



AA Area 73 District 11 Newsletter

October 2024 Volume 118

West Virginia – Wild, Wonderful, and Sober

Grapevine Corner

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others.” - Cicero

“Gratitude is the single most important ingredient to living a successful and fulfilled life.” - Jack Canfield

“It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up.” - Eckhart Tolle

Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.” - William Arthur Ward

It’s November and Halloween is over; very sad. No children of any age came to my home trick or treating; very disappointing. Oh right, this is Grapevine Corner for November. I got distracted, as usual. This month the title of the magazine is “The Gift of Gratitude”. Gratitude is found throughout the stories, so please enjoy them.

This month’s special section is called “Neurodivergence in AA”. If any of you have no idea what that means, I am grateful to you. I have no clue. Quoting from the magazine, “Neurodivergence describes people whose brains process information differently than most people. This can include autism, ADHD, dyslexia, social anxiety, OCD, and Down syndrome to name a few.” These member story titles include: “Different, but not different”; “Rebuilding”; “I hear the message”; “Listening to life”; “The guy who ruined my meeting”; and “Pint-sized.” Talk to you next month!

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. Grapevine and La Vina now have apps. Check out the various ways you can obtain an app for your phone by going to www.aagrapevine.org.

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 freedom of a happy life instead of the bondage of an alcoholic obsession

*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 a few groaners:

Why did the farmer report the turkey to the police? He sensed fowl play.

What did the turkey say to the computer? Google, google!

What do you call a turkey the day after Thanksgiving? Lucky!

What do turkeys give thanks for on Thanksgiving? Vegetarians.

(Amen)

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.

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 11 Anniversaries.....

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

DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

District 11, meeting minutes from September 12, 2024 Snyders Bible Church 6:00 pm (all are welcome)

6:00 PM opened with the Serenity Prayer

Present: Bob D., Eddie, Marliene, Frank, Dana

DCM report: Bob D. Eddie from the Marlowe group is the new GSR. Bob passed around a copy of the South East Regional Forum will be taking place in Biloxi Mississippi, December 6-8 2024. Bob has information for anyone interested.

Vancouver is the international convention. There is a message from General Service Board about getting into Canada with a felony charge. You will need a passport. Bob has more information if you need it. The Area Fall Assembly of Area 73 is this upcoming weekend. This is a voting Assembly. Every 2 years at the Fall Assembly is a voting assembly. All positions will be rotated out and new people will be voted in. Bob will not be attending. Marliene, Frank and Dana will be attending.

Secretaries report: Marleine sent out minutes from August meeting. Thanks Marliene. She did put an agenda at the end of the minutes for the next meeting. Minutes from every meeting should be on www.aawv11.org website.

Motion to accept as written all approved.

Treasurers Report: Marliene has sent out treasurers report via email to all GSR's.

We have a beginning balance of \$4966.00, prudent reserve \$800.00. Available funds \$4100.66. Contributions from groups: Good Orderly Direction \$39.00.

Zero expenses. Ending balance is \$4939.66, prudent reserve of \$800.00. Available funds of 4139.66, \$500.00 seed money.

Keeping a year-to-date contributions and expenses for anyone to see.

There is a rough draft of a budget. Bob suggested having a budget committee.

The last years budget was used for this year. Bob suggested to hold off on budget for now.

Dana made a motion to except the treasurers report as written.

Frank seconded, all in favor

Committee reports:

A&T: Accessibilities and Treatment: **Carrie stepped down and Bob D. has taken over. Marlowe, H.O.W. and Eye Opener** has signed up for these meetings.

He has a chart for groups or individuals to sign up with days and time slots. Keep in mind an individual in recovery can sign up. WVU Detox/Wilson Street Martinsburg/ Mondays at 7 pm. Pyramid/Kearneysville/Thursday at 7/one man one woman. WVU Behavioral Unit/Martinsburg/not sure what day. Contact Bob D at 508-254-9668 to sign up for these. Must have at least one year of continuous certain sobriety time

PI: Public Information

No report

Corrections: Bob D. talked to Donovan, who is the Area 73 chair about us not getting in to the Eastern Regional Jail. Will continue to see what we can do to move this forward.

Newsletter: Pam is continuing to send out newsletter to everyone on the list.

Website: If you have any changes to meeting please let Dana know at danastuxedo@hotmail.com. If you have any anniversaries let Dana know.

For anniversaries we need First Name, number of years celebrating, where and when they are celebrating. There is a printable version of the meeting schedule on our website if your meeting needs to print out a few.

Literature:

Panhandle printing broke down prices for printing.

