



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## NEWS SHEET

update

Aug/Sept 2011

“This News sheet is intended as an aid to service throughout the Fellowship in Ireland”

## The Language of the Heart

Big Book 3rd Edition - pg 9

The door opened and he stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different. What had happened?

I pushed a drink across the table. He refused it. Disappointed but curious, I wondered what had got into the fellow. He wasn't himself.

"Come, what's all this about?" I queried.

He looked straight at me. Simply, but smilingly, he said, "I've got religion".

I was aghast. So that was it – last summer an alcoholic crackpot; now, I suspected, a little cracked about religion. He had that starry-eyed look. Yes, the old boy was on fire all right. But bless his heart, let him rant! Besides, my gin would last longer than his preaching.

But he did no ranting. In a matter of fact way he told how two men had appeared in court, persuading the judge to suspend his commitment. They had told of a simple religious idea and a practical program of action. That was two months ago and the result was self-evident. It worked!

He had come to pass his experience along to me – if I cared to have it.

### AA Comes of Age - pg 140

Let's begin with my own sponsor, Ebby. When Ebby heard how serious my drinking was, he resolved to visit me. He was in New York; I was in Brooklyn. His resolve was not enough; he had to take action and spend money. He called me on the phone and then got into the subway; total cost, ten cents. At the level of the telephone booth and subway turnstile, spirituality and money began to mix. One without the other would have amounted to nothing at all. Right then and there, Ebby established the principle that AA in action calls for the sacrifice of much time and a little money.

Bill

Ebby

### Language of the Heart - pg 36

As I continued to recollect, the vision of Ebby looking at me across our kitchen table became wonderfully vivid. As most AAs know, he spoke to me of the release from hopelessness that had come to him (through the Oxford Groups) as the result of self-survey, restitution, outgoing helpfulness to others, and prayer. In short, he was proposing the attitudes and principles that I used later in developing AA's Twelve Steps to recovery.

It had happened. One alcoholic had effectively carried the message to another. Ebby had been enabled to bring me the gift of grace because he could reach me at depth through the language of the heart. He had pushed ajar that great gate through which all in AA have since passed to find their freedom under God.

### Pass It On - Pg 336

Bill's behaviour toward Ebby – even given his generous nature and his debt of affection to the man he called his sponsor – went beyond the comprehension of many of his friends. Bill simply could not do enough for Ebby. This, given the fact that Ebby (after his family money had run out) could do very little for himself, meant that Bill undertook major responsibility for him until Ebby died – sober – in 1966.

## I Had Hoped That You Could Help. . .

Dare we tell others that how we recovered is strictly our own business?

JOHN Y. has got to be the most dedicated and active member of AA I have known in my four years in the Fellowship. What's more, John Y. is my sponsor, and that's why I was so upset about this thing that happened to him.

When I say dedicated and active, I mean John Y. thinks nothing of driving a hundred miles in a blizzard to speak at a meeting, and when he stands up and says, "My name is John Y. and I'm an alcoholic," everyone knows they're going to get the real word straight from the book.

When a newcomer slinks into our meeting, you can bet that John Y. will be at the door and will be the first to stick out his hand and say, "Welcome, friend. My name is John Y."

Then, too, when there's any question about the Traditions and such, John Y. is the man who has done his homework and can give you chapter and verse.

Early on in my AA sobriety, John Y. set me straight on the anonymity tradition. He explained that telling people about your membership in

AA—even on a personal, face-to-face basis—is merely feeding your own ego. "God meant us to be sober," he says, "and it's strictly our own business how we stay that way. What's more, if I tell someone I'm in AA and then—God forbid—I ever take a drink, I'm doing a lot of damage to AA."

All in all, there are a lot of people in our group who feel that John Y. is sort of the sticking plaster that holds the whole group together. I'm sure I don't know what I'd do without him, and it isn't just that he's my sponsor.

Now about this thing that happened to John Y. He works for the 29 electric company—some sort of clerical job—I don't know just what. John Y.'s boss is apparently a pretty nice guy. During John Y.'s drinking days, his boss covered for him the best he could, so John Y. never lost his job. After John Y. sobered up, they never talked about it. John Y. naturally felt that his sobriety spoke for itself, and the boss didn't ask any questions—except just once.

That was a couple of years ago when John Y. and his boss ran into each other at the local diner one Saturday morning, over a cup of coffee. The boss sort of fished around about how come John was

managing to stay sober, and John Y. made it clear to him, nicely but firmly, that this was strictly his own business. So the boss right away backed off.

Well now, to get down to this thing that has got John Y. so upset. Here's what happened.

