



News Sheet

Issue: Feb/Mar 2020

AA's Legacy of Service

Recovery, Unity, Service—these are the Three Legacies given to the whole membership of A.A by its founders and their fellow oldtimers

When this heritage was announced, at the St. Louis Convention in 1955, celebrating A.A.'s 20th birthday, Doctor Bob was already gone. But Bill W. spoke for him and the other pioneers, as well as for himself, in turning over to all of us the responsibility for A.A.'s continuation and growth. "The A.A. Service Manual," current version of the handbook first known as "The Third Legacy Manual," may seem to be simply a guide to organization and procedure, and its approach is indeed practical. At the same time, it is based firmly upon spiritual principles, as Bill explains in his introduction to the manual, reprinted here to recall the development of our Third Legacy.

Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

This News Sheet is intended as an aid to Service in AA.

The views and opinions expressed in the News Sheet are not necessarily those of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland.

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PREAMBLE ©

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

(Extracts from pamphlet — *AA's Legacy of Service* which is a reprint from the *AA Service Manual*, produced by AAWS.

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Vital to AA's Growth

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion. Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A.

The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that

A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole; namely, the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., the A.A. 3 Grapevine, Inc., and our Board of Trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities. Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few old-time A.A.'s, several non-alcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.'s infancy, we oldtimers had been the self-appointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Highlights of AA Service History

To go back to the beginning: One day in 1937, at Doctor Bob's Akron home, he and I added up the score of over two years' work. For the first time we saw that wholesale recovery for alcoholics was possible. We then had two small but solid groups at Akron and New York, plus a sprinkling of members elsewhere. How could these few recovered ones tell millions of

alcoholics throughout the world the great news? That was the question. Forthwith, Doctor Bob and I met with 18 of the Akron Group at the home of T. Henry Williams, a steadfast non-alcoholic friend. Some of the Akron Group still thought we ought to stick to the word-of-mouth process; but the majority felt that we now needed our own hospitals with paid workers and, above all, a book for other alcoholics that could explain to them our methods and results. This would require considerable money — millions perhaps. (We didn't know that millions would have ruined us even more than no money at all.) So the Akron meeting commissioned me to get to New York and raise funds. Arrived home, I found the New York group in full agreement with this idea. Several of us went to work at once.

A Rash of Anonymity Breaks

About this time a serious threat to our longtime welfare made its appearance. Usually meaning well, members began breaking their anonymity all over the place. Sometimes they wanted to use the A.A. name to advertise and help other causes. * The pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." (no longer in publication). 15 Others just wanted their names and pictures in the papers. Being photographed with the governor would really help A.A., they thought. (I'd earlier been guilty of this, too.) But at last we saw the appalling risk to A.A. if all our power-drivers got loose at the public-media level. Already scores of them were doing it. So our General Service Office got to work. We wrote remonstrances, kind ones, of course, to every breaker. We even sent letters to nearly all press and radio outlets, explaining why A.A.'s shouldn't break

The Man on the Bed

This full colour painting first appeared as a Grapevine centre spread in the December 1955 issue. It proved so popular that four colour prints were made available separately. The artist, Robert M., was a volunteer illustrator for the Grapevine, and in 1956 he presented the painting to AA co founder Bill W. In his thank you letter Bill wrote: "Your representation of 'The Man on the Bed' hangs in my studio at Bedford Hills.... The whole heart and essence of AA can be seen by just looking at it."



their anonymity in the media. Nor, we added, did A.A. solicit money — we paid our own bills. In a few years the public anonymity-breakers were squeezed down to a handful — thus another valuable G.S.O. service had gone into action.

