



## **Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

### **If there's something deep inside that's smarter and kinder, then why not listen to it?**

What if there is no God?

This question has haunted me periodically throughout my sobriety. If my sobriety depends on belief in and access to a power greater than myself, what happens if there is no God?

Some say I can use a doorknob or a lamppost or anything for a God, but I don't think so. How can I turn my life and will over to a doorknob? How can a lamppost remove the character defects that the Big Book says will lead me back to drinking?

What about using the group as my Higher Power? Well, that's great, except that when I reached one year of sobriety, I found the power of the Fellowship alone insufficient. I felt depressed and indifferent to life and I mainly wanted to sleep. The group was great, mostly, as long as I was at a meeting, but it wasn't very portable, and I needed something to sustain me between meetings.

I was dissatisfied with the Big Book chapter on the subject. I felt that "We Agnostics" was a classic bait-and-switch. "Our own conception ..." morphed quickly into the traditional view of God, with all the attendant masculine pronouns and biblical implications. And yet I was sold on the idea that, on my own, I was in deep trouble.

Two phrases in the book rang true for me. The first was "something at work in a human heart ..." This was something I could work with. And then, thank God (ha!), there was the appendix on "Spiritual Experience," which mentions "an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a power greater than themselves."

I have been sober nearly 28 years now, and I still can't say much about a God "out there," one that created the universe, involves itself in natural events or dispenses the occasional convenient parking spot on a lucky day.

I have, however, had a deep and effective spiritual experience as a result of the AA Steps bringing me into contact with "an unsuspected inner resource" (which I call God as a matter of convenience). If someone asks, I might just say that there's something inside of me that's smarter and kinder than I am, and I think I'll listen to it.

It is easy enough to give alcoholism a personality: it's cunning, baffling and powerful. It is patient, doesn't discriminate, and it wants to kill me. It's tied up in a tangle of knots with my selfishness, pride and fear. So it seems reasonable to personify the other side, the "place" within from which emanates love, honesty, compassion, sanity and a willingness to help others. And it seems reasonable to appeal to this place—to state a willingness to live my life under its guidance. I call this appeal "prayer."

I like to read "other books," as mentioned in the Eleventh Step. I read about religion, philosophy, science and skepticism, as well as faith. I haven't rejoined the debate society. I just enjoy exploring ideas.

An old-timer once told me that "religion is a finger pointing at the moon." What that tells me is that if I spend too much time staring at the finger I will forever miss the moon. I am no longer so interested in labels like "atheism," "agnosticism," "deism" or "theism." And I can't afford to revert to "me-ism." When I'm the center of the universe, it's a dark and lonely place.

My small God might seem insufficient to some, but it works for me. And I believe that that same inner resource is a part of each of us. When I'm in a room full of people talking about God's effect on their lives, it becomes a presence that we can all sense even as our individual concepts vary.

Occasionally, I have the intuitive sense that my unsuspected inner resource is an expression of something much larger, and that perhaps there is a deeper relationship between consciousness and external reality than simply that of observer to observed.

The poet William Blake said that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." I'm still looking for that palace.

(Reprinted from *One Big Tent: Atheist and agnostic AA members share their experience, strength and hope*, 93-95. Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. 2018. Reprinted with permission)

**St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.**  
**608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102**

Web Site: [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org)

E-mail: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

Fax: 651-290-0209

Office Hours: Monday through Friday — 9 AM to 6 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 1 PM

**Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

**An AA strives to put principles before his personality**

In my AA journey, my understanding of the anonymity of Tradition Twelve has been ever-changing. I came to AA in the late eighties, when my wife told me, "Go to AA or get out of the house."

At the time I knew nothing of AA, but if I was to be so humiliated as to be among alcoholics, at least the word "Anonymous" in the name was reassuring. In my early weeks in the program, I would not go to any meeting within ten miles of my home, for fear of running into someone I knew. I soon understood anonymity to mean that they wouldn't tell on me if I wouldn't tell on them.

My first home group studied the Traditions regularly. Tradition Twelve had to do with revealing my alcoholism and AA membership to others. Each individual can be as anonymous as he likes, but we always protect the anonymity of others. I still understand this to be a part of the Tradition.

Still, what was this about "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions?" That seemed to be saying that the other Traditions were somehow based on this one.

What I know about foundations is that if they are shaky, there will be continuing problems with the rest of the structure and efforts to repair other structural problems will be futile. But if the foundation is solid, problems that develop in the rest of the structure can be dealt with as they arise.

