



AA Area 73 District 11 Newsletter

November 2023 Volume 106

West Virginia – Wild, Wonderful, and Sober

Grapevine Corner

“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.” - Meister Eckhart

“From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of each other - above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received.” - Albert Einstein

“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.” - Albert Schweitzer

It's November, fewer hours of daylight and colder temperatures. I am not complaining because we've had beautiful, sometimes breathtaking Autumn colors so far this year. Thanksgiving is this month and the November issue of Grapevine Magazine is featuring stories about gratitude written by AA members. The titles include: “Love”; “The one-minute solution”; “A reason for gratitude”; and “Thankful for all I have learned.”

Grapevine is offering some special prices on gift subscriptions this month as well. Please go to their website at www.grapevine.org for more information and to see the many books and other publications in the Grapevine library.

To receive the Grapevine quote of the day, log on to www.aagrapevine.org and provide your email address at the end of the quote. Grapevine has started providing stories of the week in email which is another good reason to sign up. While on the website you can subscribe to The Grapevine magazine, order books, and play with the sobriety calculator among other things.

Please don't forget to read At Wit's End which is near the end of the magazine.

11th Step

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

11th Tradition

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

11th Concept

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

11th Promise

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

11th Reward

The love and understanding of our families instead of their doubts and fears

*Also, every Monday is Grapevine's fun half-hour Grapevine Podcast. It features jokes, interviews, and member sharing at www.aagrapevine.org/podcast. You can also follow Grapevine on Instagram at: [alcoholicsanonymous_gv](https://www.instagram.com/alcoholicsanonymous_gv).

And finally:

"I bought one of those tapes to teach you Spanish in your sleep. During the night, the tape skipped. Now I can only stutter in Spanish." - Steven Wright

"You'll never be as lazy as whoever named the fireplace." - @longwall26

"We need a 12-step group for compulsive talkers. They could call it On Anon Anon."

- Paula Poundstone

Ok, one more of my favorite quotes. As Marcel Proust said, "Let us be grateful to people who make us happy."

Pat McElroy

AREA INFO

1. Here's some info for those wishing to make financial contributions:

- District 11
Make check payable to
District 11
PO Box 1831, Martinsburg WV 25402
- Area Contribution:
Make check payable to
Area 73
PO Box 461, Morgantown WV 26507-0461
- General Service Office contribution:
Make check payable to
GSO
Po Box 459, Grand Central Station. New York, NY 10163

DISTRICT INFORMATION

1. This month we haven't yet received the minutes from the monthly district meeting, but when they become available you can view them at <https://aawv11.org/>
2. 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: AA-district11@gmail.com
5. If you know when/where you will be celebrating, please be sure to send to the above email address not later than the 25th of the month before your anniversary.
6. GSRs and long time meeting members, please notify us here if you notice any inaccurate info on the anniversary lists (members no longer active, in the area, or deceased).
7. **If YOU have an announcement you want posted here** (sober room for rent, items for sale, looking to carpool to meetings, etc.) please send your announcement to us at AAdistrict11@gmail.com. Deadline for submission in next month's newsletter is the 25th of each month

Coming Events & Announcements

1. **An Ice Cream Social along with a game of AA Jeopardy has been scheduled** for Sunday November 5th between 1-4pm. It will be held at 49 S. Green St. in Berkeley Springs. First United Methodist Church. There will be carpooling available from Martinsburg, so please **SAVE THE DATE**.
2. **The Berkeley Springs Group is holding their annual potluck on Saturday, December 9, 2023 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Berkeley Springs.** They will have a pot luck dinner beginning at 6:30. The meeting will have a guest speaker, and will begin at the usual 7:30. For further information or to sign up for what you plan to bring, please call Kelly W. at 304-258-0369 or email her at nineball@bsbdinc.com.