AA's Early Money Problems

Through my brother-in-law, Dr. L. V. Strong, Jr., my only remaining friend and the confidant of the worst of my drinking time, we made a contact with Willard S. Richardson, a friend and longtime associate of the Rockefeller family. Mr. Richardson promptly took fire and interested a group of his own friends. In the winter of 1937, a meeting * Except for 1955 Conference held in St. Louis, Missouri. 5 was called at the offices of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Present were Mr. Richardson and his group, Dr. William D. Silkworth, alcoholics from Akron and New York, Doctor Bob and I. After a long discussion, we convinced our new friends that we urgently needed money — a lot of it, too. One of them, Frank Amos, soon made a trip to Akron early in 1938 to investigate the group there. He returned with a very optimistic report, a digest of which Mr. Richardson quickly laid before John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Though much impressed, Mr. Rockefeller declined to give any large sum for fear of professionalizing A.A. He did, however, donate \$5,000. This was used to keep Doctor Bob

and me going during 1938. We were still a long way from hospitals, missionaries, books, and big money. This looked mighty tough at the time, but it was probably one of the best breaks that A.A. ever had. In spite of Mr. Rockefeller's views, we renewed our efforts to persuade his friends of our crying need for money. At length, they agreed that we did need more money, certainly enough to prepare a textbook on our methods and experience. In the late spring of 1938, I had drafted what are now the first two chapters of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous."

Mimeographed copies of these were used as part of the prospectus for our futile fund-raising operation. At board meetings, then held nearly every month, our nonalcoholic friends commiserated on our lack of success. About half of the \$5,000 Mr. Rockefeller advanced had been used to pay the mortgage on Doctor Bob's home. The rest of it, divided between us, would, of course, soon be exhausted. The outlook was certainly bleak.

I am responsible. . .

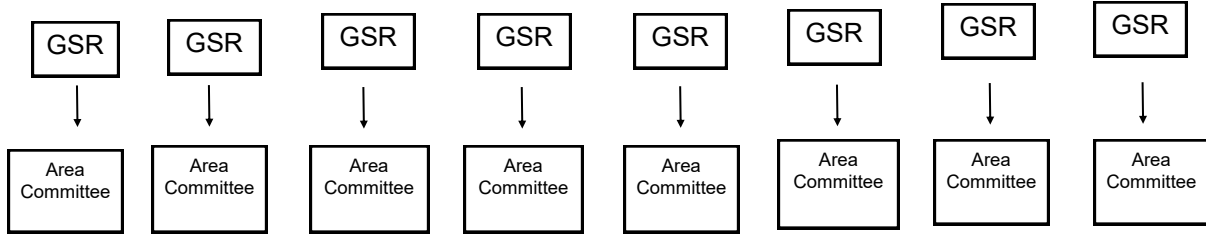
When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

STRUCTURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP

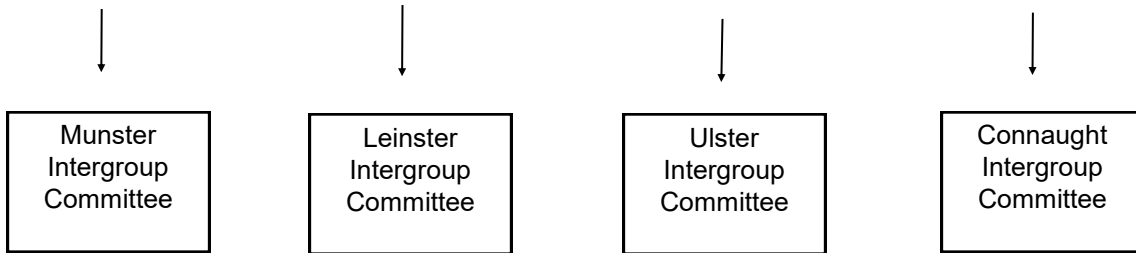
AA GROUPS (G)



TWO GSR's FROM EACH GROUP FORM AREA COMMITTEE



FOUR MEMBERS FROM EACH AREA COMMITTEE FORM PROVINCIAL INTERGROUP COMMITTEES



FOUR DELEGATES FROM EACH PROVINCIAL INTERGROUP TO GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE



All Ireland Convention 2020
Friday 17th to Sunday 19th April 2020
 Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

See our website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie
 for a full list of forthcoming events in Ireland and abroad.