That is the relation I've come to see between Tradition Twelve and the rest of the Traditions. It is asking me to develop a simple spiritual attitude. As long as I have that spirit of anonymity, the other Traditions will follow naturally. But when I don't, the other Traditions will be continually troublesome.

What helped clarify the idea was reading Bill W.'s Grapevine writings on the subject, now published in *The Language of the Heart*. He uses the words "modesty," "humility," "prudence," and "self-effacement" in describing anonymity. In *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, he uses the word "sacrifice" as forming the spiritual substance of anonymity.

Modesty, prudence, self-effacement, and sacrifice are not words we alcoholics like to use very often, but together they describe an attitude that I believe is key to the spirit of anonymity. It's an attitude that wishes to avoid having attention called to oneself. It describes a spirit that would always rather see the Fellowship receive any credit and would rather call attention to God at work than to anything we might do. It goes beyond humility and includes always caring more about the Fellowship and its message than about being recognized. It will always place the principles of AA ahead of personality.

I believe that Tradition Twelve is much more about a spirit of anonymity than about any rules concerned with revealing identities. From this simple attitude, the other Traditions will flow naturally. As long as I maintain this simple anonymous attitude, the common welfare of AA will always come first (Tradition One), the will of a loving God in our group conscience will always be taken as my authority (Tradition Two), and so on.

How has this spiritual anonymity worked day to day? Insofar as I have been able to practice it, the changes are pervasive in my personal life, in my carrying the message to others in the program, and in how I approach service to others.

Notably, I've changed how I decide when to reveal my AA membership. After getting past my initial fear of anyone finding out I was in AA, I became much more liberal about talking about my AA membership. The guide I tried to use was whether or not I thought it might help a still-suffering alcoholic.

**Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

But I can see that, too often, what I really was looking for was a pat on the back, as in, "What a good boy is he, having conquered the alcoholic scourge," or, "Look at the wonderful things he is doing helping those other alcoholics."

Or sometimes, the hidden motive was to gain favor, as in, "Give me a break, I'm an alcoholic and deserve special treatment." Wasn't my real motive to call attention to myself?

As I accumulated some years of sobriety, a sort of "old-timer syndrome" began to set in. It showed itself in meetings and service commitments, where my sharing began to take on a tone of expertise or authority. I became an expert on the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts, sponsorship, and all else.

Of course, as my fellow AA members failed to appreciate my experience and expertise, the resentments grew until I learned that in my group, too, I needed to practice the spirit of anonymity. Calling attention to myself by trying to be profound and wise only detracts from the message and blocks me from gaining what others offer. It is placing my personality before the principles. So I am repeatedly brought back to being a simple member of the group, contributing what I can.

"Principles before personalities" applies to me first. In fact, my job is to make sure the principles come before my personality.

So I've come to believe that the anonymity of Tradition Twelve is spiritual and forms a foundation for me in working the Steps and other Traditions. I must continually check my motives to see that I'm not trying to call attention to myself. It is not about me; it's the program that's due any attention and credit.

- Ross D., Tulsa, Oklahoma

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**Thoughts From your Board**

When I first sobered up, I was barely able to hold a social conversation with people I met in the program. I was so introverted [without the alcohol], and was so clueless about what a sober life could be like that I just wanted to sit in the chairs and not participate. I didn't feel as if I had anything to give. But then, they started asking me to do a few simple things: setup chairs, make coffee, clean up after meetings... and I discovered that I could contribute and I became a "part of" the groups, the club, and my sober community. People trusted me, and I learned to trust myself. They thanked me, and I began to feel useful; they told me I had gifts to share, and I became empowered and encouraged to walk through my fears to even more responsible positions within our organization.

Now, here I am, wrapping up my year as the Intergroup Board Chair. I've gained a whole new level of gratitude and confidence, not just personally, but in our fellowship and its countless volunteers who give their time and energy to Intergroup to fulfill our purpose of service to our community. It's been a truly amazing, humbling experience and, I must say, **one you must not miss.**

- Lesli D., Board Chair

**The Lifeline: Purpose Statement**

*The Lifeline* is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Incorporated. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition, or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of our A.A. experience.

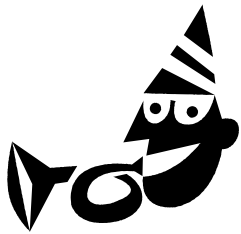
Please email your article to [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org), or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 608 Seventh Street West, St. Paul MN 55102. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the

# Join St. Paul AA Intergroup

In a Sober Celebration!!