John Y. was having a cup of coffee at the diner last Saturday when again in walks his boss. According to John Y., the boss looked terrible—almost like he'd been crying. He sat down next to John Y., and for a while he didn't say a word.

Finally, John Y. says to him, "Mr. Brady, you look like something was on your mind."

"Yeah," says Mr. Brady. "My son." "He sick?" asked John Y.

Mr. Brady didn't answer right away.

Finally he says, "John, it's a problem I had hoped you knew something about—alcoholism."

"Your son got a problem with alcohol?" asked John Y.

"Not now," said Mr. Brady. "He's dead."

*B. F. P.  
Manhattan, New York  
Grapevine January 1973*

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## THE ROAD BACK

Issue No 2 June 1949

Dying Embers . . .

A certain sponsor was worried about a backslider who once had been a regular attendant at meetings. He went to the man's home and found him sitting over an open fire. Without saying a word, the sponsor took up the thongs, lifted a glowing coal from the fire and laid it aside on the hearthstone. In silence they watched it dying out, whereupon the backslider exclaimed; "You need not say a single word. I'll be at the next meeting."

*Co-Ordinator St Louis*

## Concept XII

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

This Concept consists of the General Warranties of the General Service Conference. It is cast in stone; that is, although Bill leaves the door open for alterations and changes in the other Concepts and points out that the rest of the Conference Charter "can be readily amended", these General Warranties – like the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions – be changed only by "written consent of three-quarters of all AA groups" in the world!

### Why?

Because "these Warranties indicate the qualities of prudence and spirituality which the Conference should always possess....These are the permanent bonds that hold the Conference fast to the movement it serves".

The Warranties also express spiritual principles which apply to all other AA entities as well. Let us, then, consider these principles one by one:

**Warranty One:** "The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power". The Seventh Tradition protects us against the accumulation of too much money. So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual members' 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". Although many of us as active alcoholics were free spenders, when it comes to supporting "AA service overhead, we are apt to turn a bit reluctant". Yet, in AA the cost of the service office is relatively low in terms of the number of groups served, and if the need for support is made clear, the contributions are forthcoming. The Reserve Fund should be one full year's operating expenses of the GSO and the Grapevine. The Reserve Fund comes almost entirely from income from the sale of AA 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". This principle is discussed earlier in Concept IV, but "it is so important, we have made it the subject of this Warranty" – a "strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure".

**Warranty Four:** "That all important decision should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity". 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". Although practically all other societies and governments find it necessary to punish individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws, Alcoholics Anonymous find this practice unnecessary.

When we fail to follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts us down. No humanly administered system of penalties is needed. This unique condition is an enormous advantage to us all, one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack and punishment. Of all societies, ours can least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts which would result were we ever to yield to the temptation to punish in anger.

For much the same reason, we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defence. Our experience has shown that, providentially, AA has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the worldwide goodwill which AA enjoys than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Some situations which may require Conference consideration are:

AA may come under "sharp public attack or heavy ridicule" – perhaps "With little or no justification in fact. Our best defence in these situations would be no defence whatever – namely, complete silence at the public level. If the criticism of AA is partly or wholly justified, it may be well to acknowledge this privately to the critics – with our thanks.

Public violations of AA Traditions.

Our own members may try to use the AA name for their private purposes. "Aggressive or punitive action, even in this area, must be omitted. Privately, we can inform Tradition-violators that they are out of order. When they persist, we can use such other resources of persuasion as we have. In the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly on the pressures of AA opinion and public opinion".

"Another kind of problem is the severe internal disagreement that comes to unwelcome public attention". As GSO "is not a police operation", we can only offer AA's experience as a matter of information.

**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 service, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action".

The AA Traditions accord the individual member and the AA group extraordinary liberties. In fact, we AA's probably enjoy more and greater freedoms than any Fellowship in the world. We claim this as no virtue. We know we have to choose conformity to AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or else face dissolution and death.

"Because we set such a high value on our great liberties and cannot conceive that they will need to be limited, we here specially enjoin our General Service Conference to abstain completely from any and all acts of authoritative government which could in any way curtail AA's freedom under God. We expect our Conference always to try to act in the spirit mutual respect and love – one member to another.

"Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of Alcoholics Anonymous. May our General Service Conference be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty".