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

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:(646)749-3122)

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:+1(646)749-3122) Access Code 604-461-373

The 11th Tradition (LONG FORM)

Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

Let's Celebrate

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

| NAME | ANNIVERSARY | YEARS SOBER | HOME GROUP | SOBER YEAR |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|------------|
| Mark B | 11/25/2015 | 8 | 11th Step Group | 2015 |
| Nick A | 11/10/2017 | 6 | 11th Step Group | 2017 |
| Rob V | 11/30/2008 | 15 | 11th Step Group | 2008 |
| Shannon G | 11/9/2016 | 7 | 11th Step Group | 2016 |
| Sharron H | 11/2/1988 | 35 | 11th Step Group | 1988 |
| Shawna F | 11/24/2016 | 7 | 11th Step Group | 2016 |
| Don R | 11/30/1985 | 38 | Berkeley Springs | 1985 |
| Jeff M | 11/21/2015 | 8 | Berkeley Springs | 2015 |
| CHARLIE.P | 11/20/2005 | 18 | Eye Opener | 2005 |
| CHRISTY.N | 11/3/2014 | 9 | Eye Opener | 2014 |
| JESS.D | 11/18/2017 | 6 | Eye Opener | 2017 |
| JON.M | 12/17/2008 | 15 | Eye Opener | 2008 |
| LEANTHONY.J | 11/17/2012 | 11 | Eye Opener | 2012 |
| LEON.B | 11/8/2012 | 11 | Eye Opener | 2012 |
| LORI.T | 11/24/2017 | 6 | Eye Opener | 2017 |
| NICOLE.L | 11/14/2013 | 10 | Eye Opener | 2013 |
| SARA.B | 11/9/2008 | 15 | Good Orderly Direction | 2008 |
| TAMMY.H | 11/9/1994 | 29 | Good Orderly Direction | 1994 |
| Toby M. | 11/28/2014 | 9 | Hancock Open Door | 2014 |
| Jesse B | 11/11/1983 | 40 | HOW | 1983 |
| Joi T | 11/25/2015 | 8 | HOW | 2015 |
| Stacy R | 11/21/2016 | 7 | HOW | 2016 |
| Lori T | 11/24/2017 | 6 | | 2017 |
| Lynette J | 11/27/2017 | 6 | | 2017 |
| Pam W | 11/7/2004 | 19 | Behind the Star | 2004 |
| Justin C | 12/1/2016 | 7 | 11th Step Group | 2016 |
| Tom S | 12/7/2015 | 8 | 11th Step Group | 2015 |
| Paul B | 12/7/2016 | 7 | Berkeley Springs | 2016 |
| BERNARD.J | 12/8/2015 | 8 | Eye Opener | 2015 |
| BUBBA.M | 12/7/2003 | 20 | Eye Opener | 2003 |
| DAVE.W | 12/3/1978 | 45 | Eye Opener | 1978 |
| DEBORAH.S | 12/1/2013 | 10 | Eye Opener | 2013 |
| DOUG.A | 12/5/2014 | 24 | Eye Opener | 1999 |
| JEFF.F | 12/5/2016 | 7 | Eye Opener | 2016 |



STEP 11

“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

“The process of enlightenment is usually slow. But in the end, our seeking always brings a finding. These great mysteries are, after all, enshrined in complete simplicity.” – Bill W.

Step 11 is a desperately needed breath of fresh spiritual air. When we are actively drinking there is little to no focus on God. Usually our energy is spent getting what we want, when we want it and how we want it....self, money, physical appearance, job, relationships, power, possessions, prestige, etc., when it comes to these, we truly do go to any lengths. For some of us, towards the end King Alcohol takes all and our lives end up being nothing more than pitiful, incomprehensible demoralization. However, once physically sober we get to begin focusing on the spiritual. If all we were and had was stripped away (the looks, the money, the relationship, car, job) what would be left? Here is the beauty of the 11th Step – what's left is you and God.

Some people call Step 11 a maintenance step, but really it is a step rooted in growth. Our alcoholism is a progressive illness which means our spiritual recovery cannot just be maintained but must progress as well. We grow to become more connected to our Higher Power, and in turn we become more in tune with what our primary purpose is...to serve God and God's kids. For many of us, prayer and meditation are not things we actively utilized in our days of drinking, outside of the occasional “foxhole” prayers. You know the ones: “God, if you get me out of this situation, I will never do this again.” For most of us, these prayers never held any real meaning, and if we were lucky enough to get out of trouble it was no time before we found ourselves doing the same thing over again. However, deep down inside all of us we have a fundamental idea of God, in other words the blueprint of God is within each and every one of us. Getting in tune with this inner image is where peace can be found. Seeking spirituality is a wonderful and illuminating experience. Psychologically speaking, the belief in God is a healthy one because if a person doesn't have any spiritual belief then life is a death sentence.