## New Year's Eve 2018

Monday, December 31st



### 7:00 PM Open Speaker Meeting

**Speaker: Ed M. Nicollet Group, Minneapolis**  
Personal story, followed by a presentation of *Stools and Bottles*, illustrating daily reminders on commonly encountered AA problems during an alcoholic's way of life - A frequent talk from the early days of AA in St. Paul and Minneapolis.



ASL Interpreted, upon request. Please contact Intergroup staff by Dec. 1st.  
651-227-5502, or [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

### 9:00 PM—12:30 PM - Dance:

**DJ - Mikey Y.**

(\$5.00\* Contribution Requested)



9:00 PM—Midnight:

## Marathon Step Meetings



## Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

285 North Dale Street - St. Paul, MN 55103

For

more Information call the Intergroup office: 651-227-5502

\*No one turned away for lack of funds - plenty of service opportunities!!

# Announcements & Updates

## HOOTS!

### WANTED: One New Night Owl Committee volunteer

The Night Owl Committee members take turns carrying the back-up Phone for one week at a time. We help out if a volunteer has a problem and we also make the reminder calls.

Requirements:

- >1 year sobriety
- >Answer the back-up phone during your rotation
- >Experience with Night Owl
- >2 year commitment

Thank you!

Frank N.  
Night Owl Committee Coordinator

Night Owl Tidbit: Do you have an interesting Night Owl story you want to share? Send an e-mail to [nightowl@aastpaul.org](mailto:nightowl@aastpaul.org).



*"I don't want to trudge the Road of Happy Destiny - I want to sprint it."*

(Clara T. Cartoon reprinted with permission, Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc.)

### Group and Area News

**New Meeting:** The *Calm Within The Storm* group is now hosting a Closed Women only Thursday 5:30PM meeting at the Roseville Lutheran Church, 1215 Roselawn Ave, St. Paul, 55113. The Format is Topic, Step, and Tradition. Childcare is available, and the site is Accessible. Emphasis is on women, mothers with babies and toddlers, and breast feeding.

**New Meeting:** The *Downtown Alano* has added a Tuesday 6:30PM Closed, Mixed, All- Ages, Big Book & Tradition meeting to its schedule. The Club is at 520 North Robert Street (corner of 10th and Robert) in Saint Paul, 55101.

**Meeting Change:** The *Down Alano M-F 5:30PM* Meetings are now being held at 6:00PM, with the exception of the Friday meeting, which is no longer being held.

**Meeting Moved:** The *Pocketing Our Pride* group's Sunday 11:00AM meeting is now being held at the Charles Thompson Memorial Hall in the Second Floor Dining Room, 1824 Marshall Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104 - Enter through South Door. The meeting format is 12&12 and Tradition. It is Open, Mixed, and All -Ages.

### Your News?

Please Let us know about any meeting changes, new meetings, or any meetings that are no longer. Please email: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

We look forward to hearing from you.



