed in me, please know that I take this process seriously: I make sure - and will continue to make sure - that the conscience of all of you is considered in each appointment that I make.

One of the criteria that I use is the recommendations from each of you; it's important that your thoughts and wishes are part of the process in filling appointed positions. It's also critical that those of you who want to serve as a specific Committee Chairperson make sure that you speak up. The interest in a given position is directly proportional to the success of that appointed servant. In other words, the more the better, even though it makes the decision more difficult.

There is also a vetting process that I go through so that I can be sure that each potential appointee is the best possible candidate. This is accomplished through conversations with others and observation of prior service work and commitment to the area.

The final part of the process before selecting any one person is a consultation with my higher power in the form of prayer and reflection, as well as giving my sponsor an opportunity to do his job: to question my motives, humility, and intent.

Each of the present committee chairpersons has accepted the responsibility to serve all of you such that you are part of Alcoholics Anonymous and that as a part of an informed group conscience you are entitled to have your voice heard, so you are part of the fellowship as a whole. You get to know if you wish to know. At the last assembly I was impressed with how well each of these chairpersons were prepared, and the commitment they all showed in facilitating their individual committees.

I'll be the first to say that the process may not be perfect, and mistakes are possible! But in my present position I am fulfilling my responsibility as it was intended in the guidelines of Area 76. I can understand both sides of this issue, and at the last assembly a floor action was put forth that put the issue of "appointed versus elected" up for discussion. I didn't vote on this or any other issue at the assembly, because I believe that it is my job to make sure all opinions are considered and each voice is heard. I do however encourage every member of our area to come to the assembly with their ideas for making it better and easier to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

I'm humbled by the faith and support that you have afforded me so that I can be of service to all of you. It's important to me that I do this well.

Thank you all for your service to each other and all of Area 76,

Mel W.

Area 76 Chairman



Concept I - “The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world service should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.”

I question if our groups or members know about Concepts? “The average member, preoccupied with his group life and his own ‘twelfth stepping,’ knew almost nothing of A.A.’s world services.” The A.A. Service Manual, Page 7.

I often hear - and my experience is - that I cannot keep what has been freely given to me, unless I share it with others. I have a sense of responsibility to share my experience, strength, and hope, not only with my recovery with the Twelve Steps, but with my experience applying the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts in my daily life.

Sponsorship has been the key to my knowing sobriety is more than attending meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. At twenty-one years sober, I asked a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, who was very active in General Service, to sponsor me in the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. I was informed we’d start by having Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) read to me and take the Twelve Steps as outlined in the book. With some contempt, I stated, “I’ve taken the steps multiple times.” Well, “I’d like to make sure you have the foundation of Alcoholics Anonymous first.” Trust me, I had never been read the Big Book and I did not have the foundation.

As a result of being given this gift, I now get to meet with other alcoholics one on one and journey through the Twelve Steps as outlined in the Big Book. Each time I read with another member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I learn more about myself, my alcoholism, God, and being of maximum service to God and my fellows. It didn’t stop there. We have proceeded with the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age and The A.A. Service Manual Combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service. I

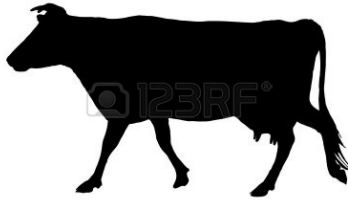
have attempted to pass along to others what is freely being given to me. It's not easy, because it is so new to me to study and apply the traditions and concepts to my life. I know, like the steps, each time I have the opportunity to share one on one, I will continue to grow along spiritual lines.

I take seriously my responsibility to not only carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous (Recovery through the Twelve Steps), but to protect the message of Alcoholics Anonymous (Unity through the Twelve Traditions) and to perpetuate the message of Alcoholics Anonymous (Service through the Twelve Concepts). I do this by attending meetings, sharing my experience, strength, and hope with our Three Legacies, being active in service work, and through sponsorship. I am very grateful that someone took precious time to sit with me one on one and share there is so much more to being sober than attending meetings. It's a blessing in my life to have a Three Legacy Sponsor. Thank you God for my many blessings!

At present less than 50% of our groups support world services. If we'd like this fellowship and the integrity of the fellowship to be here for our children and grandchildren, it may be worth learning what world services is. As individuals learn and experience more with the Twelve Concepts, we in turn can share with our groups and when our groups learn and experience more, they in turn can experience the full meaning of Concept I: The final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

Mary M.





Concept One

As long as I'm going to suggest a topic for us all to write about, I may as well practice these principles and write about it myself. Practice what I preach, in other words. Concept One embodies this principle, as it brings everything in AA worldwide back to personal responsibility: "Final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA World Services," in fact. It says these "reside" - or *live in* - the "collective conscience" of our whole Fellowship.