After doing the work of the first ten Steps we have a solid foundation upon which to build and so now we get to grow and expand our capacity for new information about God, ourselves, as well as the world around us. This open mindedness and spiritual transformation is one of the greatest things about AA. In AA the concept of a “higher power” and “a God of our understanding” really affords every single person, from every walk of life, an unlimited choice of spiritual beliefs and actions. Seeking to improve our conscious contact with God really is just a constantly developing, growing and a deepening process. Life constantly provides new, difficult, exciting, challenging, scary, wonderful situations and people and it all has an effect on us. Which means our spirituality needs to grow along those lines...or as it is often referred to as living life on life's terms. Therefore, the Step 11 task at hand is finding ways to improve conscious contact and connection with our Higher Power regardless of the circumstances in life.

A consistent and disciplined practice of prayer and meditation seem to be the most effective means for building a relationship with our Higher Power. Step 11 includes both, not one or the other. Both are essential to our new spiritual way of life.

“In AA we have found that the actual good results of prayer are beyond question. They are matters of knowledge and experience. All those who have persisted have found strength not ordinarily their own. They have found wisdom beyond the usual capability. And they have increasingly found a peace of mind which can stand firm in the face of difficult circumstances.” – Bill W.

“And let’s always remember that meditation is in reality intensely practical. One of its first fruits is emotional balance. With it we can broaden and deepen the channel between ourselves and God as we understand Him.” – Bill W.

Sometimes there is a temptation for us to let our own personal spiritual path take us away from the fellowship and practice of AA. My sponsor was always quick to remind me that because we are alcoholics, we need the rooms of AA in order to stay sober and also it is our responsibility to help the next suffering alcoholic; our personal spiritual practice will enhance the quality of our recovery, but nothing can take the place of the Steps, AA meetings, service and fellowship. With the 11th Step we are adding to the many ingredients that make up the perfect sobriety pie and while many things enhance our recovery, nothing should replace it. While actively working Step 11, many of us begin to notice more and more times the presence of our Higher Power and the magnificent ways it works in our life; whether experienced in nature, through the unconditional love of our sponsor and other AA members and through the feeling of being anchored by our program during the storm of difficult times what used to be a fleeting notion becomes a powerful force in our lives.

Consistent prayer and meditation also help us put our focus on our primary purpose rather than on ourselves, which is an added bonus offering relief, peace and freedom. It also helps us to no longer feel such an urgency in controlling every little thing in our lives and to surrender our self-will, which leads to even more satisfaction and success. This is a spiritual awakening and with new faith, courage and strength we get to fully live our lives. The 12 Steps are kind of like a recipe for a spiritual cake, one that brings about a personality change sufficient to allow alcoholics to recover from our alcoholism. When we’ve followed the recipe of ingredients as it has been specifically outlined in Steps 1 to 10, and then put it in the oven to bake it in the spiritual practice of Step 11, we are ready for the icing on the cake...Step 12.

TRADITION 11

"Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us." (Long Form)

Tradition 11 is far more about ego than about stigma, far more about self-promotion than about personal embarrassment. “To us...[Tradition 11] represents far more than a sound public relations policy. It is more than a denial of self-seeking. This Tradition is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in A.A. In it, each member becomes an active guardian of our Fellowship.” 12x12.

Bill W. once said, “We had no public relations policy except for a fear of public relations. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.”

Bill W. personally struggled with this Tradition before it was written....same guy, two different examples. The first example is when a famous baseball player announced that he was an alcoholic who had been dry now for one year with the help of and through Alcoholics Anonymous. He was interviewed time and time again, becoming probably the best known AA member during that short period of time. Bill W. admitted he was jealous and began to seek speaking engagements and

publicity for himself. Bill said, "For two or three years I guess I was AA's number one anonymity breaker. A great example competitiveness and envy can be disguised as motives of altruism and desire for the highest good.

