



AA Area 73 District 11 Newsletter

May 2023 Volume 100

West Virginia – Wild, Wonderful, and Sober

Grapevine Corner

“More and more we regard all who labor in the total field of alcoholism as our companions on a march from darkness into light. We see that we can accomplish together what we could never accomplish in separation and in rivalry.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., March 1958, “On the Alcoholism Front,”
The Language of the Heart

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” - John Muir

“Find a group of people who will challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life forever.”
- Amy Poehler

“We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others’ actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others’ activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others.” - The Dalai Lama

Welcome to the May issue of Grapevine Magazine. They are celebrating their recently revised and updated book, The Home Group, 30th Anniversary Edition, with stories by members about their love for their home groups because “Healing yourself is connected with healing others.” - Yoko Ono. I always start the Grapevine Corner with three (four this time) quotes I think are relevant to the months’ issue. This month I found so many good quotes, I wanted to use them all! “We rise by lifting others.” - Robert Ingersoll. Why not share them? I hope they don’t break up the text to the point that it doesn’t make sense, after all, “It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” - Harry S. Truman. Enough of that.

The titles of the stories members wrote praising their various home groups include: “Happy hour”; “80 years & counting”; “10,000 stories”; “Helping our own”; “Lost & found in Central America”; and “Tough crowd.”

I hope you enjoy the May issue of Grapevine Magazine as much as I do. Pat D.

5th Step

Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

5th Tradition

Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

5th Concept

Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

5th Promise

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

5th Reward

Self-respect instead of self-contempt.

District 11 Meetings On-line

According to the latest Where and When published June 2021, all groups are meeting in person or have a hybrid meeting format except for the following which are on-line.

Daily at 7:30am- Eye Opener Group Hybrid

<https://www.gotomeet.me/EyeOpenerGroup>

Dial in at [\(646\) 749-3122](tel:6467493122)

Access Code: 604-461-373

Daily at 5:30pm - Early After Work Friends of Bill W. Group

Zoom Meeting ID 671-314-2769

Password: 118

Daily at 7:00pm - Doomsdayers Group

Join Zoom Meeting ID 942-899-066

Password 049396

Sundays at 2:00pm - Women On A Journey Group

Join Zoom Meeting ID 274-008-239

Password: woaj

Wednesday at 7:00pm – Wednesday Night Men’s Group Hybrid

<https://www.gotomeet.me/EyeOpenerGroup>

Dial in: [+1 \(646\) 749-3122](tel:+16467493122) Access Code 604-461-373

District News

1. District meetings have also yielded the suggestion of holding more social events and there is current discussion about perhaps a dance, movie night, or bowling event. Please let your GSR know if you have ideas, suggestions, or interest in volunteering for the now forming “Events Committee”.
2. Also please note that if you’d like to view the monthly newsletter online, you can do so at <https://aawv11.org/>
3. And, if you’d like to have the newsletter delivered to your inbox every month, please send an email request to AAdistrict11@gmail.com
4. **We would like to celebrate YOUR birthday!** Please email your annual birthday information including: First name, last initial, anniversary date, and name of home group to: AAdistrict11@gmail.com

Coming Events *(Please see your local secretary for more information)*

- ✓ **The “Behind The Star” group is going to be meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of each month** (in May that’s on the 10th) for coffee and fellowship directly after our noon meeting. So, please mark your calendars to join us at 1:00pm at *LIGHTHOUSE LATTE* 114 N. Mercer Street, Berkeley Springs. In June, we’ll ne meeting on the 14th. See you there!
- ✓ **District 11 voted to hold a “Founder’s Day” picnic** (sometime around June 10th. Watch this space for more details
- ✓ **Area 73 will be holding it’s 73rd Annual Convention this August 11-13** (with Al-Anon participation). The event will be held at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center in Ridgely WV and there is an (optional) special with a reduced lodging rate that includes 5 meals! Here’s a link to a flyer for more details: <https://aawv11.org/district-events/>
You can register online at <https://www.aawv.org/wvstatecon> or for additional information contact them at: convention@aawv.org Larry C (740) 350-0175 Adrienne B (856) 701 9459
- ✓ **Lesli N. has everything needed for District 11 to host a Jeopardy Game Night** featuring AA related categories (Big Book, Important Dates, Steps, Traditions. Concepts. etc.) She’s purchased a 70” monitor and can set up the squares and categories etc. She did a test run this past weekend with a group and it was loads of fun! We are thinking about a Saturday late afternoon in mid July All suggestions, comments. Volunteers etc, please send an email to: AAdistrict11@gmail.com: The event could conceivably be held at the First United Methodist Church – 48 S Green Street- Berkeley Springs.

