



## **Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

### **Dean's Story**

When I came into A.A. I came in as a desperate, confused alcoholic who was an atheist. As soon as I saw the word "God" in the Serenity Prayer card that was on the table, I thought, "Well that's it, I don't belong here. It's a religious cult."

The person who chaired that first meeting said no to worry too much about it and to keep coming to meetings and things will start to make sense in time. Because I was desperate to stop drinking, I did just that. I learned that it was a God of my own understanding and that A.A. was not about religion.

For the next four years, I didn't do much but go to meetings and do a bit of service work. In those four years I just got sicker, until one day I had a choice to make: kill myself or get a sponsor and work the Steps.

I got a sponsor and set out to work my way through the Steps, only to fail at Step Two. I still didn't have a clue about the "gods" word. My sponsor, who is a Christian, said he could not help me find my own God, and it had to be my journey.

Because I didn't want anyone to accuse me of contempt prior to investigation, I set out looking at different religions. I soon learned enough to start on the subsequent Steps. I know there might be something: I was not sure what, but there were enough sober people around me to show me something was working.

In all I spent about a year looking at religions and different spiritual beliefs. I went to church meetings, groups, meetings, and get-togethers. Some look very inviting; Buddhism and Taoism had a lot to offer and fitted in with the type of life I was trying to live. But there was always something that didn't sit well with me, and it was this that was blocking me from making any commitments to any of the religious beliefs.

After all this, I thought that I had wasted my time. My A.A. friends and sponsors didn't agree with me and pointed out that I had spent a year finding out what God *wasn't* for me. After sitting and sleeping on this for a while it dawned on me: out of everything that I had seen and learned in the past year, *it was OK to be an atheist in A.A.*

My higher power is very much the love and wisdom I find in the rooms of A.A., and the beautiful things I see while walking in nature. I have no problem in using the word "God" with or without a capital G. My role now in A.A. is to carry the A.A. message to the still-suffering alcoholic, and that includes my journey in finding a God that works for me.

(Reprinted from *The "God" Word, Agnostic and Atheist Member in A.A.*, pgs. 12-13 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

*>>Please continue to page two for another excerpt<<*

## **Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity (Con't).**

### **The "God" Word**

While I respect that many A.A. members believe in a God of their understanding, I cannot conceive of a supernatural being that resides in the sky, has human characteristics (especially those of the male gender), and organizes me and everyone else as if it were a puppet master. And yet I have no difficulty in accepting a power greater than myself, and that such an acceptance is vital to my continued recovery. I guess that makes me agnostic, but I don't like to be defined by labels, although I do use it when in the presence of someone who is struggling to find a power great than themselves.

The power of the A.A. group is undoubtedly greater than myself, and involvement with this power is vital to my continued recovery: as Aristotle said, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." But in my daily life outside of meetings, and indeed to practice the "God Steps," I need a different concept of a power greater than myself. On page 55 of the Big Book, it says, "We found the great reality deep down within us." Through the practice of daily meditation, I sense—beneath the mental chatter and fleeting bodily feelings— a deep sense of calm and peace from which I draw strength to be able to deal with all that occurs in my daily life ("the power to carry it out," as it says in Step eleven). This I identify as my true nature, which is common to all of us. It is also, for me, the Great Reality that is referred to in the Big Book, that is beyond all concepts and labels, and that defies all attempts at description.

(Reprinted from *The "God" Word, Agnostic and Atheist Member in A.A.*, pgs. 14-15 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

## **Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**

*Where does A.A. gets its direction? ... These practical folks then read Tradition Two, and learn that the sole authority in A.A. is a loving God as He many express Himself in the group conscience. ... The elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group's decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgment, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments.*

### TWEVLE STEPS AND TWLEVE TRADITIONS

Into the fabric of recovery from alcoholism are woven the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. As my recovery progressed, I realized that the new mantle was tailor-made for me. The elders of the group gently offered suggestions when change seemed impossible.. Everyone's shared experiences became the substance for treasured friendships. I know that the Fellowship is ready and equipped to aid each suffering alcoholic at all cross-roads in life. In a world beset by many problems, I find this assurance a unique stability. I cherish the gift of sobriety. I off God my gratitude for the strength I receive in a Fellowship that truly exists for the good of all members.