**Looking for a Service Opportunity?  
Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl!**



Upcoming Night Owl Orientations:  
**Saturday, Dec 15th, Jan 19th, Feb 16th**

Every **Third Saturday** from 10:00 - 11:00 AM

St. Paul Intergroup Office

608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

**To RSVP please call: 651-227-5502**

## St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, October 16th 7:30pm

1. Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
2. Last month minutes reviewed, motioned Lindsey D and seconded by Mary T, motion approved.
3. Treasurer's Report, Justin D –Total Contributions: \$5,781 Net Income: \$425 (sales and contributions are up!) Intergroup is continuing to work with the MURC Company to clean up unresolved issues within Quickbooks. Finance Committee is meeting 10/17 to finalize our tax return and to create our 2019 budget to present to the group in December.
4. Office Report, Dennis B – Check out Grapevine's "One Big Tent" edition. We believe Intergroup's Outreach and the Financial Presentation last month really made an impact –3 new faithful fiver donors, \$600 check from a group that usually does not support Intergroup financially, and plenty of volunteers eager to help out in the office.. AA Pamphlets are changing. Please email lifeline@aastpaul.org for further information.
5. Night Owl Report, Frank N – New call forwarding system works well. 3 N.O. Shifts open: 1st, 4th, & 5th Wednesday from 10PM-6AM. An additional committee member is not needed at this time. We will be updating the N.O. website password within the next couple months Please contact Frank N at NightOwl@aastpaul.org or leave a message at the Intergroup Office.
6. Website Report, Jonathan L – 733 regular weekly meetings supported by 287 groups. 11 service opportunities. Google now charges Intergroup for using the Google Maps feature in our meeting directory. We are looking into the cost and other alternatives. Jonathan created the interface link for our directory to be converted into a mobile app. Contact Jonathan & Sergey at webservant@aastpaul.org.
7. Outreach Program, Carolyn M – Please help out the Outreach Committee by visiting groups that currently do not contribute to Intergroup. We have a couple people who have joined the Outreach team – always looking for more! Please contact Carolyn M at outreach@aastpaul.org.
8. Update from the Board, 2019 Intergroup Board Elections will be held on November 20th in place of the Rep Meeting. Open Board positions: Alternate Chair, Alternate Treasurer, Secretary, and 2 Member At Large Positions. Please submit your resume if you are interested and show up.
9. Liaison Reports: District 8: Mike C – N/A District 15: Jennifer, Fall Workshop: Living Traditions In Our Daily Lives will be held on Oct 27th @ 11:30 in the Christ Lutheran Church, Lake Elmo. There will be chili and a TBD speaker. District 19: Dan R – N/A
10. Intergroup Events:
  - a. Recap: Ice Cream Social – Huge thanks to the volunteers, speakers, and the members who made it to the event!
  - b. Upcoming: Gratitude Night: Lutheran Church of the Redeemer on Sat, Nov 17 @ 7PM-10PM 1-year speaker: Amalee; Women's Basic Text & Main speaker: Terri C; Uptown & Founder's Day Suite: DoubleTree Bloomington from Fri Nov 23-Sun Nov 25—Contact Lesli D if your group is interested in volunteering in Intergroup's Hospitality Suite.
11. Old Business:
  - a. Financial Report/How Intergroup Functions Report is now uploaded on the website.
  - b. Intergroup's Office building was sold. Building Committee will meet when we have more info about our lease - that ends in May.
12. New Business:
  - a. Please bring back your group's vote in December for the following: Do subgroups want their individual group name listed on the mobile app or do they want to be listed under the club/Alanos' name?
13. Group AA Announcements:
 

OMD Potluck, Sobriety Recognition, & Speaker meeting - 1st Friday @7:00 pm at 550 W 7th St., Saint Paul. Speaker: TBD  
Main Idea Sobriety Recognition: 2nd Friday: 7:30:9:00 pm located @ 499 Wacouta Street, St Paul.  
Maplewood Alano Potluck, Sobriety Recognition, & Speaker meeting - 3rd Saturday @6:30 pm at 1955 Prosperity Road.  
West End is NOT having a potluck on the 4th Friday of the month but Krista will be speaking.  
One More Added to the Fellowship; Halloween Potluck – October 31st @ 7:00p pm @ Virginia St. Church
14. Suggestions for next December's agenda: Elecations
15. Grapevine Report, John K; Volunteer for December, Andrew
16. Concept VII Review, Lindsey D; Volunteer for Concept for VIII, Mary T
17. Mock Rep Report, Marc B; Volunteer for December, Erik M
18. Closed with the Responsibility Statement

**Meetings Represented:** District 15; Basic Text, St. Paul; Fireside Women's Big Book, St. Paul; Happy, Joyous & Free, Mahtomedi; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Hour of Power, St. Paul; Lakeview AA, Maplewood; Main Idea, St. Paul; Maplewood Alano Groups, Maplewood, Pocketing Our Pride, St. Paul; Roll of Nickels, Hudson, WI; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Third Edition, St. Paul, MN; We Can, St. Paul; West End, St. Paul.

<b><u>2018 Steering Board:</u></b>		<b><u>Office Calls/Visitors—October 2018</u></b>	
Chair:	Lesli D.	Meeting information	71
Alternate Chair:	Rob C.	Inventory/hours/location	23
Secretary:	Carolyn M.	12th Step calls	2
Treasurer:	C.J. M.	Temporary sponsor	18
Alternate Treasurer:	Justin D.	Speaker request	26
Members-at-Large 2018:	Tom S. & Erik M.	Staff & Other Calls	151
Members-at-Large 2019	Brian L. & Vance O.	Total Calls	289
Advisor to the Board:	Jenni S.	<b>Average Calls/Day</b>	<b>12.6</b>
Manager:	Dennis B.	Total Visitors	306

**December 2018 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, December 18th @ 7:30 PM**  
 SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH (Church Basement)  
 398 West Superior Street; St. Paul, MN 55102

