



AA Area 73 District 11 Newsletter

December 2024 Volume 119

West Virginia – Wild, Wonderful, and Sober

Grapevine Corner

“Whether you think that you can or that you can’t, you are usually right.” - Henry Ford

“Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.” - Psychologist Emile Coue

“The person who broke you can’t be the one to fix you.”
- A note to self

“In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there’s something stronger — something better, pushing right back.” - Albert Camus

‘Tis the holiday season, gobble, gobble, ho, ho ho. I promise not to go on and on about something off-topic this month or about the day a bunch of us...(I just nudged myself to get to the point; geez, I can’t trust me!). Anyway, The title page has a tag that reads, “The Gift of Sobriety,” and the special section, as it usually is in December is, “Sober Holidays & Remote Locations.” The ingenuity and originality of the AA members’ stories are a big part of what makes Grapevine Magazine so readable. The member stories in this December Special Section are: “Best holiday ever”; “How I made it through the holidays”; “A gift that lasts”; “A place I call home”; “Any lengths”; and “Need a meeting? Call us!” I related to the woman in, “How I made it through the holidays.” That’s what I love about this magazine. There is something for everyone!

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.

12th Step

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

12th Tradition

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

12th Concept

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

12th Promise

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

12th 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, (this one will sleigh you!):

A couple is walking in St. Petersburg Square on Christmas Eve. They feel a slight precipitation.

"I think it's raining," says the man. "No, it's snowing," replies the woman. "How about we ask this Communist officer here? He is always right!" exclaims the man. "Officer Rudolph, is it raining or snowing?" "Definitely raining," Officer Rudolph replies before walking off.

The man turns to his wife with a smile. "See? Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."

Happy Holidays everyone!

Pat M. - ho, ho ho!

.

12th TRADITION (LONG FORM)

And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

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 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:+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

DISTRICT MEETING MINUTRS FOR NOVEMBER 2024...

District 11 minutes from November 9th, 2024. Location Eastern Recovery Foundation, 118 East Martin St.

Martinsburg WV

In Person and Virtual at <https://www.gotomeet.me/EyeOpenerGroup>.

11:00 am opened with the Serenity Prayer

Present: Bob D., Eddie W., Marliene M., Dana K., Christi O., Linda W., Makayla R., Jean P., Jennifer R., Jamie B.

Brenna L., Matt L., John S., Pam W., Robert O., Raymond, Holly, Miguel, and a few others.

For a description of all positions, visit www.aawvl1.org

REPORTS:

DCM: Bob D. did have much to report as nothing is really going on.

Secretary: Secretaries report has been emailed and should be on www.aawvl1.org. No questions about the report.

Motion to accept the minutes as written made by Linda, 2 nd by Matt. All in favor

Treasurers: Marliene emailed out report. Beginning balance \$4530.52. \$0.00 contributions. Expenses: Two

separate orders of Meeting Schedules \$126.80, PO Box 1 year \$182.00. Ending balance \$4221.72. Prudent reserve

\$800.00. Available funds \$3421.72. \$500.00 Seed money for 2025 Convention. Dana made a motion to accept the

treasurers report as presented. Christi 2 nd , all in favor.

Newsletter: Pam sends out the newsletter regularly but is willing to pass it off to someone soon.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A&T (Accessibility and Treatment) :Taking meetings into the treatment centers, hospital, detox in our area.

Bob has 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,

Wednesday at 7:00 pm

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.

Individual AA members can sign up to go in on their own.

PI: Public Information: No report. Still need to find out if he has any additional literature to give back from his

term.

Corrections: Bob B. reported we may have an opportunity to go back into the jail. Linda mentioned Carrie may

have connections to Eastern Regional Jail. Bob said he talked to Carrie, and Carrie gave him a name. Looking at

supplying the jail with Grapevine.

Newsletter: Pam is continuing to send out newsletter to everyone on the list email list. She let us know the

anniversaries is not part of what goes in the newsletter anymore since we have our website up and have a place

for anniversaries.

Website: www.aawvll.org

If you have any changes to meeting please let Dana Knowles know. You can text to 304-676-2052 or email at

danaknowlesaal1@gmail.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.

Things are updated in real time on the website.

Literature: We ordered another 250 meeting schedules. Marliene brought them to the district meeting to be

distributed. Marliene reported they charged us more because they folded them. We didn't ask for them to be

folded. Will not get folded again as they are charged \$17.24 to fold them.

We are trying to do a combined order with all meetings in District 11 who wish to order books for their groups.