(Reprinted from *Daily Reflections* pg. 66 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

### Thoughts From Your Board

Welcome to 2019! I am excited to be a part of the St. Paul Intergroup Board once again. I was elected to fill a one year position for a Member at Large. We had someone take their leave due to health reasons. Member at Large is a two year position, I am glad to help. We also have a number of new members that are serving us on the board of directors. I am excited to work with all of them and can't wait to see what 2019 brings to St. Paul Intergroup.

2018 brought many challenges and many victories. As with any small business that is run by a board of directors and serving a specific population, we worked really hard to make sure our finances are in order. We also spent time looking at our services, to make sure they are in line with the population we serve. This I believe is our greatest responsibility and something we as a board are already having conversations about. Please join us on the third Tuesday of each month at the representatives meeting so we can have your input into our future.

It is an honor to serve all of you; I will do my best and ask you again for your help. This is your Intergroup! I will pose a challenge to all the groups that are in our area. Send a Rep to our meeting, find out what we are doing, have a say in what we are doing, participate in the activities that we are putting on for you!

Yours in Love and Service,

C J M., 2019 Member-At-Large



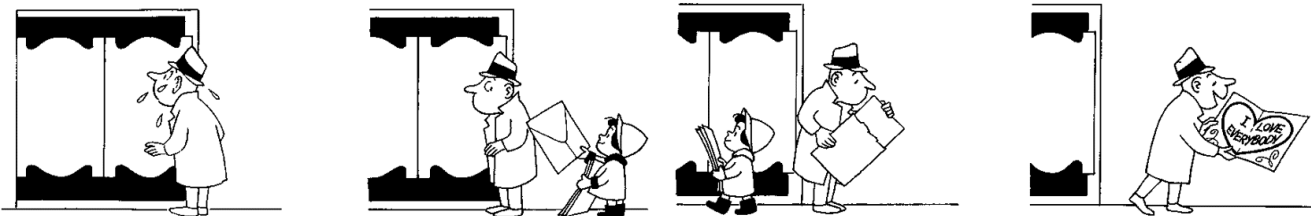
My sponsor says I suffer in silence louder than she can complain.



"Sorry officer, I thought you said touch YOUR nose."

(Reprinted from the Central Bulletin AA Cleveland District Office— Vol. 76 No. 4, Jan 2019)

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(Victor E. Cartoon reprinted with permission, Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc.)



St. Paul  
Intergroup's  
annual

# Spring Fling!

**2019 - Date & Time TBA**

*Lutheran Church of the  
Redeemer*

*285 North Dale Street  
(just south of 94)  
Saint Paul, MN 55101*



**Dinner –TBD**

**Open  
Speaker Meeting**



**Dance**



**Contribution: \$10 Entire Evening, or \$7 Dinner Only, or \$5 Dance Only**

~~No one turned away for lack of funds~~

**For More Information Call 651-227-5502**



ASL Interpreted, upon request.  
Please contact Staff at St. Paul  
Intergroup to make arrangements:  
651-227-5502