50 meeting schedules are .31 a piece

100-250 meeting schedules are .19 a piece

500 meeting schedules are .17 a piece

Concern, not many GSR's come to the district meeting. So if we print too many they will just sit in our locker at Snyders Bible Church. It was decided to get 250 meeting schedules for a total of \$49.47 total. All agreed. Dana will send updated meeting schedule pdf to Panhandle Printing and Marliene will pay at pick up. Berkeley Springs group took a few more Big Books for his group. We still have some Grapevines left and some books left. We need to revisit the book order. We were wondering if Stew has any books left. Bob D. is to ask him. The books we order are for groups to give to newcomers, not for resale.

Activities: Marlow has agreed to host a workshop any Saturday in October. We just need to tell the church what day. They have the capacity for 50 to 60 people. Need to make a flyer. October 12 at 12:00 until 4:00 on the 12 Concepts. Marlow would need to pick the date and we need to make sure Delegate Paul Hodder and Brian Tucker is available. We could go into November if necessary.

Grapevine: Grapevine is still an awesome meeting in print written, edited & illustrated by alcoholics.

Check out the website wwwgrapevine.org '

We will need a new Grapevine rep next year at rotation vote, heads-up anyone who loves Grapevine please consider that position for district.

GROUP REPORTS:

Eye opener group: all chair positions for daily meetings are filed. Picnic is Sept 21, 11:00 to 4:00 War Memorial Park. Speakers, raffles, prizes and food. Received 15 yes votes for a weekend retreat. They are ordering Daily Reflections.

Women on a Journey: Olivia G. sent minutes to Marliene. We are doing well we average 10 to 12 women per meeting, with several newcomers and return visitors throughout the month. We are seeking a new GSR to better participate in the physical at district meeting events. We will be celebrating our 8th year at our meeting on October 13th. We welcome women from many different places as well as our local district.

Berkeley Springs Group: Attendance is still down. The other day they had 3. Still looking for speakers for Saturday night. Having a hard time getting home group members to the group business meetings. Group said they would not participate in a retreat.

A Design for Living: Meets every Tuesday morning at 8:00 Berkeley County Recovery Resource Center. We average between 2 to 5 in attendance. Reading out of the Living Sober book. We are staying sober.

Marlowe Group: Eddie is the new GSR. His reported there where about 40 people at the last meeting. Averages around 20. A rehab is bringing people to the meeting.

H.O.W Group: Myself and our alternate GSR are out of town. HOW group is doing very well. I believe we took on a commitment for 1st and 3rd week of months for rehab speakers. But our homegroup member Jaime is in charge of that and he has the list. We voted no on combining our yearly chili meeting with a district Halloween event.

Behind the Star: New GSR Marc D.

Old Business:

Retreat update: Linda said we could rent the old lodge if we have one catered meal on Saturday night and provide the rest of the food ourselves. Catered buffet is between \$25.00 to \$28.00 per person They could house either men or women about 20 to 25, hold meetings and have a block of rooms at the other lodge and rent an extra meeting room. Estimate of 250.00 per person for the weekend. Fall of 2026.

Pros and Cons: -We need to act fast

- Discussion and comments from GSR's present:

-How would the district host it?

-How would we get a dedicated team of people to pull this off? You may need at least 12 people + to pull it off.

-Can we support this as a district?

-Suggested if someone wants to do it, go for it, the district will not have a part of it.

-Should the district financially support this event?

-Should we be affiliated with it in any way?

Final decision we agreed that if someone wants to do a retreat individually they are welcome to it.

But the district can't be a part of it.

We can support it individually but not as a district as a hole.

It was also talked about asking Brian T. about this at this weekend Fall Assembly.

-Order Meeting Schedules from Panhandle Printing

-Go Daddy www.aawv11.org, website is paid for 2 years. A check for \$409.14 was given to Dana K. from Marliene, for the host of the website and the domain name. The website was paid for by Dana K. on her credit card 2 years ago when we built the website. The old treasurer would not let us use the district credit card when we built the website. Going forward the district will have to pay on the District debit card for the website hosting and domain name. This will not be due until the fall of 2026.

NEW BUSINESS:

-Send out information about the importance of attending the District meeting to all GSR's.

-Voting on new positions soon

-Concerns about if we don't get more support at the District level we could go dark. That means the District 11 will not have any representation at the Area level.

There are 20 groups in the district and only a fraction of GSR's attend the District meetings. How do we help them?

-Upcoming elections. All positions and their responsibilities are listed on www.aawv11.org

-Book/Literature order (Living Sober, Grapevine, Small Big Books etc.)

-Workshop at Marlowe for October/November?

-Retreat information from Brian T.

Closed meeting at 7:18 with the "I am responsible" statement.