It's easy to get all vague at this point. After all, what does the "collective conscience of our whole Fellowship" have to do with little old me? Doesn't AA teach me that I am unimportant in the big scheme of things? Don't I trust our "trusted servants" enough to just let them do whatever they do? Well, I believe that is our collective cop-out.

A group conscience is nothing less than "a loving God," according to our Traditions. And it is nothing more than the voice of each member of the group, in discussion: a discussion in which an over-arching higher power can eventually be heard, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, when our principles - the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions - are kept in mind.

So in my little bunch of friends, when we get together to talk about something in AA, there is a group conscience that emerges. Yep, we all agree. When one or more of us decides to show up at our home group business meeting, we bring that idea and discuss it with everyone else who takes responsibility for our group, and set them straight! Or perhaps modify that idea. Our group's conscience emerges.

If our group is one that takes some responsibility for AA in our district, we elect a representative to carry our ideas to the district meetings. And the same process of the emergence of a group conscience unfolds. And unfolds some more, all the way to the General Service Conference and the General Service Board of Trustees.

Where is my voice, in the final result? Well, that is the beauty of this program. It is a spiritual program. So it really cannot be explained, only experienced and passed on like a contagion. Just applying the principles as outlined in the Big Book brings the results we experience, against all odds, in sobriety. And the principles tell me that “every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong *with us.*” Every time!

And so, every time, it comes back to me: what I am doing and thinking at a personal and group level. Is it easy? Just try getting informed about the issues brought before the General Service Conference! Try discussing these at your home group business meeting (if there is one). Try holding a home group business meeting, if there isn't one. Try making sure you get to every business meeting. Try applying these principles in the discussion. Try not taking it personally when everyone votes against your great idea! And then try accepting sobriety, and the process, as being as good as it gets. What an order.

Remember that we deal with alcohol: cunning, baffling, powerful. Remember also that there is a solution which is also cunning, baffling, and even more powerful! Applying that solution leads inevitably to Concept One, from what I've seen.

Suzanna T.

Area 76 Tributary Chair



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2016 WINTER BUSINESS ASSEMBLY

Dr. Bob said, “It all boils down to love and service.” Business assemblies give me another opportunity to practice this. They give me a chance to see people I haven’t seen in a while, practice principles before personalities, practice the Traditions, and learn how to be of service to Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you, Area 76.

One of my highlights from our most recent business assembly, because of the discussion it provoked, was Brenda J’s floor action, that all area service positions be elected by third legacy procedure as the area officers are now. I thought it was really good discussion. It seems that by the time we got to the end of the assembly we were either “warmed up” and ready to discuss or we knew the subject matter and had something to say. A lot of good points were made for both sides of the discussion, which left me baffled as to why we would ever want to “decline to consider.” For me, the discussion aroused thoughts and questions regarding committees and committee work in general.

I am a member of the fellowship and serve as an alternate DCM. I am not a committee chair, and I am only on a committee when we get to the assembly and sit at the tables with the signs and discuss area and GSC agenda items. I have a voice - we all do - and this is very important. I have the responsibility to be as informed as I possibly can as to what is going on in the fellowship and then show up and be part of discussion.

This can help our assembly have an informed group conscience, or not, depending on whether I am practicing principles or just voicing my opinion. If I am looking at the facts, issues and principles and running things by the Traditions, not just what I like or don't like, then I can be an effective part of an AA discussion.

Are the committees working in between the assemblies, or just when we get to the assembly? If we work in between the assemblies I think we will have more information at the assembly so that we are better informed to have the discussion that needs to take place. That is in fact the process of AA (again makes me wonder why we would ever want to decline to consider). This is my responsibility as a member of AA: to be responsible and get informed. I need to ask questions if I do not understand something, ask what is going on in the fellowship, talk about this with my sponsor, at district, and with other alcoholics in general, and reference AA conference approved literature. I believe this is part of three legacy sobriety. This assembly was a real eye opener for me, showing me that I need to be more responsible, because when I put my dollar in the basket I just bought a share of Alcoholics Anonymous, I now own part of it, and for that I am responsible.

Another highlight was bringing a newcomer who "got in the car!" Thank you everyone for welcoming him and helping him feel a part of.

In love and service,

Laurie

Area 76 - District 2



A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to AA.'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.



Swimming Lessons: An AA Parable

You're standing on a bridge playing with matches. Great fun! Whee! Suddenly you realize you've set your britches on fire, and you're about to burn to death. Whereupon, you look at the water below and realize your only chance is to jump. You climb over the railing and jump into deep water, whereupon you remember that you never learned how to swim. You're about to drown!