## **St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, December 18th 2018 7:30pm**

1. Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
2. Last month minutes reviewed, motioned John and seconded by Steve, motion approved.
3. Treasurer's Report, Justin D – Total Contributions: Flat – with a decrease in group contributions. Year to date is comparable to the prior year. Total Sales: Down versus last month. Increase in Revenue: Gopher State Check for \$9,800 and a generous \$1,000 donation from a member of AA. See *Treasurer's Report for full financial details*.
4. Office Report, Bill S – Next week Intergroup will have a new pamphlet called "God Word." A pamphlet for atheist and agnostics. Intergroup received a very generous donation from someone who celebrated a milestone in recovery. Please email [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org) for further information.  
Night Owl Report, Lesli D – One Night Owl Committee Member needed. Please email [NightOwl@aastpaul.org](mailto:NightOwl@aastpaul.org) or contact the office for more info. Please contact 5. Frank N at [NightOwl@aastpaul.org](mailto:NightOwl@aastpaul.org) or leave a message at the Intergroup Office.
6. Website Report, Jonathan L – 736 regular weekly meetings supported by 288 groups. 11 service opportunities. Night Owl Password will be updated on January 1st – please only share the new password verbally. Jonathan will be removing the Neighborhood + Zip Code combinations from the website since they are no longer accurate. Activity on the website is down – could be due to the meeting guide. Contact Jonathan & Sergey at [webservant@aastpaul.org](mailto:webservant@aastpaul.org).
7. Outreach Program, Carolyn M – Outreach is always looking for more volunteers! Please contact Carolyn M at [outreach@aastpaul.org](mailto:outreach@aastpaul.org).
8. Update from the Board, Rob C – Welcomed the new board members and thanked the outgoing members for their service.
9. Laison Reports: District 8: Mike C – Board elections were last month. District 15: N/A District 19: Dan R – N/A
10. Intergroup Events:
  - A. Recap – Founders Day (Lesli D and Vance O) Great turnout – 5 groups volunteered!
  - Upcoming – New Year's Eve Party (CJ M & Lesli D) Lutheran Church of the Redeemer: Monday, December 31<sup>st</sup> @ 7PM Speaker, Stools & Bottles, 9PM-12:30 AM B. Dance/Snacks/Drinks & Marathon Meetings 9-Midnight!
11. Old Business: N/A
12. New Business:
  - A. Budget- Accepted. Motioned by Tom and Mary T seconded. (14 said yes, 2 abstained)
  - B. Voted on: *Do subgroups want their individual group name listed on the mobile app or do they want to be listed under the club/Alanos' name?* – Group voted and we are not changing anything.
13. Group AA Announcements:
  - OMD Potluck, Sobriety Recognition, & Speaker meeting - 1st Friday @7:00PM at 550 W 7th St., Saint Paul. Speaker: TBD
  - Maplewood Alano Potluck, Sobriety Recognition, & Speaker meeting - 3rd Saturday @6:30 pm at 1955 Prosperity Road.
  - Main Idea Sobriety Recognition - 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday: 7:30-9:00 pm located @ 499 Wacouta Street, St Paul.
  - Main Idea Meeting, Candlelight, & Potluck - Christmas Eve @ 6PM, and Candlelight @ 9-10PM
  - Came to Believe: Monday @ 7PM in the Highland Park Community Center – NO MEETING ON CHRISTMAS and special location on New Year's Eve.
  - West End Potluck, Sobriety Recognition, and Speaker meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> Friday @ 7PM (same location)
  - Como Park 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Potluck on January 12<sup>th</sup> @ 7PM.
  - Saturday Night Live Speaker, Potluck, and Medallion – 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday @ 6:30PM
14. Suggestions for next month's agenda: N/A
15. Grapevine Report, Andrew; Volunteer for January, Vance O
16. Concept VIII review, Mary T; Volunteer for Concept for IX, Rachel P
17. Mock Rep Report, Carolyn M; Volunteer for January, Lindsey D
18. Closed with the Responsibility Statement

**Attendance:** District 8: Basic Text, St. Paul; Como Park Big Book, Roseville; Happy, Joyous & Free, Mahtomedi; Hole In The Doughnut, Roseville; Lakeview AA, Maplewood; Main Idea, St. Paul; Maplewood Alano Groups, Maplewood, No Time Like the Present, Roseville; Outright Mental Defects, St. Paul; Problems and Solutions, St. Paul; Roll of Nickels, Hudson, WI; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Uptown Groups, St. Paul; We Can, St. Paul; West End, St. Paul.

<b><u>2019 Steering Board:</u></b>		<b><u>Office Calls/Visitors—December 2018</u></b>	
Chair:	Rob C.	Meeting information	68
Alternate Chair:	Linsey D.	Inventory/hours/location	26
Secretary:	Rachel P.	12th Step calls	3
Treasurer:	Justin D.	Temporary sponsor	14
Alternate Treasurer:	Mark J.	Speaker request	18
Members-at-Large 2019:	C.J. M. & Vance O.	Staff & Other Calls	111
Members-at-Large 2020:	Mike C.	Total Calls	240
Advisor to the Board:	Lesli D.	<b>Average Calls/Day</b>	<b>12.0</b>
Manager	Dennis B.	Total Visitors	214

**February 2019 REPS' MEETING: Tuesday, February 19th @ 7:30 PM**

SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH  
398 West Superior Street; St. Paul, MN 55102

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SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH  
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

**DECEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS**

Number of Group Contributors	36
Total Group Contributions:	\$4427
Number of Faithful Fivers:	30
Total from Faithful Fivers:	\$754