Each group needs to get a list of books they want to order they will send it to danaknowlesaal1@gmail.com,

Deadline to order is Dec 9th as stated in the last minutes. As we have some new GSR's we can of course change that

date to further out if necessary. The combined order will be ordered through the district and paid for with

available district funds. When the combined order is delivered, we will contact the GSR for each group and let them

know what their total is. Each group will have to pay for their order when the books are picked up. Books will be

available at the district meeting.

Cost of books if bought individually: Keep in mind a big order may decrease the cost because generally, but not

always, the more we order the less they cost. If our order is over \$500.00 we will not pay shipping. This will

drastically save the groups money.

All these prices are for quantity of 1. When figuring out how much your group would like to order and your budget

assume you will be paying full price with no shipping.

New Plain Language Big Book: Not available

Big Books: Hard cover \$12.00

soft cover: \$11.00

Pocket Size Big Books: \$6.00

12 & 12: Hard cover \$11.00

soft cover \$10.00

Living Sober: \$6.00

Came to Believe: \$6.00

Daily Reflections: \$12.50

Activities: Marlene: Reported the best activity we had was a bowling night. We would like to do it again, holding

an AA meeting prior to bowling. Marlene asked GSR's to go back to groups and get their thoughts. The Spring

Assembly is in Martinsburg in March 21, 22, 23, 2025, we are planning on having movie night on Friday night after

the speaker. Hopefully My Name is Bill W. Flyer to be sent out soon. This is a combined effort with West Virginia,

Region 2, District 11, 13 and 15. District 11 is the Host district and will combine efforts with the other 2 districts.

District 11 will need volunteers to help with possibly the registration table, movie night and or hospitality room.

More information to come in January.

Grapevine: Joi reported via email. We still have grapevines for groups to give to newcomers. These are

free for GSR's to take back to their group to give to a newcomer.

Great meeting in print!

I have grapes and vines to pass on to new Grapevine rep and or alt.

Thanks for allowing me to be of service to my sobriety.

Workshop: not active

GROUP REPORTS:

Eye Opener: Marliene reported, we meet 7 days a week at 7:30 a.m. virtual and in person. They are putting in

an order for 15 Daily Reflections. Did a group inventory from the traditions to see if there group was running

good. Out of the inventory came a committee to rewrite the script. That committee met and rewrote the

script, will present it at our next group conscience meeting to see if it will be approved by the group members. They always need chair people and have pretty good attendance.

Berkeley Springs Group: No report

A Design for Living: Dana reported, we meet 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, Grapevine, Came to Belief. We are staying sober.

Marlowe Group: Eddie reported, we meet every Tuesday at 7 pm. Open discussion. Our attendance is really

high right now. 2 different rehab facilities attend. On average 20 to 30 people will attend.

Hedgesville H.O.W. Group: Jamie reported, H.O.W. group, we meet Wednesday night, 7:30 is doing very

well. He was standing in for Joi and Frederick alt GSR. They are focused on finalizing out 2 nd annual

Fall Eating Meeting. That happened on December 6 th , 2024. Speakers did a great job. We provided

food and drinks. Had about 50 folks show up. As of the last meeting in September the meeting is now an open meeting.

Behind the Star: Pam reported we had a group conscience after the Fall Assembly. Would like to put a

book order in. Pam celebrated 20 on Friday. Go Pam.

11 th 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 Sisters: Lina reported, Sober Sisters is past a year of existence. Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm in

person. We have about 10 regular women in attendance, some drop ins and occasionally getting people

from Pyramid. That is always a joy to have people. They are an Open step meeting. This past week they

didn't meet so they could go to H.O.W. They ordered used 12 & 12 books as they don't have enough

money to order new. Thanks to the District for their effort to help with a combined book order.

They are happy to be in the meeting list now. Happy that they have a regular core group of members and

all the original members are past 1 year of recovery and staying sober.

Early After Work Friends of Bill W.: Miguel reported he was filling in for Amanda, we meet at 5:30, 7

days a week. Attendance is usually between 25 to 30 people as well as on Zoom. At our last group conscience we brought up doing our group inventory. At the next group conscience we be voting on that.

Also they will be also voting on the book order. One of the things that is of concern is people coming to

the meetings tend to congregate in front of the restaurant across the street before or after the meeting.

They encourage AA visitors and members to hang out behind the clubhouse building. Once a week they

will have Pyramid bring some clients to the meeting.