"God, help me!" you scream. Suddenly you hear a deep voice from above: "Would you like a swimming lesson?" You look up, and there peering down at you is an old guy with a weather-beaten face, leaning over the edge of his rowboat. It's an old rowboat, with several old guys in it.

"Quick! Pull me in the boat! I don't know how to swim!" you yell, and go down for the first time. When you come back up, gasping for air, you find the boat's still next to you. The old guy leans over the edge. "We're giving swimming lessons. Would you like a swimming lesson?" he asks again.

"NO!" you splutter. "Pull me in the darn boat! I'm drowning!"

"Sorry," he says. "We're not in the rescuing business, we're just giving swimming lessons. Are you sure you don't want one?"

"Argh! No! You *!@*xxx!" you croak, and go down for the second time.

When you come back up, more dead than alive, the boat's still there. "Are you really, really sure you don't want a swimming lesson?" the old guy asks.

“Okay, okay,” you moan. The old guys give you a swimming lesson. “Kick! Kick!” they yell. “Paddle! Paddle!” In desperation, you do what they say, and pretty soon you’re swimming around just fine. Whereupon, they haul you in the boat. You look around and you see that every one of them has burned britches!

So now you’re just another old guy with burned britches, rowing around giving swimming lessons to people who’ve jumped off the bridge.

Anonymous



FROM OUR PAST DELEGATES:

Selfishness is the root of my problem. It was in my drinking days and is still now today. For the first 40 years of my life I thought it was imperative that I do what I wanted to do. I mean, that sounds reasonable. Do what I want, get whatever I wanted. After two times in treatment and 10 years in AA, my pain - not the pain I had caused so many others, but my pain - become great enough to make me become willing to do whatever I was asked to do for and in AA.

Around Sept. of 1975, I came to our fellowship with half of the REQUIREMENTS to stay sober: I had the part “IF YOU WANT WHAT WE HAVE.” However, it took another 10 years to get the other part, “AND ARE WILLING TO GO TO ANY LENGTH.” Sept 5th of 1985, while shaking for need of a drink, I stood in front of my refrigerator where there was the alcohol that would take away the pain I was feeling. And a thought came,

from what I now believe was my HP. "If you want to live, just say yes to any request from AA."

Up until that time I had been trying to stay sober on meetings and the fellowship. That would seem to work for a time until someone hurt my feelings, and then out I would go again. When I started to say yes when asked to take some action in AA, the drink problem was gone. I have since come to believe that I needed to have the complete way of life that is offered to those who are willing to go to any length. The fellowship is an important part, but unity, not always getting my way, and service are also. Trying to help others and our fellowship as a whole, are what was missing for my continued sobriety.

I started to say yes to the important things like making coffee and it was not long before I was asked to be "vice president" of our group - LOL- "Alt. GSR." I found that service work would let me go for periods of time without thinking about ME. So along with my EGO and my new understanding of our fellowship, I just keep saying yes to anything I am asked to do in AA.

I would like to say I was elected to serve as delegate for my area. However, it was a close vote, and the decision came from the hat. A couple of things I learned in that two years as delegate were that I did not know nearly as much as I thought I did, and that AA members who opposed my views loved AA just as much as I do. I was able go back to my group after my term as delegate and had the honor of making coffee again.

A lot of AA members do not do much service work outside of their own groups. It has always been that way, so it can't be all that wrong. However, I am most certainly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in many ways. The following is a quote that appeared in the Grapevine, submitted by Joe S. from Texas. "Service work in A.A. is like a football game; 20,000

spectators who might benefit from a little exercise are watching 22 players badly in need of rest.”

Paul J., Area 76, District 2



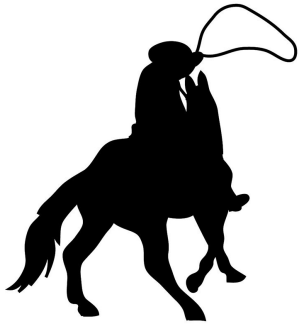
Hello, Area 76! My name is Brooke, and I am an alcoholic. Thanks, Suzanna, for inviting all of the past delegates to share a little about “hot topics” for the upcoming rotation.

It probably won't be a surprise to learn that I think all topics relate back to our understanding and the practice of our Twelve Traditions. Originally presented to us in 1946 as “Twelve Points To Assure Our Future,” they contain everything we need to prevent problems in and for Alcoholics Anonymous. It also turns out that if we aren't very good at preventing problems, we can use our Traditions to cure whatever problem was caused by not practicing the Traditions. I suspect all “hot topics” fall into one of these categories.