The second example is in 1954, when Bill W. was offered an honorary degree from Yale University. Of course he was delighted, plus it would bring a great deal of positive attention to AA so he took the offer to the trustees of AA. However, the trustees advised him to avoid this personal honor. Additionally, at that time AA now had the Traditions, in fact Bill W. had just personally defined anonymity in the Twelve Traditions, which had been published the year before. Bill knew what he had to do...."If I don't take this, it will act as a terrific restraint on big shots and power seekers in Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm declining for that reason only, not because I am so damn noble or anything." Without a doubt Bill Wilson was disappointed because he had never graduated from college, but he refused the great honor of a degree from Yale because he didn't want to break his anonymity and violate Tradition 11, because he recognized the grave danger of doing so.

Tradition 11 is an ongoing spiritual challenge to A.A. members. Many members have the attitude of, "When I was drinking, everybody knew I was the town drunk, why should I hide my identity now that I am recovering?" The answer is....for the good of the fellowship. If we claim to be members of the AA fellowship than it is our responsibility to follow the Traditions of the AA fellowship. Anonymity as described in the literature of A.A. has three parts: spirituality, community and personal identity, and public relations. They comprise a balancing act between A.A. members' responsibility to help other alcoholics and their responsibility to the group and their own sobriety. This Tradition of anonymity is for the good of the AA, it is not about being ashamed of being an alcoholic, but as spiritual protection from our own egos. The success of AA in staying strong and being able to help the suffering alcoholics of the future will heavily rest upon us practicing these spiritual principles in all our affairs, a wise vigilance, humility and the deepest sense of personal responsibility on the part of us all. There is also the utmost concern in Tradition 11 in protecting the identity of our fellows. Every newcomer must have absolute confidence that coming to AA for help will not result in public knowledge of their problem. Every member must believe that she/he can trust AA to protect their identity and every member must believe without doubt that they can discuss openly and it will never be repeated to anyone without permission. Pictures at conferences or AA events should never identify that it is AA and should never include anyone without their specific permission; pictures should not be taken inside a meeting.

It is vital to truly understand the spiritual principle of anonymity and why it still applies to today's world in regards to press, radio, film and now social media. As stated, anonymity does not mean secrecy or stigma nor does Tradition 11 suggest keeping quiet about our recovery, but breaking anonymity at the public level causes great harm to the name of AA, and harms potential members from coming. We, inside the rooms of AA, know that the program never fails when thoroughly followed. When we relapse, it is because we failed grow and enlarge our spiritual program in some aspect of our life. However, this fact is not commonly known to the general public and many interpret one member's failure as a failure of AA. How many desperate men and women will seek a tragic final end instead of AA because of this perception? So, we stay out of the public eye, letting the newcomer decide based on his/her personal need and not perception. As a fellowship we are here to say, "we were hopeless alcoholics and it was killing us. We found a way out. If you want what we have and are willing to do what we did, you can also experience what we have experienced."

General Services Organization (GSO) has stated that, "A.A. members may disclose their identity and speak as recovered alcoholics, giving radio, TV and Internet interviews, without violating the Traditions—so long as their A.A. membership is not revealed." It is pretty simple really...when discussing AA at the public level, members should not be identified at all by their names, and if an individual's name is revealed or the person is famous, they should never identify they are members of AA. Additionally, AA literature states that people should not identify themselves as members of

AA on any social networking sites, or anywhere else online that isn't a protected forum for AA members only. This "secret" Facebook page would be an example of a protected forum for AA members only so it is not a violation to post in this group, but it would be a violation to post that we are an AA member on our personal Facebook page.

The never-ending attraction vs promotion debate. Although "our work, as such, needed to be publicized...to reach quickly as many despairing alcoholics as they could, a quiet adherence to A.A. principles would be a better means of publicizing A.A.'s work than billboards and barkers." ~ Bill W.