11 th Step Group: Christi reported meets on Tuesday and Thursdays at 7 pm and Sunday at 11:30 am.

We average from 15 to 25 people at every meeting. Recently they have been alternating on Tuesday and

Thursday getting the girls or guys from Pyramid. It is really great that some of them keep coming back

after they get out of treatment. The group is very full of veterans, especially the CAT 5 veterans.

Old Business:

New Year's Alcahthon, Dec 31 st starting at 4:30 P.M. until Jan 1 st at 4:30 P.M. It will be at The Eastern

Panhandle Recovery Foundation. 118 East Martin St. Martinsburg. We need people to sign up to chair

meetings, set up, clean up, hospitality, etc.. The committee is Miquel, Christi, Pam, Dana, Marliene.

Reach out to one of these people to get more information on how you can help. You can reach out to

Christi O. at 301-800-8160.

Combined book order see literature above. Do we need to push the date back by 30 days we will discuss at

Decembers meeting.

Topic of discussion:

Do we want to change the location of our District monthly meeting, so we would be closer to the majority of

meetings that are in District 11? Do we want to have the District meeting virtual? We could vote on it now or

wait until the new GSR's are in office and let them decide. We have the ability to change the day, time and

place. They used to be at the mall, Salvation Army. At present District 11 meetings are being held at Snyder's

Bible Church just across the Berkeley/Morgan county line in Hedgesville. At one of the future meetings,

possibly in December. We may want to consider where can we have it that we can also do virtual? We did do

it on Zoom with a phone but there were problems with people not being able to hear and see everyone. The

room that Snyder's Bible Church gives us to hold our meeting is not handicap accessible. GSR's will have to

decide this.

.

New Business:

Elections: All of these positions will get information emailed to you from GSO at some time in the future.

You can always go to www.aa.org, I have attached information from GSO under each committee explaining

what you could do to be the best at your new position. Treasurer and Secretary is an autonomous position

so you will not get any information mailed to you.

DCM (District Committee Member: Dana K. danaknowlesaa11@gmail.com)

Alt DCM: n/a

Treasurer: Marliene M. Marlieneam29@gmail.com

Alt. Treasurer: Christi O.

Secretary: Jennifer R. jenjenmarie83@gmail.com

Alt. Secretary: n/a

Treasurer or DCM will jump in if Secretary is not present

District 11 Committees: I have attached some information from www.aa.org for you to look at. There is a good bit of information on that website under Inside AA then look for Service Committee for more information.

These are only suggestions:

Accessibility and Treatment: A&T: Bob D.

Alt. A&T: n/a

[https://www.aa.org/accessibilities-](https://www.aa.org/accessibilities-committees?_gl=1*_1rmql78*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSg)

[committees?_gl=1*_1rmql78*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSg](https://www.aa.org/accessibilities-committees?_gl=1*_1rmql78*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSg)

[s3zIAOMZjza2D5c4XoBQQ-7wtVlaiEXgCztgaAhbZFEALw_wcB](https://www.aa.org/accessibilities-committees?_gl=1*_1rmql78*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSg)

Cooperation with the Professional Community: (CPC) Stew B. Not present

Alt CPC: n/a

[https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-41i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_2Azkiglu%2A*_up%2A*_MQ..*_gs%2A*_MQ..)

[41i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_2Azkiglu%2A*_up%2A*_MQ..*_gs%2A*_MQ..](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-41i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_2Azkiglu%2A*_up%2A*_MQ..*_gs%2A*_MQ..)

Corrections: Carrie H.

Alt Corrections: n/a

[https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-45i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_veacsi*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSgs)

[45i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_veacsi*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSgs](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-45i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_veacsi*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSgs)

[3zIAOMZjza2D5c4XoBQQ-7wtVlaiEXgCztgaAhbZFEALw_wcB](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-45i_0423.pdf?_gl=1*_veacsi*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuou6BhDhARI-sAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSgs)

Public Information: (PI) Jamie B.

Alt. PI: n/a

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/M-27i_PubInfWorkbk.pdf?_gl=1*_1tquxch*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCQiAuou6BhDhARIsAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSgs3zIAOMZjza2D5c4XoBQQ-7wtVlaiEXgCztgaAhhZEALw_wcB

Grapevine Representative: Pam W.

