



AA Area 73 District 11 Newsletter

March 2024 Volume 110

West Virginia – Wild, Wonderful, and Sober

Grapevine Corner

"We live now in a global village and we are in one single family. It's our responsibility to bring friendship and love from all different places around the world and to live together in peace." - Jackie Chan

"The love of one's country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border? - Pablo Casals

"Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures." - Cesar Chavez

"Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival." - René Dubos

Hello everyone, welcome to March! Spring is only 3 weeks away and all the migratory birds will be returning. They will also be very hungry (hint, hint). I digress again as usual, but I wanted to get a little plug in for the birds who enrich our lives with their fascinating behaviors, colors, and variety of songs.

To quote a line from the March Grapevine Magazine: "In the Spirit of unity, this month we are featuring stories of sobriety and hope by our Spanish-speaking AA members, translated from the pages of La Viña."

The titles include: "Fresh off the farm"; "Building unity"; "The secret to a good party"; "A woman devoted to service"; and "Music, money & free drinks."

However, my favorite story so far is, "Shower not required" because it reminded me of how people are welcomed into AA regardless of their lack of possessions or living conditions. I am lucky enough to have a very nice place to live...with a shower.

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.

*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).

3rd Step

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

3rd Tradition

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

3rd Concept

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.--the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives--with a traditional "Right of Decision."

3rd Promise

We will know peace.

3rd Reward

Courage instead of fear.

And finally:

An 87 year-old man is out fishing. He was sitting in his boat when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up!"

He looked around and did not see any one. He thought he was dreaming until he heard the voice again.

"Pick me up." The old man looked in the water and there, floating on a lily pad was a frog.

The man said, "Are you talking to me?"

The frog replied, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up. Then, kiss me and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous because you will have me as your bride."

The man looked at the frog for a minute in confusion, reached over, picked him up carefully, and placed him in his front pocket.

The frog screamed, "What, are you nuts? Didn't you hear what I said?? I said kiss me and I will be your beautiful bride!"

He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said,

"Nah, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

3rd TRADITION (LONG FORM)

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

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



“AA Around the World”.

Check it out below

I’m just a regular drunk.

When I first arrived in the rooms of AA I thought I was “different”. I was a different race, sex, and much younger than many of the people I saw in the rooms. I hadn’t (yet) reached the depths many of you people talked about as I still had my home, health, car and self-employment. I hadn’t had any consequences to my health, my legal or financial status. From all outward appearances I was a productive member of society.

But the fact was, I was drinking myself into unconsciousness nightly. Each morning brought the horrible regrets, shame, remorse, and self loathing that are the daily companions of a late stage alcoholic. And yet, I tried without success for the first 3 years to get sober in AA without success. In part because I didn’t really want to stop drinking, I just wanted to avoid the consequences of my drinking which were agonizing. Because although I still had lots of ‘stuff’, inside I wanted to die. Each morning I had to face the reality that I was powerless over alcohol AND that my life was unmanageable. The sun was too bright, sounds were too loud and life was becoming impossible. Even while I lived alone, I hid liquor bottles in my home, and hid from everyone in my life how much I was drinking. I was sick every day with horrible headaches, vomiting, sweats, paranoia, and a bad case of the shakes. My skin reeked of alcohol, so I didn’t dare get too close to anyone, lest they notice it at 9:00 a.m.

And, I continued to try to run my life -as well as everyone else’s - while my disease progressed and I became more and more miserable.

At Christmas of 2003 my sister and her daughter came to spend the holiday with me and she got an up close look at what my drinking was doing to me. She saw that I was slowly killing myself and she said that she wouldn’t stand by and watch. Just to get her off my back I promised her that I would take *some* action : AA, therapy, rehab - *something* in the first quarter of 2004. What I was actually doing was what I always did- just try to buy myself some time.

Somehow, miraculously, after 9 years of progressively more and more drinking, I had my last drink in November of the following year and I got sober on November 7, 2004. I wish I could tell you what happened, but I honestly don’t know. I kept going to meetings, trying and failing to stop, and then one day something changed. I did not know at the time that would be my last drink, It was a Saturday night like any other. I got my bottle, drank it all up (straight out of the bottle of course), then went to another store to buy a second bottle. By now drunk driving, was a regular part of my day. I still don’t know how or why I never got caught

or worse in a wreck, but I never did. I didn't finish my second bottle, and of course I poured down the drain what remained in the morning, because of course, I wasn't going to drink again. How many hundreds of times, I had said/done this I can't begin to count.