District 11 minutes October 10, 2024, Snyders Bible Church

6:00 PM opened with the Serenity Prayer

Present: Bob D., Eddie, Marliene, Frank, Dana, Christy, Mark, Linda, Toni

DCM report: Bob passed around the flyer for the chili cookoff at the H.O.W. Group Wednesday Nov 6th, 2024. United Methodist Church, Hedgesville. Brought hard copies of the newsletter. It is the end of our 2 years commitment for all service positions. We are looking for people who would like to stand for all the committee openings.

Available positions: For a description of what all positions are about visit www.aawv11.org

District Committee Member: Dana will stand for DCM and maybe Frank

Secretary:

Treasurer: Marliene will stand for treasurer as she has been alternate for some time.

Public Information:

Accessibilities and Treatment: Bob D. will stand

Corrections: Carrie said she will stand

Grapevine:

Secretaries report: Secretaries report has been emailed and should be on www.aawv11.org. Adjustment and clarification made to the minutes on treasurers report. Marlene motioned to accept, Toni seconded all in favor.

Treasurers Report: Report was given emailed out. Beginning balance \$4939.66. Expenses of \$409.14 for 2 years web-site hosting and domain renewal. No deposits. Ending balance \$3730.52. Prudent reserve \$800.00. Dana made a motion to accept, Frank seconded all in favor.

Newsletter: Pam sends out the newsletter. Pam voiced her thoughts about continuing on with the newsletter. She will gladly pass it off to someone in the spirit of rotation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A&T: Bob had a sign-up sheet to take meetings into the

WVU Detox/415 Wilson Street Martinsburg/ Mondays at 7 pm

Pyramid Healthcare Mountaineer, 3094 Charles Town Rd, Kearneysville/Thursday at 7/one man one woman

WVU Medicine Berkeley Medical Center - Behavioral Unit Martinsburg, 2500 Hospital Drive Martinsburg,

I think it is on Wednesday's, Contact Bob D at 508-254-9668 for times at WVU and to sign up for a day.

Must have at least one year of continuous certain sobriety time.

Frank said he went on the 26th he was told by someone at Pyramid told it was the women's week. We have questions about that.

PI: Public Information: Vance is moving out of the area and will be stepping down from PI. It was mentioned to ask Vance if he has any literature from his position.

Corrections: No Report Spoke to Donovan at the Fall Assembly. Donovan is the Corrections Chair for Area 73. One of the problems is ERJ just isn't AA friendly. Bob reached out to WV corrections and it was confirmed that each facility has the right to have meetings or not. Carrie said that she wanted to do corrections.

Newsletter: Pam is continuing to send out newsletter to everyone on the list.

Website: If you have any changes to meeting please let Dana know at danastuxedo@hotmail.com. If you have any anniversaries let Dana know.

For anniversaries we need First Name, number of years celebrating, where and when they are celebrating. There is a printable version of the meeting schedule on our website if your meeting needs to print out a few.

Meetings are updated live on the website. There is a PDF meeting schedule that can be printed off if anyone needs them. Send to Rusty.danastuxedo@hotmail.com.

We have to remember 2 years from now to make sure Area Debit card is charged and not a members card.

Literature: Meeting schedules are in and delivered to the meeting. We ordered 250. Some discussion about did we make a decision at an earlier meeting to order 1000. We were not sure and couldn't find it in the minutes past that we voted on 1000. In the August minutes it was reported that Marliene will get a price for qty of schedules to be printed and bring it to the next meeting. We voted at September meeting that we would only order 250 because the low amount of GSR's that attend the District meeting. There was no motion made on the amount we would order at the August meeting. Eyeopener requested for the district to get 12 & 12's.

Activities: We planned on having a workshop in October and it is not going to happen. Marlowe did ask the church and they said any day in October, there was a communication breakdown. We decided that we need to plan a workshop about 4 to 5 months prior to the workshop. Will possibly plan a workshop in Jan or Feb 2025. The Spring Assembly is in Martinsburg in March 2025, we are planning on having movie night with the movie being, My Name is Bill W. That is the goal.

Grapevine: A magazine, a meeting in print, written, edited & illustrated by alcoholics, awesome tool for newcomers or old timers. AAGRAPEVINE.ORG WEBSITE, check it out, new stuff monthly, many options to help us stay active in our sobriety.

GROUP REPORTS

Eye opener group: They had a great picnic and are going to do a group inventory on Oct 26th from 8:45 to 11:45. According to the traditions. The group is having difficulties and feels they need to do an inventory to get clarification on what they can do. They are not holding hands anymore and discussed alcohon.

Berkeley Springs Group: Still the same very low amount of group members. He is looking for speakers on Saturday night.

A Design for Living: Meets every Tuesday morning at 8:00 a.m. Berkeley County Recovery Resource Center in the trailer on the left of the main building. We average between 2 to 5 in attendance. Reading out of the Living Sober book. We are staying sober.