**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 December**

- 11th Step FINE Group
- Amazing Grace Group
- Amigos III
- Anoka Day By Day
- Apple Valley Keep It Simple Sun PM
- Dakota Alano THUR 1145AM
- Dakota Alano WED 8PM
- Eagan Burnsville Savage Groups
- Elements Group
- Fellowship Club AA
- Forest Lake Alano
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Highland Park Groups
- Inver Grove Heights Club 84
- Lake Elmo Thurs Night Group
- Lakeland Group
- Maplewood Groups
- Mendota 1030 AA Group
- Midway Club
- North Branch Community Groups
- North Dale Group
- North Road Group
- Positively 4th Street
- Ridge Runners III Sun 830AM
- Rosemount Groups
- Saturday Morning PS Meeting
- Shivering Denizens
- South Saint Paul 301 Club
- South Suburban
- Steps to Freedom
- Sunnyside Group
- There's a Better Way
- Third Tradition Northfield
- Uptown Club
- USR-STB Tuesday Night
- White Bear Lake - Thursday Night Group

**Thanks to all of the FANTASTIC Office Volunteers who helped in December:**

- Angela B., Caleb A., Chris H., Dan K.,
- David D., Debbie L., Don S.,
- Frank D., Jimmy D., Jodie H.,
- John F., Leah F., Marc B., Marc S.,
- Randy O., Ruth K., Pam M.,
- Steve R., Timothy B., Tony G.



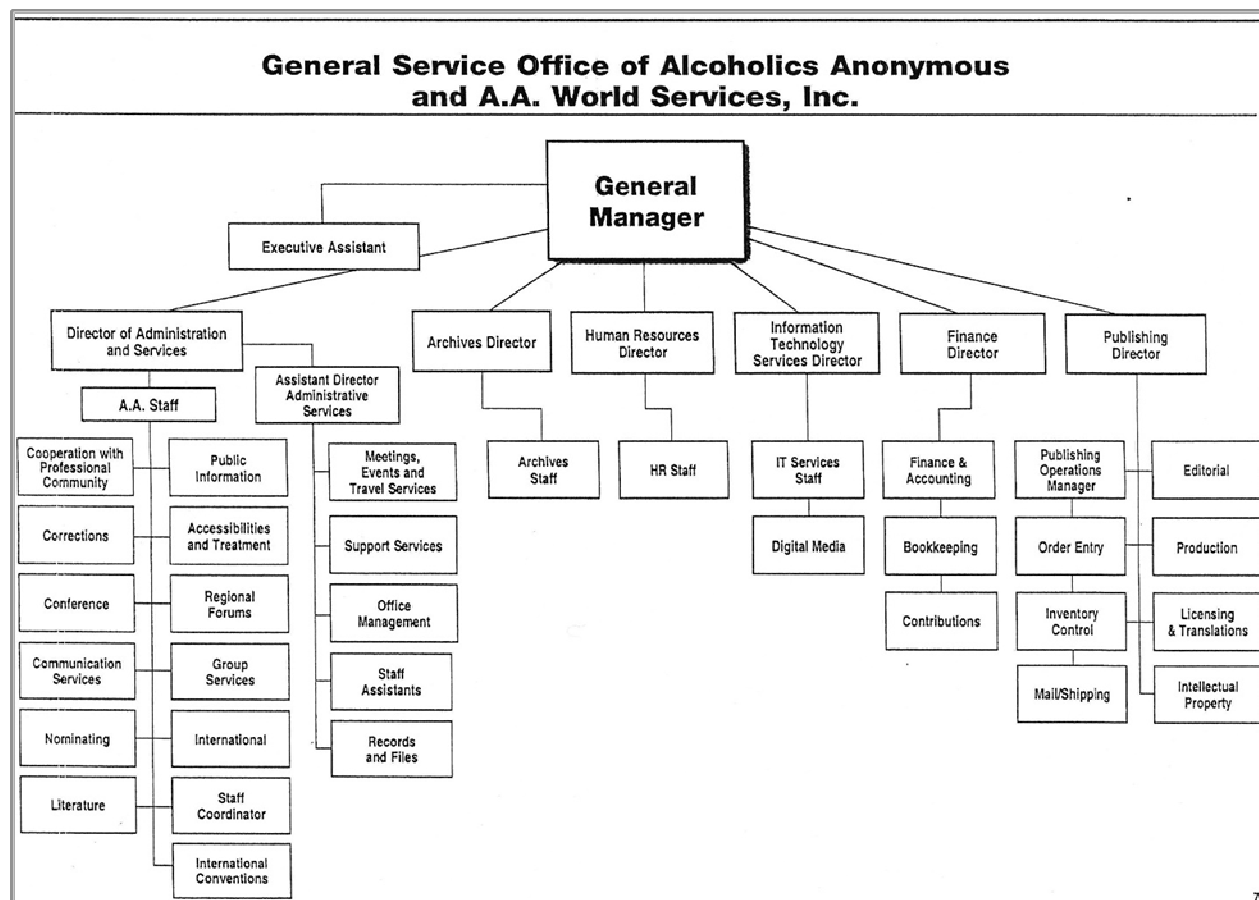
**Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!**



