

# INTO ACTION



## *Acceptance..*

**Leads to Doing Things Differently.**

***In Seeking, I Yearn. In Accepting: I am***

### **What Is Acceptance?**

**By Bill W.**  
GV-March 1962

One way to get at the meaning of the principle of acceptance is to meditate upon it in the context of AA's much used prayer, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference".

It is always worthwhile to consider how grossly that good word *acceptance* can be misused. It can be warped to justify nearly every brand of weakness, nonsense, and folly. For instance, we can "accept" failure as a chronic condition, forever without profit or remedy. We can "accept" worldly success pridefully, as something wholly of our own making. We can also "accept" illness and death as certain evidence of a hostile and godless universe. With these twistings of acceptance, we AAs have had vast experience.

Hence we constantly try to remind ourselves that these perversions of acceptance are just gimmicks for excuse making: a losing game at which we are, or at least have been, the world's champions. This is why we treasure our Serenity Prayer so much.

It brings a new light to us that can dissipate our old-time and nearly fatal habit of fooling ourselves. In the radiance of this prayer we see that defeat, rightly accepted, need be no disaster. We now know that we do not have to run away, nor ought we again try to overcome adversity by still another bulldozing power drive that can only push up obstacles before us faster than they can be taken down. On entering AA, we become the beneficiaries of a very different experience.

Our new way of staying sober is literally founded upon the pro-position that "Of ourselves, we are nothing, the Father doeth the works." In Steps One and Two of our recovery program, these ideas are specifically spelled out: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable" -- "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." We couldn't lick alcohol with our own remaining resources and so we accepted the further fact that dependence upon a higher power (if only our AA group) could do this hitherto impossible job. The moment we were able to fully accept these facts, our release from the alcohol compulsion had begun.

For most of us this pair of acceptances had required a lot of exertion to: achieve. Our whole treasured philosophy of self-sufficiency had to be cast aside.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

*(Continued from the front page)*

This had not been done with old-fashioned willpower; it was instead a matter of developing the willingness to accept these new facts of living. We neither ran nor fought. But accept we did. And then we were free. There had been no irretrievable disaster.

This kind of acceptance and faith is capable of producing 100 percent sobriety. In fact it usually does; and it must, else we could have no life at all. But the moment we carry these attitudes into our emotional problems, we find that only relative results are possible. Nobody can, for example, become completely free from fear, anger, and pride. Hence in this life we shall attain nothing like perfect humility and love.

So we shall have to settle, respecting most of our problems, for a very gradual progress, punctuated sometimes by heavy setbacks. Our old-time attitudes of "all or nothing" will have to be abandoned. Therefore our very first problem is to accept our present circumstances as they are, ourselves as we are, and the people about us as they are. This is to adopt a realistic humility without which no genuine advance can even begin. Again and again, we shall need to return to that unflattering point of departure. This is an exercise in acceptance that we can profitably practice every day of our lives. Provided we strenuously avoid turning these realistic surveys of the facts of life into unrealistic alibis for apathy or defeatism, they can be the sure foundation upon which increased emotional health and therefore spiritual progress can be built. At least this seems to be my own experience.

Another exercise that I practice is to try for a full inventory of my blessings and then for a right acceptance of the many gifts that are mine -- both temporal and spiritual. Here I try to achieve a state of joyful gratitude. When such a brand of gratitude is repeatedly affirmed and pondered, it can finally displace the natural tendency to congratulate myself on whatever progress I may have been enabled to make in some areas of living. I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know.

In times of very rough going, the grateful acceptance of my blessings, oft repeated, can also bring me some of the serenity of which our prayer speaks. Whenever I fall under acute pressures I lengthen my daily walks and slowly repeat our Serenity Prayer in rhythm to my steps and breathing.

If I feel that my pain has in part been occasioned by others, I try to repeat, "God grant me the serenity to love their best, and never fear their worst " This benign healing process of repetition, sometimes necessary to persist with for days, has seldom failed to restore me to at least a workable emotional balance and perspective.