Marlowe Group: Eddie is new GSR she wanted to come to the District meeting an officially let the District know. They have an average of 40 to 45 people attend the meeting. Will talk to church about possible dates in Jan or Feb for the workshop.

H.O.W. Group: How group, Wednesday night, seven thirty is doing very well. We our submitting our Chili meeting flyer to add to website. Nov 6, eat at 6, meeting with speaker 7:30. Our group is in need of big books for newcomers. Just wanted to mention before we need to do an order on our own. We are also in need of more where and when's. I know we can print or copy ourselves but just wanted to check before we do so. We have switched to an Open meeting per group conscious and will need to update where and when's.

Behind the Star: Marc the new GSR, They added a few homegroup members attendance is steady at 6 to 8, sometimes as little as 3. But have a good core group that attends.

11th Step Group: Pyramid is bringing people women one week and men the next. Everything is going smooth. They haven't had a group conscience for a while. But everything is running smooth.

Sober Sister: They are growing slowly, and they are now on the meeting schedule. Initially there were only a few that had long term recovery. Now there are more and more with over a year. Dana said she submitted the meeting to the meeting app. But it is not on there still. Dana will check on that. The District has no control over the meeting guide app. They are in need of 12 & 12's.

Old Business:

We decided an AA retreat would not be something that the district can support financially.

New Business:

- Dana will send out information about elections coming next month. The concern is if we don't get enough members to step up the district can go dark. This means we still have a district but District 11 will have no representation, then we have no voice. There are 20 groups in District 11 and only a fraction of GSR's attend the District meetings. We will encourage all GSR's to attend the Spring Assembly. Then we talked about Marliene and Dana looking at what we should buy. The question of how much money the district wants to spend on literature.
- Linda made a motion that we spend \$1000.00 on 12&12's, Daily Reflections, Living Sober, Big Books for the purpose of reselling this literature at cost to the groups. Frank seconded, Then there was much discussion. All in favor. Secretary will send out announcement to get their orders to us by a date to be determined.

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- Alcothon: Due to the lack of help last year. Christy said they (didn't know who she was referring to?) are willing to do just a New Year's Alcothon. 4:30 PM on Dec 31st to 4:30 PM Jan 1st 2025. If a meeting would like to host an Alcothon on Thanksgiving or Christmas step on up. Christy would like to put a sign-up sheet online for people to sign up for chairing a meeting. All in favor. The District is budgeted for \$300.00. All in favor of supporting the Alcothon. All in favor.

 - Book order: The district could purchase books but we are limited in space to store them. Some groups are suggesting the district put a combined order together to save money on shipping. Groups are to get a wish list from their groups about what literature they want. We could do a combined book order to save on shipping. A \$500.00 minimum order for free shipping.

 - Talked about doing the District meeting virtual. We tried to do it on a phone at Snyder's Bible on the phone and it just didn't work. People on Zoom couldn't hear. Either no one showed up or maybe one person. Possibly changing the place so we can have the District meeting on a virtual platform.

 - Solution to deal with elections:

 - **Linda made a motion to have the November District meeting at the 118 East Martin Street Martinsburg the 11:00 am Saturday November 9th, at 11:00 am for the District Elections, meeting live and virtual.
It will be on the GO TO MEETING app**

Virtual Link – <https://gotomeet.me/eyeopenergroup>

ALL ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED OT ATTEND

Closed meeting at 7:36 with the "I am responsible" statement.

Next meeting will be held at 118 East Martin Street Martinsburg on Nov 9th at 11:00 am,

Contributions can be sent to:

District 11

Make check payable to District 11

District 11

PO Box 1831, Martinsburg West Virginia 25402

Area contributions:

Make check payable to Area 73 Area 73

PO Box 461, Morgantown West Virginia 26507-0461

G.S.O: Make checks payable to GSO

PO Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY, 10163

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

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE CAMPFIRE GROUP MEETING:

It has moved inside for the winter. Now held in the boathouse- follow signs.

CALL FOR NEWSETTER 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

Coming Events & Announcements.....

Berkeley Springs AA Group
Sixth Annual Meeting Anniversary Pot Luck

Saturday, December 7, 2023

6:30 – 8:30 pm

Please come and help us celebrate our anniversary of being a registered AA meeting in Berkeley Springs, WV! Our anniversary date is December 3, 1985. This will be our 39th year of continuously having AA meetings in Berkeley Springs and being listed in the District 11 Where and When.



We 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 703-622-7866 or email her at nineball@bsbdinc.com.

We hope to see you there!!

Held on Saturday, December 7, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Berkeley Springs

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



NOVEMBER

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.