## The Employees who Work for Alcoholics Anonymous

Over the past three months the three corporations of AA have been outlined. While each corporation is overseen by a Board that are trusted servants, meaning they are not employees and serve at no cost to the fellowship other than reimbursement of expenses associated with their service, the people that work at 475 Riverside Drive in New York City are not trusted servants but instead employees in the conventional sense of word, and many actually refer to their employment as "working for the company". These employees maintain their position based on their skills, experience and education like any other employee of a corporation, while some of these people are required to be sober members of AA to be eligible to hold their employment position.

The first group of employees are the people that work at "The Office" or the General Service Office (GSO) of Alcoholics Anonymous. There are approximately 88 employees at GSO. With a few exceptions, these people work for and are paid by AAWS, Inc. The illustration below shows that 6 major department heads who report directly to the General Manager. Three of these, Human Resources, Information Technology and Finance are very typical corporate departments. Archives is a bit of a hybrid in that it is both a repository for our "institutional memory" plus it carries a very important responsibility to preserve, document, and act as a resource for the fellowship. The two remaining departments, Publishing and Administration Services, perform the lion's share of the day-to-day AA work, which the fellowship has the most interaction with through either literature and pamphlets or the array of services to the groups, districts, areas and these Intergroups.



(Continued Pg. 2 )



## **The Employees who Work for Alcoholics Anonymous (Con't)**

As mentioned in last month's article, the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. (GSB) is the parent corporation to AAWS, Inc. and AAGV, Inc. The purpose of the GSB is largely custodial in nature, overseeing the operations of the two affiliate corporations through a directorship comprised of GSB members and directors approved by the GSB. Because the General Service Conference is not incorporated, the GSB, through its own committee system, utilizes the operations of AAWS and AAGV to accomplish much of the work resulting from the fellowship's annual General Service Conference. Because some of the work performed by GSO staff and management is for the purposes of the GSB's need to coordinate fellowship services, some salaries are recognized as employee expenses for the GSB. This division of labor can be seen on the IRS documents filed annually, plus the Final Conference Report segments revenues and expenses.

Contributions are a very good way to illustrate this multi-corporate structure. Contributions by groups and individuals to AA are deposited into the bank in the name of the parent corporation, the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. However, the labor to process the contributions are performed by employees at the General Service Office whose paycheck is from AAWS, Inc. To have the financial resources to operate the GSO, the GSB intermittently transfers contribution money from the account of the GSB to the account of AAWS. Conversely, if AAWS has a profitable year with regard to net income derived from contributions and literature sales, AAWS may transfer money from its account to the GSB bank account for the Reserve Fund.

This resolves why Bill Wilson wanted to make sure there was no accumulation of large amounts of money in the operating corporations, but they also would have the necessary funds to operate effectively, so the General Service Board members are tasked with prudent levels being maintained for operations at AAWS and in AA's GSB Reserve Fund.

There is a bit of a twist with regard to two of the employees. First, the General Manager, who is the President of AAWS, Inc., also serves as a director on AAWS as part of his employment. The AA Staff Coordinator also serves as a director. Hence, two of the nine directors on AAWS are paid employees, rather than volunteer, trusted servants (trustees or non-trustee directors).