## 7th Tradition Suggestions for Groups

"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

The Conference-approved pamphlet: "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

### 50% St. Paul Intergroup

608 Seventh Street West  
St. Paul, MN 55102

### 30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

### 10% Southern MN Area 36

Area Assembly  
P.O. Box 2812  
Mpls., MN 55402

### 10% District Committee

Ramsey County:  
District 8, P.O. Box 131523  
St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:  
District 19, P.O. Box 1466  
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:  
District 15, P.O. Box 181  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

SE Ramsey County:  
District 26, P.O. Box 75980  
St. Paul, MN 55175

## OCTOBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Number of Group Contributors	44
Total Group Contributions:	\$5522
Number of Faithful Fivers:	23
Total from Faithful Fivers:	\$715



## District Meetings

### District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center  
1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 108  
Roseville  
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM

### District 15 (Wash. Co.)

Christ Lutheran Church  
11194 N. 36th St.  
Lake Elmo  
4th Mon., 7:00 PM

### District 19 (Dakota Co.)

Rosemount Community Center  
13885 South Robert Trail  
Rosemount  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

### District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)

Grace Lutheran Church  
1730 Old Hudson Rd.  
St. Paul  
2nd Sun., 7:00PM  
[www.district26-area36.org](http://www.district26-area36.org)



## Thanks to all the Groups that contributed in October

A Baffled Lot  
Anoka Day By Day  
Apple Valley Monday AM Women's Mtg.  
Basic Text  
Children of Chaos Plus  
Como Park BB  
Complete Defeat Group  
Dakota Alano THUR 1145AM  
Dakota Alano THUR 730PM Mens  
Eagan Wed Night Open Meeting  
Fellowship Club AA  
Forest Lake Alano  
Fourth Dimension  
Friday Nite 12x12 By The Book  
Hastings Club  
Hazelwood AA  
Hole in the Doughnut Group  
Hugo Group  
Joy of Living Group  
Lindstrom Groups  
Live and Let Live  
Maria Drunk Squad  
Mendota 1030 AA Group  
North Dale Group  
North Hamline  
Oakdale Thursday Group  
Oakdale Woodbury Sun Group  
@Canvas Heath  
OMD  
Positively 4th Street  
Rivertown BB Group-Hastings  
Rosemount Groups  
Roseville Centennial Group  
Roseville Wed Night  
Saturday Morning Serenity Group  
Shivering Denizens  
Shoreview 12 x 12  
Sisters of Serenity  
Stillwater Morning Groups  
There's a Better Way  
Third Edition Group  
Third Tradition Northfield  
Uptown Club  
Valley Creek Thurs Night  
White Bear SAT AM Women's Group

## Thanks to all of the FANTASTIC Office Volunteers who helped in September

Adam P., Angela, Barb M., Chris H., Christina L., Cody D.,  
David D., Desiree C., Don S. Elizabeth B.  
Frank D., Heather W., Jake, Jeff M., Jimmy D.,  
Jodie T., Joel P., Johnny S., Marc B. Marc S.,  
Margaret B., Martin R., Matt F., Pam M., Randy,  
Sheila H., Spencer S., Steve R., Suzanne B.,



Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!

## **AA World Services, Inc. Illustrated**

In this article, the second of three, I will describe the second affiliate corporation of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. or "AAWS". As mentioned in the article last month on the affiliate corporation AA Grapevine, being an affiliate means that some (in this case, all) of its stock is owned by the parent. The formal ownership of these corporations from the eye of the IRS are the twenty-one trustees of the General Service Board. All three of these corporations have the same basic mission: *To Serve The AA Fellowship*.

AAWS is commonly viewed as the General Service Office (GSO). Indeed, GSO is part of the makeup of AAWS. Most AA members see GSO as the office that serves them, their group, district and area, which in fact it does. However, besides that broad definition, within the GSO there is a publishing operation which manages the manufacturing and distribution of over 1,000 items that AA produces to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Most items published by GSO are trilingual, available in English, French and Spanish. These items are not only for the AA fellowship in the United States and Canada. For countries where there is no General Service Office it provides the printing and distribution of literature in other languages, totaling 71 for the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and about one hundred languages of various pieces of literature.

To serve the AA fellowship (the mission of AAWS) is no simple task. Individuals, groups, districts, areas, regions, Intergroups and a wide array of committees all utilize the services of GSO. Without a doubt AA's General Service Conference (GSC), held annually, relies on the GSO to perform all the tactical work that results from General Service Conference Advisory Actions and other business surrounding the GSC.