Instead of looking at any particular topic, I'm hoping that we gradually get better at looking at the principles first to figure out if it's a topic we should even be discussing. Then we can look for the spiritual guidance that's given to us by the Traditions as to how we might proceed. I hope I don't make that sound really easy, because my own experience is fraught with misunderstanding and lots of trial and error! My hope is that we will all be “willing to grow along spiritual lines” and better learn how to “practice these principles in all our affairs” by practicing the Traditions.

Brooke C.

Area 76, District 2

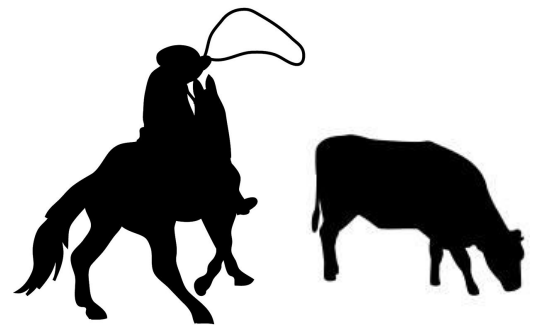


Greetings from District 10:

Laramie has 5 active groups with 24 weekly meetings scheduled. We have one unrecognized group that follows a Primary Purpose focus. The Downtown Group installed a Beginner's meeting that has been going on now for about 18 months and meets at 5:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Civic Center. We take weekly meetings into the Detention Center and we also are scheduled for times in Lusk and Rawlins for prison meetings.

We will be holding a Back to Basics Workshop on June 11, 2016, at the Cooper House on the University of Wyoming campus. It will be an all day workshop, and Jeff M. and Dan Y. from Cheyenne will be leading. Potluck and speaker to follow. All are welcome.

Blessings, Richard M., DCM District 10



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

Uncle Lyle's Corner: "Why We Were Chosen"

God in His wisdom selected this group of men and women to be the purveyors of His goodness. In selecting them through whom to bring about this phenomenon He went not to the proud, the mighty, the famous or the brilliant. He went instead to the humble, to the sick, to the unfortunate. He went right to the drunkard, the so-called weakling of the world. Well might He have said to us "Unto your weak and feeble hands I have entrusted a power beyond estimate. To you has been given that which has been denied the most learned of your fellows. Not to scientists or statesmen, not to wives or mothers, not even to my priests or ministers have I given this gift of healing other alcoholics which I entrust to you."

"It must be used unselfishly; it carries with it grave responsibility. No day can be too long, no demands upon your time can be too urgent, no case be too pitiful, no task too hard, no effort too great. It must be used with tolerance for I have restricted its application to no race, no creed, and no denomination. Personal criticism you must expect, lack of appreciation will be common, ridicule will be your lot, your motives will be misjudged. You must be prepared for adversity, for what men call adversity is the ladder you must use to ascend the rungs toward spiritual perfection, and remember, in the exercise of this power, I shall not exact from you beyond your capabilities"

"You are not selected because of exceptional talents, and be careful always, if success attend your efforts, not to ascribe to personal superiority that to which you can lay claim only by virtue of My gift. If I had wanted learned men to accomplish this mission, the power would have been entrusted to the physician and the scientist. If I had wanted eloquent men, there would have been many anxious for the assignment, for talk is the easiest used of all talents with which I have endowed mankind. If I had wanted scholarly men, the world is filled with better qualified men than you who would be available. You were selected because you have been the outcasts of the world and your long experience as drunkards has made, or should make you, humbly alert to the cries of distress that come from the lonely hearts of alcoholics everywhere."

"Keep ever in mind the admission you made on the day of your profession in Alcoholics Anonymous, namely that you are powerless and that it was only with your willingness to turn your life and will unto My keeping that relief came to you."

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

Lou R., Yoder

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



**Unity Potluck and Fun-shop : “...Release from care, boredom, and worry...joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good...”
(p151, Alcoholics Anonymous)**

May 22, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., First Christian Church, Sheridan

Back to Basics all day Workshop June 11, 2016, Cooper House, U. of Wyoming campus, Laramie. Potluck and speaker to follow.

Area 76 Summer Business Assembly August 26, 27, 28, 2016

Thermopolis, WY ~ Common Ground at Corner of 5th Street and Arapahoe

Contacts: Tom F. 307-921-9230 and Cindy M. 406-671-8923

Info and flyers at aa-wyoming.org

**West Central Regional AA Service Conference
Cheyenne, WY March 3-5, 2017**

2017 Area 76 Winter Assembly, Green River

2017 Area 76 Spring Convention, Sheridan June 2-4 Holiday Inn

2017 Area 76 Summer Assembly, Evanston

2017 Area 76 Fall Convention, Gillette