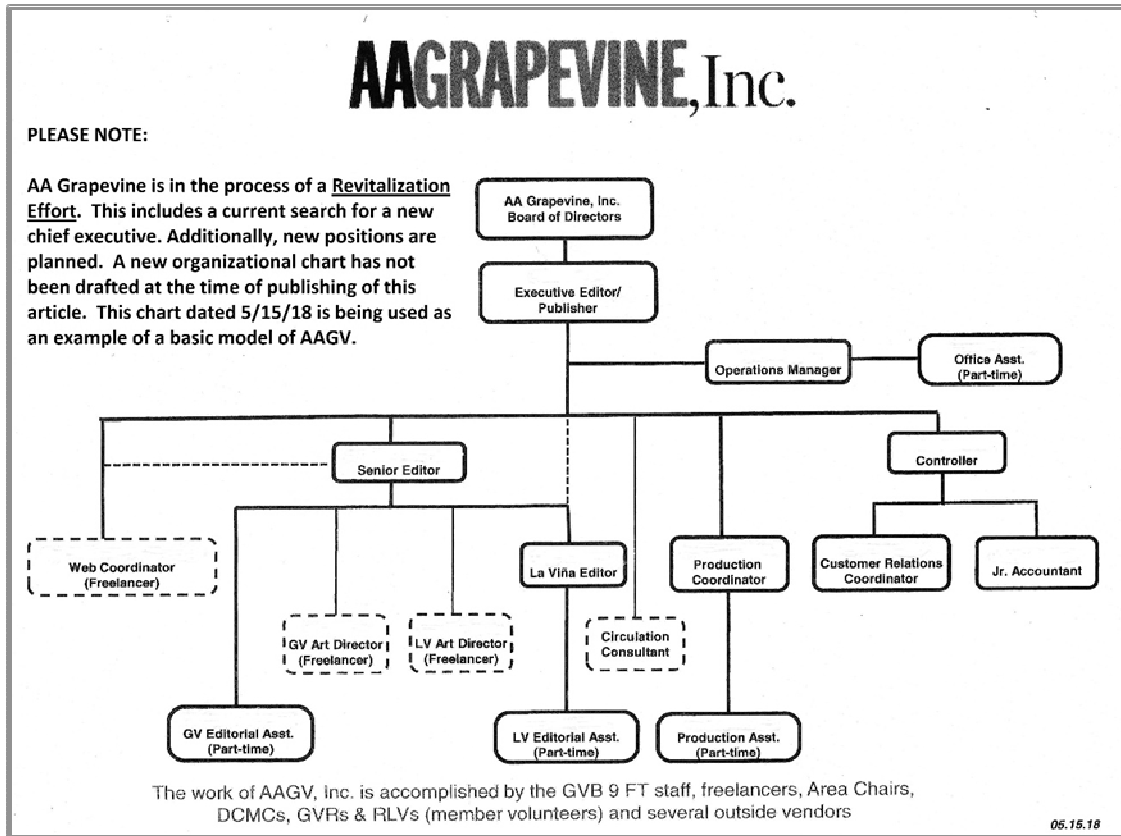
Let's now move to the other corporation I had covered three months' ago, AA Grapevine, Inc. (AAGV), and examine the employee structure. AAGV is much simpler and smaller. Below is the organizational chart as of 5/15/18. Currently AAGV is seeking a new chief executive and is going through a Revitalization Effort. While the organizational chart below indicates nine employees at AAGV, this will likely be changed as part of the Effort. However, this chart will serve to give a good comparison to AAWS.

Similar to AAWS, the head of AAGV, the Executive Editor in this chart is the counterpart to the General Manager of the General Service Office. This position also serves as the President of AAGV, mirroring the GM being the president of AAWS. AAGV operates in a very lean fashion, and the graphic illustrates that some positions are part-time and some are free lancers.

Because AAGV is purely a publishing operation and has a self-support mandate it constantly walks a fine line of insuring the financial solvency and stability while simultaneously providing both monthly periodicals (AA Grapevine and the La Vina) and also publishing books and materials that many AA members use as core to growth and maintenance of their sobriety. Additionally, AAGV's materials can serve as resources to carry the message to people in and outside of AA. Because the corporate structure and employee base are not supported by contributions to perform unpaid services like those that emanate from the General Service Office, AAGV has to rely on the AA membership, spearheaded by Grapevine Representatives and Representatives of La Vina to facilitate the use of AAGV's valuable materials it publishes.