The conference process also tasks the committees of the General Service Board (GSB), the topic of article 3) with the responsibility to perform services. While GSB committees perform a good deal of work for the fellowship and the GSC, it is the General Service Office that carries much of the active responsibility in the actual work set out by GSB committees. Additionally, the GSB tasks the GSO with administrative services for AA as a whole. Hence, the employees at AAWS are the people that do AA's administrative work, not the GSB. We will see next month that the GSB is largely a custodial body for AA.

The GSO is comprised of an estimated 85 employees that make up the publishing operation as well as the service operation for the AA fellowship. As is typical of any corporation of relatively the same size, a general manager heads up AAWS, and he or she has departmental managers for finance, human resources, information technology (I.T.), publishing, and a unique blend of departments that take care of group services such as records of all AA entities and trusted servants, and twelve people called "staff" that are responsible for the unique services AA has such as corrections, treatment, literature, public information, cooperating with the professional community and other "desks" that mirror conference committees and committees normally found in the AA structure in districts and areas. Each of these staff people have a few people that support that functional area.

Mirroring the AA Grapevine, Inc., AAWS has a board of directors, nine members in total. The composition of these nine directors is almost the same as AAGV. Two employees at the GSO are directors, which are the General Manager and the Staff Coordinator. The GM also serves as president of AAWS, and the Staff Coordinator serves as Secretary. The General Service Board embeds four of its trustees onto AAWS: two are regional trustees and two are General Service Trustees (GSTs). Finally, three alcoholic members of the board, called Non-trustee Directors (NTDs) are selected from the AA fellowship to serve as directors, rounding out the nine-member board.

Membership tenure varies. The GM is always a director while employed. The staff coordinator serves as a director during their 3-year tenure in their employment position of staff coordinator. Regional trustees serve for two years on AAWS, during years two and three of their trusteeship. GSTs serve four years but have normally served as an NTD for four years prior on one of the affiliate



### **AA World Services, Inc. Illustrated (Cont.)**

corporate boards. Finally, NTDs normally serve for four years. The chairperson of the corporate board is always a GSB trustee, either a GST or a regional, and they serve a one-year term. This toggles from one trustee type to the other and back.

This board, as described, meets in NY approximately every six weeks. Four of the eight AAWS Board meetings are in conjunction with GSB quarterly meetings. An AA Board meeting agenda is comprised of committee meetings that board members are assigned to (typically 3-4 committees), followed by an AAWS Board meeting later on in the afternoon. Most committee work is done between meetings and this time is spent reporting; however, some discussion is common as it is advantageous to be together and also allow all board members to participate with the committee. A GSO staff member is assigned to each committee as a secretary as well as to perform work for the committee as directed.

The results of a Board meeting include: 1) work directly related to AAWS; 2) work for trustee committees of the General Service Board; and, 3) work for the General Service Conference Committees. The latter two requires that work-product be forwarded to the respective body for review and approval.

Finally, there are other tasks that arise from being a director on the AAWS Board: directors rotate and attend regional forums as AAWS representatives; directors meet for AAWS strategic planning; directors have additional meetings for management performance and salary reviews; a director may be asked to assist staff in special events and projects. It is common for directors to utilize their skills and experience from their personal and professional life to be of service to AAWS.

With services and publishing operations creating a twenty-million-dollar corporation, good business practices directed by sound spiritual principles that everyone has learned before their tenure on AAWS results in a frugal, efficient operation that is always focused on its mission of serving the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Next month we will review the General Service Board, which has full stock ownership of AAWS and AAGV.

Yours in Service,

Tom A.

*WCR Trustee, AAWS Director*

*General Service Board Secretary*

### **Gratitude Is An Action**

Early in my sobriety I was taught that gratitude is not a feeling, but an action. This was explained to me to help counter the mistaken idea that I must feel like doing something before I am able to do it. My sponsor at the time was stubbornly uninterested in how I felt about much of anything. This usually left me with the impression that my emotional well-being was being ignored – I was quite sensitive after all. But his point was not to discount that I had feelings. He was simply helping me to realize that I could take the right actions in my life no matter how I was feeling. I could treat people and situations better than I felt. This would prove key to my ability to endure, at first, and, then, to enjoy living sober.