For more detailed information, please speak with your group’s GSR.

AA Humor -

A few thoughts from the comedian, Steven Wright:

- ❖ “Why is it a penny for your thoughts but you have to put your two cents in? Somebody’s making a penny.”
- ❖ "I spilled spot remover on my dog and now he’s gone."
- ❖ “I went to a general store. They wouldn’t let me buy anything specifically.”
- ❖ ”How do you tell when you’re out of invisible ink?”

Let's Celebrate

Anniversaries for May and the first week of June. As of March 1st the district has 4,099 year of sobriety with an average of 14.4 years per member.

Name	Anniversary	Years	Group
Raymond C	5/14/2014	9	11th Step Group
Fred H	5/15/1989	34	Camp Fire
DALE.H	5/30/1999	24	Eye Opener
ELEN. G	5/1/1976	47	Eye Opener
JAMIE	5/28/2014	9	Eye Opener
JENNY.F	5/27/2016	7	Eye Opener
KIMBER.S	5/2/2004	19	Eye Opener
LINDA.W	5/1/1981	42	Eye Opener
LORRIE.S	5/16/2016	7	Eye Opener
PATRICE.E	5/30/1988	35	Eye Opener
RAYMOND.C	5/14/2014	9	Eye Opener
ROBERT.A	5/20/2014	9	Eye Opener
STANLEY.S	5/5/2015	8	Eye Opener
TANYA.H	5/13/2005	18	Eye Opener
AMY.M	5/15/2016	7	Good Orderly Direction
BOB.W	5/31/2020	3	Good Orderly Direction
CARA.H	5/22/2014	9	Good Orderly Direction
Mark E.	5/2/2002	21	Hancock Open Door
George M	5/2/2011	12	HOW
Aaron M	5/31/2012	11	Paw Paw
LEE.G	5/15/2002	21	Saturday Group Inwood
Sue S	5/22/2017	6	Woman on a Journey
Stephanie S	6/5/2016	7	11th Step Group
EMMA.L	6/1/2019	4	Good Orderly Direction
NICOLE.P	6/6/2019	4	Good Orderly Direction
STEPHANIE.S	6/5/2016	7	Good Orderly Direction
Bob T	6/1/1992	31	HOW
John M	6/4/1993	30	HOW



MORE AA THOUGHTS FOR MAY.....

STEP 5

“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Admitting the exact wrongs and mistakes to ourselves is often quite challenging for those of us who live in resentment, selfishness, fear and dishonesty. Often what is most surprisingly is that the hardest part of Step 5 is actually admitting to these things to myself. My Higher Power already knows and I am only able to admit something to someone else if I myself can see my mistakes. After so many years of living a double life, protecting my alcoholism, keeping secrets, hiding my faults and shortcomings, etc., I had never fully been aware of the truth of my life. If I ever got a glimpse I quickly covered, justified, rationalize or excused my behavior.

However, taking Step 5 is essential to the fundamental change of personality required for my recovery. In its simplest form, the fifth step is basically looking at and being honest about those things inside us which block us from our Higher Power and from having a successful life. Although it is in Step Four where we do a honest moral inventory, Step Five is not completed until we have admitted the exact nature of our mistakes in how we have been living (our self-delusion, dishonesty, self-centeredness, resentments, destructive behaviors, etc) to ourselves, to God and to another person. The purpose of Step 5 is not to beat myself up or to be shamed, it is a time to become aware of/admit to the old garbage I've been holding inside. Unfortunately, my pride, fear and ego wants me to believe I'm doing well and that there is no need to admit these things...after all by this time we have gained an amount of relief due to meetings and the AA fellowship so we often are tempted to stall on this Step.

So why should we do a fifth step? An alcoholic leads a double life worthy of an Oscar award most of the time. More so than most people, the alcoholic is an actor who presents a character to the outside world that they want others to see, we cause harm to others and to ourselves. After completing Step 5 we no longer have to live this way. Because once we have completed this Step we are able to look the world in the eye, our fears begin to fall away and we start to feel at perfect peace and ease...we get to be “on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” However, the best reason for doing Step 5 is that “if we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.”

With each step we take in the program of AA we deepen our real practical commitment to our recovery. Getting a sponsor, working the Steps, (also finding a home group, having a commitment and going to meetings) keep us on a path of freedom and new way of living. Until honestly seeing,

understanding and admitting the exact nature of our wrongs we are not likely to have the willingness or the ability to choose another way of living....why would we? So, take a deep breathe, say a prayer, pocket your pride and illuminate every twist of character and every dark cranny of your past. It works, it really does!