Another helpful step is to steadfastly affirm the understanding that pain can bring. Indeed pain is one of our greatest teachers. Though I still find it difficult to accept today's pain and anxiety with any great degree of serenity -- as those more advanced in the spiritual life seem able to do.-- I can, if I try hard, give thanks for present pain nevertheless. I find the willingness to do this by contemplating the lessons learned from past suffering - - lessons which have led to the blessings I now enjoy. I can remember, if I insist, how the agonies of alcoholism, the pain of rebellion and thwarted pride, have often led me to God's grace, and so to a new freedom. So, as I walk along, I repeat still other phrases such as these, "Pain is the touchstone of progress" . . . "Fear no evil". . . "This, too, will pass". . . "This experience can be turned to benefit."

These fragments of prayer bring far more than mere comfort. They keep me on the track of right acceptance; they break up my compulsive themes of guilt, depression, rebellion, and pride; and sometimes they endow me with the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

To those who never have given these potent exercises in acceptance a real workout, I recommend them highly the next time the heat is on. Or, for that matter, at any time!

(Reprinted with permission from the AA Grapevine, Inc. N.Y.)

## **Heard Around the Tables**

### ***District 11's Wisdom and Witticisms***

- "Alcoholism is an obsession of the mind that condemns one to drink and an allergy of the body that condemns one to die." -- Dr. Wm. D. Silkworth
- "We were reborn."  
How can I do that?  
My sponsor says, "by continuing with Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9, so you can live in the spirit of Steps 10, 11 & 12. -- Dummy!
- "Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else"

**INTO ACTION Editorial Policy**

INTO ACTION News is a bimonthly newsletter of District 11; NIA 20 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by and for the Members of the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by AA. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc. and/or The AA Grapevine; Inc. Submissions are edited for space and clarity ONLY. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF IA IS Sunday—March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012.**  
**THE THEME FOR THE April/May 2012 ISSUE OF INTO ACTION IS; INVENTORIES, or anything you wish to submit.**

**INTO Action:** District 11's Newsletter  
 Editor: David Gilbert 815-344-6523  
 E-mail: [Soulsurgery@comcast.net](mailto:Soulsurgery@comcast.net)

**Acceptance Quote by William James**

Whenever I've been troubled, it's been because I haven't accepted the circumstances I've been in. Of course after reading page 417+ in 4th edition, a few hundreds of times...I felt better.

There came a time though that page 417+ in 4th edition, just wasn't quite enough...that is page 417 (449 in 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) is what to do but I needed the how to do. This quote from William James has supplied my how:

**How to cope with unpleasant conditions? Be willing to have it so! Acceptance of what has happened is the first step in overcoming the consequences of any misfortune. Don't fight - if you can't beat it - ACCEPT IT. Be willing to have it so. Then adjust. When fate closes one door, Faith opens another. Seek the open door.**

William James (Verities of Religious Experience)

Those hard and fast lines we have carved into stone are hard to erase but when willing, those lines will soften back into sand and then, we can let them go.

**D**istrict 11's G.S.R. Meetings Are Held On 1st Thursday of the Month at the McHenry Alano Club; 409 Front Street-Unit D (route 31) McHenry, IL



**District Meeting 7:30 PM**

**DISTRICT 11's WEB SITE:**↓  
<http://www.aa-nia-dist11.org>  
**DISTRICT 11 SECETARY:**↓  
[aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com](mailto:aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com)  
**SOBERFEST WEB SITE:**↓  
<http://www.soberfest.org/>  
**NIA 20 EVENTS WEB SITE:**↓  
<http://www.aa-nia.org/events.html>  
**Live Links**

**\*\*SCHEDULE INFO CHANGES:**  
**PLEASE E-MAIL** Bill J. ~ ~ EMAIL to:  
[schedulemaker@gmail.com](mailto:schedulemaker@gmail.com)

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

From Group (Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Group #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dist. #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting City: \_\_\_\_\_

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Send Contributions To:

**Heard Around the Tables**

**District 11's Wisdom and Witticisms**

- **EVENT + REACTION = WHAT YOU GET!**  
**EVENT + RESPONSE = WHAT YOU WANT!**
- To bless means to wish, unconditionally, for total, unrestricted good for others, from the deepest wellspring in the innermost chamber of one's heart.