Alt GVR: n/a

https://www.aagrapevine.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/GV-Handbook-01-2016.pdf?srsltid=Afm-BOorU-DmHv3l4zuRjS-odZyquep8v_5Tlgw9qbLK3ZW1b3zBQsLXx

Literature: Pam W. & Christi

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/mg-09_literaturecommittees.pdf?_gl=1*_1tquxch*_up*_MQ..*_gs*_MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCQiAuou6BhDhARIsAlfgm7v8oThv_LYriD4CSgs3zIAOMZjza2D5c4XoBQQ-7wtVlaiEXgCztgaAhhZEALw_wcB

These District Positions are not affiliated with General Service Office (GSO). You will not receive information from GSO about these positions.

Newsletter: Position is Open, Pam said she would do it for a little bit longer but would like to give it up.

Work Shop/Activities: Jean P.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as District 11 Secretary for the last 2 years.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve.

Dana Knowles

District 11 Secretary

2023-2024

Closed meeting at 12:45 with the "I am responsible" statement.

Next meeting will be held at Snyder's Bible Church, December 12 th , 6:00 p.m. If it's cold dress warm sometime it is

cold in the meeting room we are in.

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

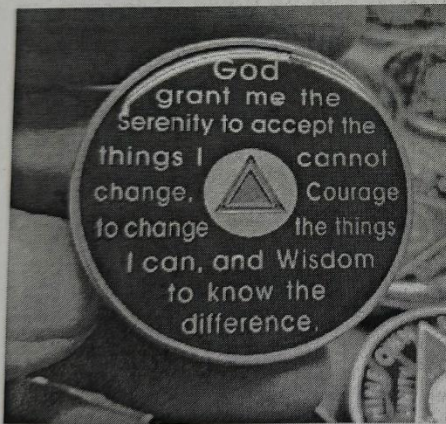
Coming Events & Announcements.....

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.



DECEMBER

STEP 12

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

If we have made an honest effort to work all 12 Steps, we are promised a spiritual awakening. Members of AA who have worked the 12 Steps often talk of feeling free, new, lighthearted and they also spend more of their time caring about others rather than on their self-obsession. On a daily basis we now have the opportunity to put into practice things that we are finally in possession of: a degree of honesty, forgiveness, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind and love.

Practicing the 12 steps in all our affairs includes turning our thinking and actions over to a Higher Power, making amends, sharing our experience, strength and hope, and giving back by staying active in service one day at a time....for the rest of our life. The increasing ability to step outside of ourselves and to fully participate in life is just one of the many amazing gifts of the 12 Steps. It's fascinating how change happens and we grow daily, little by little in incremental steps. Life events, people and challenges are easier to deal with as we practice the spiritual principles in all our affairs of our daily lives.

The first part of Step 12—to carry this message to alcoholics—relies on the second part—to practice these principles in all our affairs. Someone who doesn't live all 12 steps, to the best of their ability, often sees no need to help others. It's not enough for us to simply complete the 12 steps as a way to check boxes if we don't internalize the spiritual principles and practice them on a daily basis we have missed the whole point. When we do live by the spiritual principles we discover a way of living that we never imagined was possible and we gain an inner strength we never knew existed. Step 12 admonishes members to put the spiritual growth they have found to work not only within the AA fellowship, but in all aspects of their lives—to practice these principles in ALL our affairs.

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible. As the history of AA so clearly indicates, it was working with other alcoholics that kept Bill W. and Dr. Bob sober when all else failed. The same principle is true for all AA members: in order to keep it, we have to give it away. Carrying the message to others, by sharing experience, strength, and hope, reinforces the spiritual principle of the twelve steps in the person being 12th-stepped as well as the one doing the sharing. If nobody was doing any 12th-step work, the program would simply cease to exist. Without the service work of those who came before, no members would be here now.

Bill W. has boundless praise for the final step: “Practically every A.A. member declares that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done.” What's the secret to unlocking this sense of gratification and contentment? The power of Step 12 rests in the age-old saying that it's far better to give than to receive. The world says happiness comes when other people give us things—love, gifts, money, attention. A.A. members who practice all 12 Steps

usually find the opposite to be true. When they give back to others, they overcome their own self-imposed isolation. They build new relationships based on selfless caring and in doing so, they expand their hearts and souls. How true it is that, "life will take on new meaning.

To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends - this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives."

TRADITION 12

"We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of Anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him Who presides over us all."

I love the definition of contemplation which is, "concentration on spiritual things, a state of mystical awareness of God's being, an act of considering with attention," which is exactly what the program of AA has brought into my life.