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*update*

**Conventions Ireland**

**Tipperary Area** 26-28 August 2011  
 Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

**Clare Area** 7-9 October 2011  
 Auburn Lodge Hotel, Galway Road,  
 Ennis, Co. Clare.

**Donegal Area** 121-23 October 2011  
 The Central Hotel, Donegal Town, Donegal.

**Kerry Area** 11-13 November 2011  
 Mount Brandon Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

**Mayo Area** 25-27 November 2011  
 Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

**Galway West Area** 6-8 January 2012  
 Galway Bay Hotel, Galway.

**Waterford Area** 20-22 January 2012  
 The Majestic Hotel, Tramore, Co. Waterford.

**Limerick Area** 3-5 February 2012  
 The Strand Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick.

**One Day Events Ireland**

**Armagh Day of Gratitude**  
**Saturday 20th August 2011**  
 The City Hotel, Armagh, Co. Armagh.

**Carlow Group Day of Unity**  
**Saturday 3rd September 2011 (from 10.30am)**  
 Talbot Hotel, Carlow.

**Down Day of Gratitude**  
**Saturday 10th September 2011**  
 The Marine Court Hotel, Bangor, Co. Down.

**Donnybrook Group Day of Gratitude**  
**Saturday 10th September 2011**  
 Health Centre rear of Donnybrook Church, Dublin 4.

**Conventions Abroad**

**Sweden** 6-7 August 2011  
 Malmo Borgarskola, Regementsgatan 36,  
 Malmo, Sweden. [www.aa.se](http://www.aa.se)

**Netherlands** 19-21 August 2011  
 Info & registration at  
[www.aa-netherlands.org](http://www.aa-netherlands.org)

**Malta** 28-30 October 2011  
 Golden Tuplip Vivaldi Hotel, Drogonara Road,  
 St. Julians, STJ3141, Malta.  
[www.aamalta.org](http://www.aamalta.org)

**Korea** 4-6 November 2011  
 GyeongJu, KyoYuk MunHaw HowKwan.  
[www.aakorea.co.kr](http://www.aakorea.co.kr)

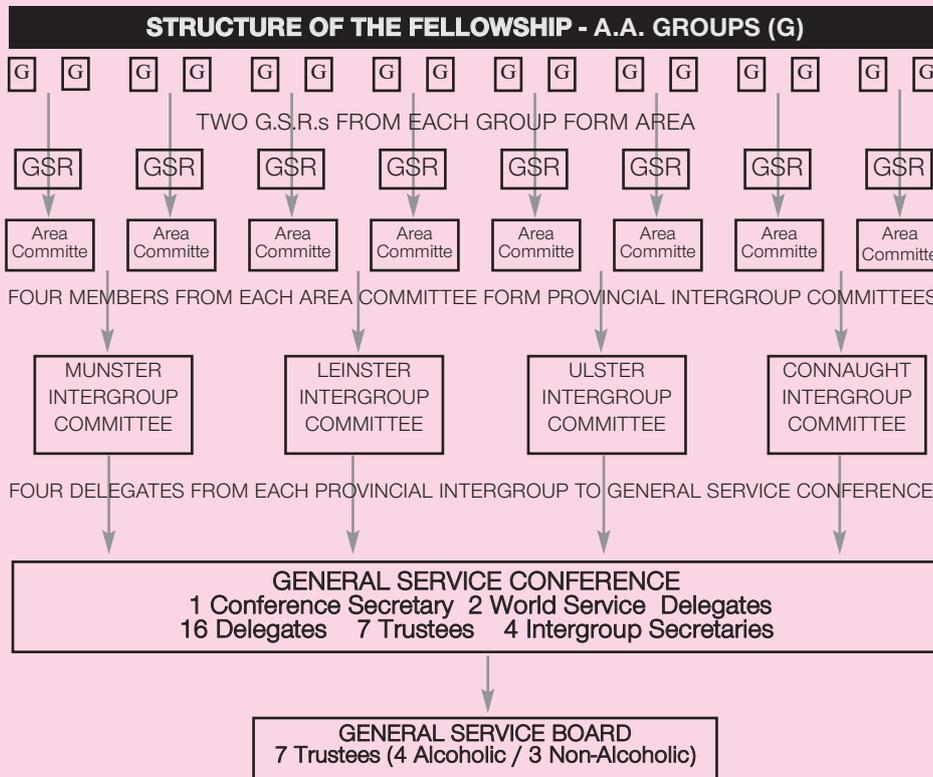
**Costa Del Sol** 25-27 November 2011  
 Fuengirola, Spain. [www.aaconventionSpain.org](http://www.aaconventionSpain.org)

**Lanzarote** 27-29 January 2012  
 Barcelo Hotel, Costa Teguisse, Lanzarote.  
[www.aalanzarote.com](http://www.aalanzarote.com)

**55th All Ireland Convention - Theme 'Comes of Age'**

20th - 22nd April 2012 Green Isle Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin.

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