By evening, I was still pretty drunk and suffering from a bad hangover, and that was unusual because I'd drunk less than my usual amount. But feeling so badly, I decided I needed a meeting, and determined to go to one that evening at 6:30 pm. It was a meeting I didn't like (the format and the people were strange) but I went anyway, not knowing that this would be the beginning of a new way of living for me. In the middle of the meeting, I had to get up and go vomit in the bathroom- I was that sick. I don't remember what was discussed, who I spoke to, or anything else about that meeting, but that day was the first day of a sobriety that has lasted for more than 19 years as I write this in February of 2024. I can tell you what happened, but not how or why. It must have been that the God I didn't believe in when I got here, did for me what I couldn't do for myself.

I got a sponsor (not my first) but this time a actually worked the steps- according to her direction and to the best of my ability. My life didn't immediately get better, in fact, for awhile it got worse. As the wreckage of my past began catching up to me, I remember saying to a woman in the rooms I greatly admired that (at 18 months) I was pretty miserable. She was 20 years sober, and said this was not unheard of for the amount of time I had been sober, but to just stick with it, and I did. I kept my original sponsor 'til she moved out of state 5 years after I got sober.

I got another sponsor, and worked the steps again with her, and she continued to work with me until she too moved out of state when I was 10 years sober. Then I got my 3rd sponsor and worked the steps again with her. What changed was that in 2018 I moved overseas and I neglected to stay in close contact with her. I also had no sponsees, no commitments, and wasn't working steps 10, 11, or 12 on a daily basis.

So guess what happened? I became irritable, restless, and discontented. If you'd like to know exactly what that looks like check out page 52 where the "bedevilments" are listed. It's a perfect description of my life at the time. Luckily I didn't drink - and then just as Covid was shutting down the world, I discovered my 4th sponsor at an online meeting halfway around the world. She's a 3 legacy sponsor, so after she took me thru the steps for the fourth time, she also walked me through the 12 Traditions- we REALLY studied them, and did the same with the Concepts! What a difference this has made in my sobriety and in my life! My life is now balanced with all three sides of the AA triangle, and instead of trying to live with only my steps for recovery and also have the Traditions which help protect the message (which is carried in the Steps) but also the Concepts which help us perpetuate the message.

My life is now rich and fulfilling in a way it never could have been when all I knew were the 12 Steps. I'm now my home group's GSR, and I have a handful of other AA commitments to keep me busy and focused on the spiritual principles I try to practice. I do community volunteer work- some formal, some not, but practicing the 11th Step each morning and again at night AND Step 10 throughout the day is working wonders for me- as long as I stay willing and humble. Relationships with my family members have improved as has my health, and as I age, I don't have to worry as I would have to, had I continued to drink at the rate I was doing 20 years ago.

I'm able to travel and enjoy my friends and surroundings, but the best reward of all is the sense of ease and comfort I used to only get by taking a drink. I now have a life that really is beyond anything I could ever have imagined, as I visit meetings all over the world and build fellowship with an AA family that I didn't believe in just a short time ago.

DISTRICT MEETING NEWS

SEVERAL DISTRICT MEMBERS HAVE MENTIONED THAT THE ANNIVERSARY LIST BEING PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER IS NO LONGER ACCURATE AS MANY PEOPLE HAVE MOVED, PASSED AWAY, ETC.

THEREFORE IT WAS SUGGESTED AND AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT LONGER BE PUBLISHED HERE IN THE NEWSLETTER, BUT WOULD INSTEAD BE PUBLISHED ON THE WEBSITE. EACH DISTRICT AA MEMBER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING IN THEIR OWN ANNIVERSARY & CELEBRATION INFORMATION

We are asking all groups and individuals to send their Name, sobriety celebration date, years of sobriety and meeting they are celebrating at.

Send to Rusty.danstuxedo@hotmail.com. Put in the subject matter "**AA Anniversary**".

IN OTHER NEWS..... Since the monthly district meeting minutes are now being published on the website: <https://aawv11.org/> they will no longer be published here.