"Tradition Twelve in the Long Form is one of the most beautiful expressions of what we aspire to be in all of our literature. It asks that I place principles ahead of my own defective, self-concerned character through the practice of the Twelve Steps as an individual and the Twelve Traditions as a member of the fellowship to ensure unity with God and the world around me as I seek to live in my primary purpose of service. It also reminds me that I need to remember that it is God who makes these blessings possible, and that I express my gratitude by carrying the AA message to others, as outlined in the Big Book as a member and through participating in the fellowship in a group which adheres to the Traditions and hence, the preservation of our unity. Again, of maximum service to God and my fellows. I never cease to be amazed at the wondrous work that God has wrought through our Three Legacies of Unity, Service, and Recovery."

~ Bill W. 1948

We practice this tradition for several reasons; to protect AA from ourselves, to practice genuine humility and to always keep gratitude in our lives. Giving up is an essential idea of Tradition 12 and the individual or group is asked to give up something for the welfare of the group—we give up our way. Tradition 12 stresses an attitude of humble anonymity and it includes all preceding 11 Traditions.

Unfortunately, the tradition of anonymity is increasingly being challenged by AA members aspiring to be public examples of recovery or advocates for "ending the stigma." While I'm sure most are well-meaning individuals with good motives ignoring anonymity, as outlined by Tradition 11 and 12, shows a complete lack of understanding and respect for the program of AA. Although this Tradition was born out of early AA's fears of public distrust and fear of being overrun by too many requests for help, time has proven that the initial instinct to maintain anonymity in AA was a wise one. For many, the temptation to share the program through self-promotion, publishing books, public testimonials and media appearances have proved to be disastrous for the individual and harmful to AA. It is also dangerous when members take it upon themselves to speak inside the rooms of AA as an authority on outside issues, including using speaking opportunities to offer personal opinions. Groups also suffer when self-appointed leaders dominate groups or AA as a whole. It has become very clear that anonymity is not just a good practical idea, but rather it is spiritually vital for the individual and AA as a whole.

Keep in mind that AA is not a secret society (Dr. Bob encouraged the use of full names in AA meetings), but on the flipside it is also not a personal talk show platform either and anonymity is the tradition that safeguards the humility of our fellowship. The wonderful aspect of Tradition 12 is that it gives equal credence to the contribution and participation of every single member and it directs us to practice humility in our AA work and not care who gets the credit.

Tradition 12 also means that the principles of the 12-step program should be put first, rather than personal opinion and to practice spiritual principles before inserting our own personality. The spiritual principles are AA's foundation and are our guide; rather than just what is convenient at the moment, what is popular or our personal opinions. Both as members and as the fellowship, we need to humbly acknowledge our dependence on a Power greater than ourselves to lovingly guide us in all our affairs. Practicing genuine humility is often difficult because it means when we walk into a meeting we leave "our way" at the door. Whether rich or poor, race, religion, young or old, gender, our education, or the level of success, none of it has bearing on what we can get from or what we can contribute to the AA program.

It is humility that makes space for the love of neighbor. In the absence of humility, the self takes up all the available space in the room of being and no other person can fit into it. In humility love makes space for others as equally regarded by a loving God. In this shift from relating to others purely to the extent that they contribute to selfish agendas, the self finds freedom. Humility then is freedom from the falsehood and delusion of placing self at the center of the universe. As Bill W. saw it, to recover requires the alcoholic "to gain a vision of humility as the avenue to true freedom of the human spirit"

CONCEPT 12

"General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that (1) the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that (2) sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that (3) none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that (4) all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that (5) no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the (6) Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action."

This final concept has been called "The A.A. Service Bill of Rights" and also goes by the name "The 6 Warranties." It is designed to protect us from ourselves and it gives us a standard by which we respect each other's spiritual liberties. It also protects us from errors with money, property, prestige, and power; through the principles, attitudes of unity, and a spirit of prudence.

How important is Concept 12? Well it ensures that we are guaranteed the freedom of selfless service...provided we observe them. In setting up the structure of AA, Bill W. left the door open for all kinds of alterations and changes for all the other eleven Concepts (as well as the rest of the Conference Charter) and they all can be easily amended except for Concept 12—it can only be changed by "written consent of $\frac{3}{4}$ of all A.A. groups." Not just the AA groups in American—it must be $\frac{3}{4}$ of the AA groups in the world!

Why? Because, Bill W. believe that these Warranties in Concept 12 indicate the spirituality which the Conference should always possess. Interestingly, this is also true to change the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions.