I admit that I only came to A.A. because I was chasing a relationship. I only stayed because I got tricked into being sponsored. I was taught to serve before I knew that not everyone in A.A. does so. There is really very little about the good life I have in sobriety that I can take credit for. But whether I meant to be sober and happy or not, I've come to be grateful for what I've been given.

These days, I don't worry so much about whether I feel grateful, but rather whether I act grateful. This is an important perspective when it comes to showing up in my life at work, at home, in my home group, and in general service. When I remember that the relative calm and contentment that I so often experience in my life today is a gift, it is easier to act like I'm grateful for it. And acting grateful usually shows up as being of service.

## Gratitude Is An Action

It is tempting to think that whatever I do at work is being of service. It's called work after all. But that attitude ignores that I am being paid for my efforts at work. I'm getting something in exchange. Given who I was before I got sober, the fact that I can keep any job for multiple years at a time now is truly a gift. What about my actions is there a sign of my gratitude? To show that I am grateful, I can offer my time and my enthusiasm at work in service to others. I can go into my work day looking for ways to help others there get their work done more effectively and efficiently. I can encourage newer employees. I can do things that make my boss look good. All of these are ways to put my gratitude for being sober and for being able to work into action.

We can apply the same principles at home with partners, spouses, and children. I do not need to wait for feelings of great affection to flow over me before I act grateful for the other good humans in my life. I can demonstrate my gratitude by cleaning the toilet or watching a TV show that my spouse enjoys or making someone else's cup of coffee first. If I only acted generously to others in my family when I felt generous, then I would do very little for anyone else. My selfishness would play out rampantly. My relationships would suffer. I wouldn't go to visit my 90-something-year-old mother twice a week if I only did so when I felt like going. The truth is that I seldom feel like going. I can always imagine something more enjoyable or productive to do in my own life. But I have learned to act grateful first, regardless of my feelings. And taking those actions of gratitude end up reinforcing themselves. Because whether or not I feel willing to go see my mother, or whether or not I feel like cleaning the toilet, when I keep those commitments, I gain a sense of well-being and self-esteem. I have been of service. I have shown my gratitude.

Being of service in A.A. can be seen the same way. Cleaning up after an A.A. meeting – stacking chairs or putting away the literature – can be a sign of my gratitude. I can take those actions even if the chairperson of the meeting didn't call on me that night or I thought one of the old-timers spoke too long. My actions matter far more than my feelings.

When I consider all that recovery in A.A. has given me, I realize I may need to expand the ways I show my gratitude. I have come to see general service (serving in the structure of groups, districts, areas, and the General Service Conference that make up our Fellowship) as just one more opportunity to act grateful. The services we provide to other A.A.'s through our general service structure range from publishing literature to printing meeting guides to sharing information with professionals. But it takes our time and effort as A.A. members to get that work done and to make decisions about how to do it better. Acting grateful for A.A. might mean that I need to take a turn as the GSR (General Service Representative) for my group and go to district meetings. Or maybe acting grateful means I stand for a position as the public information chair at my district and make sure that A.A. pamphlets and meeting directories are supplied to local hotels, hospitals, and clinics. Maybe acting grateful simply means I stay late at my home group on business meeting night and take part in decisions about how to make my home group the most attractive, supportive place for newcomers.

There are many ways to put gratitude into action. I am never disappointed in the good feelings and sense of purpose that I experience after taking the right actions to be of service to others in A.A. and in my life in general. It turns out that acting grateful makes me feel grateful. And feeling grateful is a wonderfully freeing way to feel.

This is my final article as Delegate. My term ends December 31<sup>st</sup>. Thank you for all your service in A.A. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to have served with you.

Curt K.  
Delegate – Panel 67  
Area 36 – Southern Minnesota  
delegate@area36.org

New Session in Downtown St. Paul begins Sunday January 6, 2019 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm

# Study & Action Group

"Precisely how we have recovered"



We recover in AA by taking the Twelve Steps, and if we don't take the action as described in our Big Book, we may not recover. These groups will give the participants the tools to do the Twelve Steps precisely as the first one hundred men and women who recovered from alcoholism. This is a back to the basics kind of group, accepting the "simple kit of spiritual tools" that has been laid at our feet. Participants are asked to commit to the entire process



Additional information at [www.Into-Action.com](http://www.Into-Action.com)  
Date and location information on back of this flyer.