DISTRICT INFORMATION

1. FULL District Meeting minutes are now being posted monthly, and 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. **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. FREE BOWLING NIGHT!!! – Saturday March 9th from 6:00-8:00pm at Pikeside Bowl 3485 Winchester Avenue Martinsburg, WV 25405

The background of the poster is dark blue. It features stylized line-art illustrations of bowling equipment: a pink bowling ball with three blue dots in the top-left and bottom-left corners, a light blue bowling ball with three blue dots in the top-right and bottom-right corners, and two bowling pins, one light blue on the left and one pink on the right. The main title 'Bowling NIGHT' is centered at the top. 'Bowling' is written in a large, yellow, cursive font, while 'NIGHT' is in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a thin black outline.

Bowling NIGHT

MARCH 9TH, 2024

6PM - 8PM

FREE EVENT

PRIZES

Pikeside Bowl

3485 Winchester Ave
Martinsburg, WV 25405

RSVP By March 1st to

District11Activities@gmail.com

Sponsored by District 11

2. Area 73 Annual Convention – August 9-11 2024 at the Lakeview Resort in Morgantown West Virginia – (304) 594 1111. Rooms at \$109 +tax per night – use room code “Area 73”- Flier Attached



The flier features a vibrant, colorful background with a blue sky, green hills, and a large, multi-colored rainbow. A red and blue rocket is shown launching from the rainbow, leaving a trail of green smoke. The text is primarily in purple and yellow. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo for AA Recovery with the words 'UNITY', 'SERVICE', and 'RECOVERY' around a central 'AA' symbol.

Area 73 Convention

August 9-11 2024

Lakeview Resort
1 Lakeview Dr.
Morgantown, WV
304-594-1111
Rooms 109+tax/night
Room code: Area 73

TO SOBRIETY AND BEYOND

4th Dimension

Rocketed to the

ONLINE REGISTRATION



Hosted by District 16
www.district16wv.or

For more detailed information on these events, 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: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

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS.....

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

MARCH 2024



STEP 3:

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

After Steps One and Two, where we admitted that we are powerless, admitted that our lives are unmanageable and came to believe that only a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, Step 3 requires us to make a decision. In simple terms the decision is, will we surrender all our thinking and actions over to the control of a Higher Power. In essence we become willing to stop playing God/the Director by trying to control everything. In the section regarding Step 3, the Big Book clearly explains how we have selfishly acted on self-will, behaved without consideration for others, focused on what we wanted, and explains how we ignore the needs and feelings of others. While we are busy pursuing our will and our way, we leave a path of destruction behind us, and we definitely lose contact with a Higher Power. So the 3rd Step has us redirect our attention to seeking knowledge of a Higher Power’s will for us.

However, a decision not married with action is merely a fantasy and it is meaningless. A "decision" to turn our lives and will over won't do anything at all, unless we take the actions necessary to make that decision a reality.

For some people the word GOD is a deal breaker, due to old ideas and beliefs, and the word “God” used in AA literature and meetings freak many of us out when we are new. Upon closer inspection however, and much to our relief, the Big Book makes it clear that an individual doesn't have to consider anyone else's conception of “God” but instead encourages each one of us to discard our old unworkable conceptions of God and to seek a conception of God that we are willing to give up control to and trust. As the Big Book points out, about half of the original members of AA considered themselves atheists or agnostics before they began the Twelve Step program of AA. In AA we have the freedom to lay aside our prejudice and we get to be willing to seek a “Power greater than ourselves.”

We get to call that Higher Power whatever we want, because any label we give this Power is insufficient anyway so there is no need to get stuck over a word. In AA there is spaciousness and freedom for a variety of conceptions and freedom to develop a positive, useful belief about a Higher Power. In Step 3, we make a decision to admit the possible existence of an underlying Power behind the totality of things, and we become willing to have that Power direct everything. We finally come to the place in life where we agree to offer ourselves to God-to build with us and to do with us whatever...without our approval. We are willing to be relieved of the bondage of self, so that we are better able do God's will. We ask for our difficulties to be taken away so that victory over them will show others the Power of God,

the Love of God, and God's Way of life. We commit to doing God's will always...no matter what. Definitely some pretty scary and exciting stuff is packed into Step 3.

TRADITION 3:

"Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation."

~ Tradition Three (Long Form)

AA's primary purpose as stated in our preamble - to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. AA opens the doors and offers fellowship to anyone who fits the eligibility outlined in Tradition 3, and AA leaves that determination up to the individual. All who suffer from alcoholism can be members of AA whenever they decide to, no matter what their sex, age, race, creed, socio-economic states, or religious preference. It does not matter what other problems they may have - gambling, sex, narcotics, food - those issues are left at the door. Those who attend AA meetings either identify and feel a sense of "belonging" or they do not and move on. We who have been in AA have seen the Third Tradition in action many times; the amazing transformed people, men and women who had hit rock bottom and came to AA in order to live. Unfortunately before the Traditions were adapted some early AA groups refused to admit women, inmates, homeless people, prostitutes, and anyone else who they felt might hurt the integrity of their group. This intolerance stemmed largely from fear, and this is one of the major reasons that we must embrace Tradition 3 today. The fellowship is one of AA's greatest gift to each and every one of us.