If followed, the Warranties keep us from the extremes of fear and recklessness, through the practice of prudence. Bill W., who knew it was vital to the survival of AA, often wrote about the importance of prudence in achieving harmony, effectiveness, and consistent spiritual progress. In AA, prudence is a workable middle ground, it is a channel of clear sailing between the obstacles of fear on the one side and of recklessness on the other. In practice, prudence is the only way in which harmony, effectiveness, and consistent spiritual progress can be achieved and the Warranties provide us with protection against needless errors, against ourselves and our temptations to wealth, prestige, power, etc.

In short, the Warranties state that;

1. We do not pursue authority, wealth, and power.
2. We live by a prudent financial principle: sufficient operating funds plus an ample reserve (one year of operating expenses).
3. We are not dictators and are not placed in a position of unqualified authority over anyone.
4. We seek substantial unanimity whenever possible.
5. We are not personally punitive, nor do we incite public controversy.
6. We are democratic in thought and action.

The Warranties also express spiritual principles which apply to all other A.A. entities as well.

Warranty One:

“The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power.” Spiritual Principle: Selflessness. The Seventh Tradition protects us against the accumulation of too much money. So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual member’s donations, “we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense.” And if we live by Tradition Two — that “our ultimate authority is a loving God” and that “our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern” — then we are safe from perilous power.

Warranty Two:

“Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.” Spiritual Principle: Realism. Although many of us as active alcoholics were free spenders, when it comes to putting more than a dollar in the basket, we all of a sudden get stingy. Thankfully the cost of the service office is relatively low in terms of the number of groups served, and hopefully if sponsors and home groups explain where the support goes people will give. The Reserve Fund in AA, should only be one full year’s operating expenses of the G.S.O. and the Grapevine (likewise for groups). From what I have learned, the Reserve Fund is made up almost entirely from income from the sale of A.A. literature, which also is used to make up the deficit between group contributions and the cost of group services.

Warranty Three:

“None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others.” Spiritual Principle: Representation. This principle is discussed earlier in Concept IV, but it is so important that it was made the subject of this Warranty. AA has a strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure.

Warranty Four:

“That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity.” Spiritual Principle: Dialogue. This Warranty is, on the one hand, a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and, on the other hand, it takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle

guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision.

Warranty Five:

“That no Conference action shall ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.” Spiritual Principle: Compassion. Although practically all other societies and governments find it necessary to punish individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws, Alcoholics Anonymous finds this practice unnecessary. Why? When we fail to follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts us down and no humanly administered system of penalties is needed. This actually is an enormous advantage to us all, and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack and punishment. It is vital to AA that this spiritual principle be practiced at the individual and group level as well. Of all society, AA can least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts which would result were we ever to yield to the temptation to punish in anger. We cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Our experience has shown that AA must cease to fight or quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity, and to the worldwide goodwill which A.A. enjoys, than public controversy, no matter how promising the immediate outcome may appear. It is very difficult to practice, but even when A.A. comes under sharp public attack or heavy ridicule (especially when we do not deserve it) AA’s defense is no defense whatever—complete and total silence at the public level. On the other hand, if the criticism of A.A. is partly or wholly justified, it is important to acknowledge this privately to the critics (also with our thanks to them) and make amends quickly. Regarding public violations of A.A. Traditions by our very own members, or when people try to use the A.A. name for their private purposes, any aggressive or punitive action must be omitted from our actions. Privately, we can and should inform Tradition-violators that they are out of line with the Traditions, however in the long run we have to rely mainly on the pressures of A.A. opinion, strong sponsorship and the discipline we all get from alcohol.

Warranty Six:

“That though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.” Spiritual Principle: Respect. The A.A. Traditions give the individual member and the A.A. group extraordinary liberties. In fact, we in A.A. probably enjoy more and greater freedoms than any Fellowship in the world. This as no virtue, in fact quite the opposite, it is self-preservation. We know we have to choose conformity to A.A.’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or else we will face destruction and death. Because we set such a high value on our great liberties and cannot conceive that they will need to be limited, the General Service Conference is to abstain completely from any and all acts of authoritative government which could in any way curtail A.A.’s freedom as a spiritual entity. We as AA members, expect our Conference to always act in the spirit of mutual respect and love; one member to another.

By following the Twelve Concepts personally, in our home-groups, in our various service positions and collectively in our World Service affairs, our fellowship is assured that we can effectively carry AA’s message of hope to the still-suffering alcoholic throughout our service structure, while maintaining a spirit of love, trust, cooperation and unity.