# District 11 Minute Highlights from January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012

(Editor's Note: Dates and times contained in the following minutes are a reflection from the minutes taken on January 5, 2012 not the date of this publication.)  
(SOME UPDATES - THX)

**Secretary's Report:** Terry G (Lynn V. alt)

**Written committee report forms must be submitted to the secretary to be included in the minutes. The new E-Mail for the secretary is [aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com](mailto:aadistrict11sec@yahoo.com).**

**Treasurer Report** David Clough (Alt OPEN)

Transfer of the treasurer responsibilities has been proceeding smoothly. We have transferred signatures at the bank, removing Mark James and adding Dave Clough. Dave and Brandon still need to get together at a 5th/3rd bank to add Dave and remove Brandon. I have collected the mail from the PO box and made a deposit of \$1,594.20. Payments went out to the answering service and PO Box. Transfer of the tracking software has been difficult due to incompatibility between Money 99 and Quicken 2012. The web service account has been switched over to my name and I have setup automatic payments. Doug should be able to have full access to perform his web master tasks. I forget the checkbook today and will mail checks to anyone who wants to leave their receipts and mailing address with me.

December Account Summary

Starting balance: \$6178.36  
Total Income: \$729.00  
Total Expenses: \$365.99  
Ending balance: \$5812.37



## **Heard Around the Tables**

### **District 11's Wisdom and Witticisms**

- "God was inside me all the time, but I kept Him so drunk, I couldn't hear Him."
- "Live today fully, expressing gratitude for all you have been, all you are right now, and all you are becoming."
- My sponsor told me I am a well-balanced guy. I have a chip on both shoulders.

Updated to Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>

## **DCM Report**

David G (Alt Jen A.)

I attended Winter Committee Meeting in LaFox on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of January and after the Standard Opening our focus was directed to the Agenda Item of the Orientations Workshop.

The workshop lasted a couple of hours and, WOW – what a treat.

Three topics were covered:

### **1. General Service Structure/Conference**

Panelists –

Rich Healless our current Delegate, panel 62

Cheryl Vassau our current Alternate Delegate, panel 62

Ray Mengler our Past Delegate panel 60

### **2. NIA Service Structure/Assemblies & Primary Purpose Finance**

Panelists –

Kelly Lambert our NIA20 Area Chair

Brandon Long our NIA 20 Alternate Chair

Mike Frisbie our NIA 20 Treasurer

### **3. NIA Service Structure/Standing Committees & Registrar**

Panelists –

Marcia Stiff our Past Delegate panel 50

Larry Stiff our Past Delegate panel 56

Marilyn Finn our NIA 20 Area Registrar

**See separate DCM Report and the piece in INTOACTION newsletter.**

**Public Information Report** Billy C. (Alt Brian B)

No Report

**Hospital & Treatment Report** Kevin K. (Alt Craig W.)

Submitted By Kevin Kendrick

I had the opportunity to attend the winter assembly & winter committee meeting was able to listen and hear what's going on in the differ distrust with their treatment and BTG programs. I was to share the way district 11 is trying to reach out to other with the BTG program. I also had the opportunity to attend a BTG family day and patient BTG at South Street in Woodstock Well for me to have these experience of these meeting I feel I will be able to help in certain areas for our district this is just the start of my journey of my commit for district 11 I have been working with one counsel center to bring BTG meeting to their center so hopefully this will be successfully.