The reason that Tradition 3 was emphasized by the founders was to protect the fellowship from outside influences and to ensure that AA would maintain its primary focus. Some people today fear that the fellowship has been diluted, that it has gotten away from its spiritual foundations and primary purpose and may become so diluted that it becomes ineffective. However, even with this fear and in self-protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the alcoholic who still suffers. We cannot just expect all who enter the rooms of AA to know what alcoholism is or what they in fact are. They will come to us with only information they acquired beforehand (much of it wrong) and it is not their responsibility to know prior to coming to AA. No, it is our responsibility to carry the message to them; we must enter the dark cave where the alcoholic is, show the alcoholic that we understand and be armed with the facts about alcoholism. We must realize that a newcomer is altogether too ignorant, weak and confused to understand their fatal malady. If we raise obstacles, the alcoholic might stay away and perish and be denied a priceless opportunity. It is the responsibility of our current AA membership to engage newcomers upon their arrival, educate them as to what alcoholism is because most will have no idea, give them the history behind why we are structured as we are and the solution the 12 Steps offer. It is at that point that they can decide whether they have alcoholism. (If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. - Pg. 44). By sharing information about the physical allergy with them (only alcoholics have that), they can make an informed decision if they are a member of AA.

Tradition 3 also reminds us that we cannot affiliate or use the AA name in conjunction or attachment to any other organization...period. No matter how wonderful the organization or reason. When the world looks at us, they should see a fellowship that helps people with an alcohol problem to get sober. Nothing else.

Let us of A.A. therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive, and never exclusive, offering all we have to all men save our title. May all barriers be thus levelled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life --and a useful one!"

~ Bill W. (February, 1948)

CONCEPT 3:

"As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

The spiritual principle embodied in Concept III is "Trust." Strange as it may seem, at all levels of service, every trusted servant and every A.A. entity has the right "to decide how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises. In other words, they can decide which problems they will take care of themselves and which matters they will report, consult, or ask for help with specific directions. This is "the essence of "The Right of Decision."

But this means the Fellowship must have trust in our "trusted servants." If the groups instruct their G.S.R.s rather than giving them a "Right of Decision," then the area conference is hamstrung. If the G.S.R.s instruct the area delegates rather than giving them a "Right of Decision," then the General Service Conference is hamstrung. As Bill W. stated, the Conference delegates are primarily the servants of A.A., so they should cast their votes according to their best judgment and conscience at that time. This is another reason why it is vital that each Home Group elect the very best person available for the job of GSR. Our groups put a great deal of trust in the GSRs, as well as our DCM and Area Delegate. Similarly, if the General Service Board were to micro manage the General Service Office or the A.A. Grapevine, then the staff members would quickly become demoralized; they would become just rubber stamps and AA would become bogged down by bureaucracy and apathy.

However, it is important to note that Bill W. also warned us against using this "The Right of Decision" as an excuse for failure to take our responsibilities as members and groups seriously. There is no excuse of us as members to not make the proper reports of actions taken (inaccurate or sloppy minutes or treasurer reports); or for exceeding a clearly defined authority (violating Traditions under the guise of autonomy); or for failing to consult the proper people before making an important decision (other groups or the membership at large when making decisions which effect the fellowship).

In concluding his comments about Concept III, Bill W. stated, "Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other." Yes it is true that trust is a commodity which comes hard to us alcoholics; we don't trust ourselves and we rarely trust others, and this becomes even more difficult when our egos come into play. However, when the light of trust enters the scene, we willingly give our trusted servants and service entities freedom to decide how they will act. We trust them to choose which matters they will take care of themselves and which matters they will bring to those they serve for consultation, direction or advice.

According to Bill W. our servants are to be informed, but not instructed. Ultimately, we allow them to vote their conscience based on their best judgment and knowledge at the time. We trust they will act

in the best interest of A.A., because as Bill W. stated, "Conference Delegates are primarily world servants of A.A. as a whole, [and] only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective areas." (Service Manual, Concepts, pg. 15)