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Big Book Study & Action Group, LLC

Start the new year in Al-Anon

Join us for a tropical potluck Al-Anon dinner

When: Saturday January 26, 2019 starting at 6 PM

Where: Recovery Church, 253 State St., St. Paul, MN 55107

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Bring your favorite food to share (beverages provided)

Speakers: Al-Alanon, AA, and Alateen

Activities: Tropical fun and games plus open bookstore



38TH ANNUAL  
SOUTHERN MINNESOTA AREA ASSEMBLY  
RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE  
CONFERENCE

HOLIDAY INN FAIRMONT, FAIRMONT, MN  
JANUARY 25, 26, 27 2019

OUR BIG BOOK:  
80 YEARS, 71 LANGUAGES

### FRIDAY JANUARY 25, 2019

- 5:00pm: Registration Opens
- 7:30pm—7:45pm: Welcome  
YESTERDAY'S WORLD
- 7:45pm—8:45pm: Our Legacies Begin
  1. The Book is Born
  2. Unsuspected Strength
- 9:00pm—10:00pm: SMAA Comes of Age
  3. Southern Minnesota's First 12th Step Call
  4. The Turning Point
- 10:00pm—11:00pm: Ice Cream Social

### SATURDAY JANUARY 26, 2019

- 8:00am: Registration Opens  
TODAY'S WORLD
- 9:00am—11:15am: Growth Through Service
  5. General Service Representative
  6. District Committee Member
- 10:00am—10:15am (BREAK)
  7. Standing Committee Chair
  8. Area Officer
- 11:15am—1:00pm: LUNCH (on your own)
- 1:00pm—2:00pm: Demonstrating our Integrity
  9. This Matter of Honesty
  10. Breaching the Walls of Ego

### SATURDAY JANUARY 26, 2019

- 2:15pm—3:15pm: Anonymity and Service
  11. A Tradition Born of Our Anonymity
  12. To Serve is To Live
- TOMORROW'S WORLD
- 3:30pm—4:30pm: Courage to be Vigilant
  13. Member and Custodian
  14. A Vision for You
- 4:30pm—7:00pm: DINNER (on your own)
- 7:00pm—8:15pm: OPEN SPEAKER MEETING  
Arnold R., Baltimore, Maryland
- 8:30pm—9:00pm: Ask It Basket
- 9:00pm—10:00pm: Ice Cream Social

### SUNDAY JANUARY 27, 2019

- 9:00am—10:00am: High Road to a New Freedom
  15. 89 Years
  16. 71 Languages
- 10:15am—11:00am: Our Three Legacies  
Reflections on RUSC
- 11:00am—11:15am: Incoming Delegate Remarks
- 11:15am—11:30am: RUSC Chair Closing Remarks

RUSC INFORMATION INCLUDING HOTEL AND REGISTRATION LINKS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.AREA36.ORG](http://WWW.AREA36.ORG).  
QUESTIONS? EMAIL [RUSC@AREA36.ORG](mailto:RUSC@AREA36.ORG).

### THREE WAYS TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE

- REGISTER ONLINE: Go to Eventbrite: [www.rusc2019.eventbrite.com](http://www.rusc2019.eventbrite.com). \$17.00 (+ \$1.58 service charge) prior to JANUARY 14, 2019. Credit cards only.
- MAIL-IN: Complete the registration form below and mail with your check for \$17.00 by JANUARY 14, 2019.
- REGISTER ONSITE: \$20.00.

### HOTEL INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION OPTIONS

CALL HOLIDAY INN FAIRMONT at 507-238-4771. Ask for the Southern Minnesota Area Assembly RUSC rate. \$99 per night double/single, \$109 per night king. DEADLINE for rate—JANUARY 4, 2019.

### REGISTRATION FORM

Please mail by JANUARY 14, 2019. Complete, cut and mail with your check for \$17.00 payable to SMAA. Please mail all pre-registrations to: SMAA, P.O. Box 2812, Minneapolis, MN 55402.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME ON BADGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
HOME GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_ SERVICE POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Sobriety Date: \_\_\_\_\_

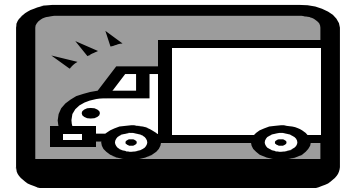
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## St. Paul Intergroup *Individual Contribution* Enrollment Form

Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to *The Lifeline*. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Faithful Fivers* (\$5.00/month), *Terrific Tenners* (\$10.00/month), or *Fantastic Fifteeners* (\$15.00/month).

### 1. Contact information:

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

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\*I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc.). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup.

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