Step 11 is spiritually related to the Tradition 11. In praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out, we become a source of attraction to God and give God all credit for our new lives. Step 11 poses the question, "How can we improve our conscious contact?" Tradition 11 answers that question by pointing out that when we do not take credit for the good we do we become closer to God. By changing how we represent ourselves in language, dress, and conduct ourselves in and out of the rooms of AA, we do far more to end stigma and promote the AA program of recovery, than any words, posts or book. To allow people to see the transformation in us, the spiritual design for living and the results of how it has worked in our life is the best possible promotion. When we live the AA program, people see four changes in our life—mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual—all four which are amazing and speak volumes. When others see the changes in us they are attracted so there is no need for promotion. Maybe the most important aspect of attraction is for each one of us to be ready when the suffering alcoholic walks in the door and then lovingly show them what AA is.

Anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which keynotes AA life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of humble anonymity, we give up our natural desires for personal distinction as AA members, both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations each of us take part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole fellowship and under which we may grow and work in unity. Anonymity is about our profound gratitude that many of us feel to AA and to one another for our sobriety; it is a spiritual principle designed so that the alcoholic offers their ego to the Fellowship, saying that "I am part of the whole." Unfortunately, we alcoholics have egos that quickly grow out of control by our desire to rescue others. Soon we begin to imagine statues and monuments erected in our honor. We begin to conjure images of an entire city being shut down to make way for our funeral procession. It is hilarious in a tragic sort of way how quickly our egos can balloon out of control. However, through the history of AA it has been demonstrated again and again, that our alcoholic egos cannot properly handle receiving public attention for our sobriety. Our egos swell at the slightest attention and when the ego swells, our relationship with God diminishes and becomes blocked. So we avoid public attention for the sake of our own sobriety and to protect AA.

There is an aspect of practicing Tradition 11 inside the rooms of AA. According AA co-founder, Dr. Bob, "since our Tradition on anonymity designates the exact level where the line should be held, it must be obvious to everyone who can read and understand the English language that to maintain anonymity at any other level is definitely a violation of this Tradition. The AA who hides his identity from his fellow AA by using only a given name violates the Tradition just as much as the AA who permits his name to appear in the press in connection with matters pertaining to AA."

Dr Bob wrote that one is maintaining his anonymity ABOVE the Tradition and the other is maintaining his anonymity BELOW the Tradition, while the Tradition states that we should maintain our anonymity AT the level of press, radio, and films. In other words, Dr. Bob said there were two ways to break the Anonymity Tradition: 1) by giving your name at the public level of press or radio; and 2) by being so anonymous that you can't be reached by other drunks.

CONCEPT 11

“While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.’s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs, and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.”

In this, the second longest of the Concepts, Bill explains in great detail the composition, functions and relationships of the standing committees of the General Service Board, its subsidiary operating boards, the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine, as they existed in 1962. As A.A. has grown and changed, many of the descriptions would be different today, and some of the issues that are addressed do not seem to be relevant any longer. Nevertheless, the full text is valuable as an historical document, and many of the principles still apply.

Underlying the service structure we have been discussing there is another, internal structure of service consisting of the non-trustee members of the trustees’ committees; the non-trustee directors of the two operating boards, and the executives and staff members. Members of this group not only support the leadership of the trustees: they share leadership with them.

The following are several principles which apply to A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

1. The status of executives: No active service can function well unless it has sustained and competent executive direction. This must always head up in one person, supported by such assistants as he needs. That person has to have ample freedom and authority to do his job, and he should not be interfered with so long as his work is done well.
2. Paid workers and how compensated: Each paid executive, staff member or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world. Cheap help is apt to feel insecure and inefficient. It is very costly in the long run. This is neither good spirituality nor good business. Assuming service money is available, we should therefore compensate our workers well.
3. Rotation among paid staff workers at A.A.’s General Service Office: All employees, except for office management, have their work assignment changed every two years. When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, every job in the place. There is no ownership of an office or position at GSO
4. Full “Participation” of paid workers: This concept is highly important. We have already discussed the necessity of giving key paid personnel a voting representation on our committees and corporate boards. They should be given access suitable to their responsibility, just as our volunteers do.