TRADITION 5

“Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose — that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

All Traditions build on, support and revolve around each other and Tradition 5 seems to be the hub of them all. Each group, regardless of its individual customs, is charged with keeping the Traditions and this Tradition states that AA has only one reason to exist: to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. As a fellowship, as groups, as meetings and as members we have only one message. Spiritual awakenings and personal sobriety have been happening long before the existence of AA, we hold no exclusive “market” on getting sober; there are other methods and we do not disparage them. However, the only thing we share in AA is AA. It is our only message and we have no other. Anything other than AA is an outside issue (reference Tradition 10) and has no place in AA. Our co-founder Bill said that it is better to do one thing well than many things bad. The one thing that AA does well is that one alcoholic helps another alcoholic achieve sobriety. That's it! We have one primary purpose, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The Washingtonians tried to save the world, first drunks, then they got into the abolition of slavery, the temperance movement, etc., and as a result they collapsed.

Understanding Tradition 5 helps us when conducting AA business and when holding meetings, because it keeps us all going in the same direction, doing the same work and supporting each other in the AA work. It allows us to support each other as we practice these principals. Originally, a newcomer was not even permitted into the meeting until he/she had committed to this way of life (taken the 3rd Step). This usually occurred within a few hours or days of the first meeting with him/her. This is why “A Vision for You” concentrates on carrying the message when being asked how to build a fellowship (group/meeting). In that way the group or meeting operates on God's schedule, not our own or, as often said, because of a resentment and a coffeepot. Our focus, as individuals and groups, should always be to carry the AA message. The meeting or group will happen when it needs to and when it does, it will be composed of men/women that are focused on a spiritual life. Helping others in a way that we are uniquely qualified is a theme that runs through and through the instructions contained in the Big Book.

We carry our message in 3 ways. We do service work within our fellowship. These are the jobs necessary for the fellowship to function. We must all take our turn. Another venue is outreach. We each must make an effort to go out into our community; hospitals and institutions, jails, prisons, halfway houses, homeless shelters, and treatment centers, etc. Lastly, we carry the message by practicing the program on its most fundamental level: one on one. We must always each be making our best effort to show the newcomer and those we sponsor, how to employ the Program in our lives such that we live in a growing relationship with our respective Higher Power.

However, we can't carry a clear message to the alcoholic who still suffers, if AA is commenting on all sorts of topics that are completely unrelated to this primary purpose. This means that AA groups and members ought never express an opinion in such a way that suggests that his/her opinion represents AA itself. The focus of the group can't waiver from its primary purpose or the group comes apart and becomes individuals and their agendas...if that occurs AA will cease to be helpful to both the newcomer and the members.

CONCEPT 5

“Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.”

Concept 4 dealt with “Right of Participation” and the huge efforts that are taken in AA to have everyone included. Here in Concept 5, the “Right of Appeal” is addressed. Newcomers to A.A.’s General Service Conference are often surprised at the pains taken by the presiding officer to make sure the minority (the side who votes for something and loses), has a second opportunity to present their point of view. Even in a situation when there has been extensive debate on an issue which is followed by a vote, those who are on the losing side are polled/asked if they wish to speak further regarding their views. Believe it or not there has been numerous instances in the past when the minority view was so compelling that the Conference then reversed itself. This is A.A.’s “Right of Appeal” in action.

Bill W. pointed out, this right “is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority” and that this same principle should apply to the meetings of our area committees, trustee committees and boards. He goes further and said that far from these people being trouble makers or annoyances, the minority has a DUTY to present its views on issues of importance. The concept of the “Right of Appeal” recognizes that minorities frequently can be right and that even when they are in error they still perform a most valuable service when they compel a thorough and thoughtful debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority. “Trusted servants,” according to Bill, “do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves” and in exercising their “Right of Decision” (see Concept 3), trusted servants are almost always “a small but truly qualified minority.” So it is vital that in their own meetings those trusted servants pay extra special attention and deference to the minority voice.

This Concept also warns us of “the tyranny of the majority” and points out that in A.A., a simple majority is seldom sufficient basis for a decision. That’s why we usually require at least a two-thirds majority. Lacking this, it is preferable to delay the decision; or in the case of an election following the “Third Legacy Procedure,” to “go to the hat.” (See Service Manual, Chapter I). In AA, because of our “Right to Appeal” we can all truly be assured that once we vote on a recommendation, the conference had indeed reached an informed group conscience, and that our actions reflected substantial unanimity for the good of AA. The “Right of Appeal” also permits any person in the service structure, whether paid or volunteer, to petition for redress of a personal grievance. He or she can complain directly to the General Service Board, without prejudice or fear of reprisal.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Anyone wishing to submit an announcement, or story for the newsletter is encouraged to do so by emailing Pam Washington at AAdistrict11@gmail.com