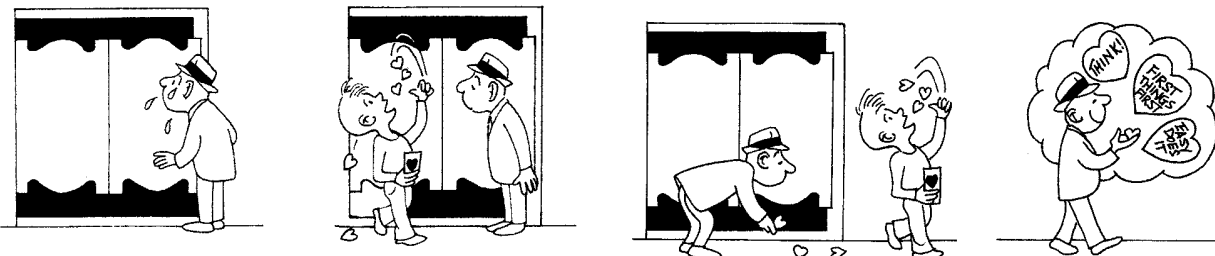
*(Continued Page 3)*

## The Employees who Work for Alcoholics Anonymous (Con't)



In summary, while the General Service Office's organizational diagram does not show it, it is overseen by the Board of Directors of AAWS, described in an earlier article. Likewise, AAGV has the AAGV Board of Directors overseeing its operations. Finally, as the Concepts describe in detail, the General Service Board, which was described in the prior article, has the final responsibility for these two operations. With fewer than one hundred employees, AA's 1.2 million alcoholics are served by these employees, as well as many global services for the 2 million AA members in the world, all coordinated by this small, sub-one-hundred group of employees. This very unconventional, lean organizational model is only possible because of many altruistic AA members that serve AA out of love for the fellowship that has saved their lives, and by virtue of their service stay sober and perpetuate our singular message of recovery from alcoholism.

Yours In Service,  
 Tom A.  
 WCR Trustee, AAWS Director  
 General Service Board Secretary



(Victor E. Cartoon reprinted with permission, Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc.)

## Contribution Corner

### Remember the Fallen

I had two best friends in high school here in Minnesota in the early 1970s. One of them was Randy. Like most high school friends, we spent a lot of time together, we double dated, fished, hunted, had parties, pig roasts, listened to music, debated the issues of the day, attended wildlife conservation banquets, you name it. We also used a lot of drugs and alcohol. We were partners in addiction.

After high school, I moved west, Randy stayed in Minnesota. Seven years later I hit my bottom, sobered up and moved back to Minnesota 1.5 years sober. I heard Randy was having a hard time at life, so I gave him a call.

Randy was glad to hear from me, but mad I waited so long to contact him. I explained that to protect my sobriety I had to stay away from old using friends. He sounded intoxicated as he cursed me out for keeping my distance. Then, Randy started to talk about the problems in his life such as the inability to have children, dissatisfaction with his job and comparing himself unfavorably to others who had achieved more. He was being real hard on himself and then confessed he was drinking too much.

"It doesn't have to be that way, Randy," I said, hoping he'd consider starting down the road to sobriety.

Alas, Randy would have no part of such a conversation, he changed the subject and soon our chat was over. It would be our last. A few years later he collapsed into a coma as his liver and pancreas shut down. Three days later he was dead. I went to his funeral, looked at the photos of his life displayed on bulletin boards, talked to old friends and wept when a mutual friend and I embraced.

Another old friend shoved a photo in my face of me with a joint in one hand and a beer in the other, threatening to use it against me in case I ratted him out. He snapped the photo out of my hand and walked away. I remember being that afraid, paranoid and angry and was grateful I wasn't in that world anymore.

We went back to Randy's house after the funeral to relive old, fonder memories of our dead friend. There, I pulled his grieving mother aside and told her I had extended the hand of sobriety to Randy, but that he would not take it. She thanked me for trying. I later made a donation to a wildlife conservation group in Randy's name. They gave me a certificate in his name, which I sent to his mother.

Randy has been gone some 20 years now. I think of him and the fun times we had those many years ago. We had a lot of laughs and adventures. I learned some things from Randy too, he was a smart guy. Many other Americans have been killed by addiction since Randy, but thanks to AA, I have not been one of them.

- Mark H.,

### ***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.

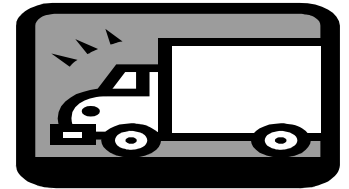
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