*(Continued on the next page)*

(Continued from page 4)

I started the process to be badged at the hospital should be done soon I will be setting South Street up with a literature rack and material We probable could use some Grapevines for the Saturday BTG meeting . The Hospital has plenty of big books. Alt Craig Workinger Is setting up a meeting with the hospital to see where we can be more service.



**FROM the Hosp/T<sub>x</sub> Alternate Craig W.:** I only have some of the things that we are going to talk about this Thursday. (young people for IOP/PHP meeting with drug and alcohol addiction) The 4th floor is staffed well and we are getting someone to the hospital 4th floor every week including weekends.

I would like to set up a meeting with Mercy Harvard to see what we can do there.  
Craig Workinger

**Corrections Report:** Carol H, (Alt. OPEN)

The corrections committee welcomed three new volunteers in the month of January 2012, two women and one man. **We are still looking for more women volunteers.**

We will have a committee meeting in February, time and place to be determined. There will be an orientation at the jail sometime in March for any new volunteers in the last year.

The alternate chair had to step down due changing commitments but we have another volunteer that would like to stand for the position at the February meeting.

**If anyone would like additional information about volunteering at the McHenry County Jail please contact Carol Hubner at 815 47-8262 or via email at hubn88@sbcglobal.net.**

Thanks,  
Carol

**CPC Report:** Frank S. (Alt OPEN)

Needing some basic literature – CPC Workbook..etc.



**Answering service** Mitch P. (Alt Pat C.)

**December 2011 Answering Service Calls**  
**Total Calls 68.**

- Meeting Information 50
- Open Meeting Information 4
- Speak to AA Member 7
- NA 2
- 12th Step Calls 1
- Questions About AA 2
- Out of District Calls 1
- AI-Anon Information 1
- Needs a Ride 0
- Treatment Information 0
- Bridge the Gap 1

- 0-10 Minutes 58
- 11-20 Minutes 8
- 21-30 Minutes 2
- Over 30 Minutes 0



Hang Ups 1, Refused Call Back Number 2

**Archives Report:** Clarence J, (Alt OPEN)



**FEBRARY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**  
**AMERICAN LEGION HALL –**  
**WAUCONDA**

*On Main Street, 2 Blocks South of Rte. 176*

*Doors Open at 9:00 AM*

*Brunch from 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM*

**Speakers at 11:00 AM**

**Dan R. Colleen F.**

Donation \$6.00

**Heard Around the Tables**  
**District 11's Wisdom and Witticisms**

- "What we do in these rooms is we share our stories. The better it gets, the more we cry. The worse it gets, the more we laugh. We call it Alcoholics Anonymous." (Norm A.)
- "My sponsor suggested that now that I've been sober for awhile, there is no denial, there is only refusal."

*(Continued on the next page)*

(Continued from page 5)

**Grapevine Report** Chair & Alt.- BOTH OPEN  
**INFORMATION – JOB DESCRIPTION:**

The job of the GvR and RLV is to familiarize members with the Fellowship's international journal, The A.A. Grapevine, and its bi-monthly Spanish-language magazine La Viña, and the enhancements to sobriety the magazines offer.

The magazines contain articles written by A.A. members based upon their personal experiences; discussion topics; regular features, and a calendar of special A.A. events. GvRs and RLVs participate in the activities of their area's Grapevine committee, announce the arrival of new magazines at the group each month, and encourage members to submit articles and illustrations, and explain how members can order their own subscriptions. In some groups, the GvR and RLV positions are combined.

A new GvR or RLV should send his/her name, address, group name and group service number to: Grapevine, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 1040, New York, NY 10115, or e-mail gvrc@agrapevine.org Attn: GVR/ RLV Coordinator. Representatives will then receive quarterly mailings containing order forms for the magazine and for books, audio and other Grapevine items. GVRs and RLVs can also register online at the Grapevine website: www.agrapevine.org. Make out magazine subscription checks to the Grapevine, Inc.

**Taken from "The AA Group" Pamphlet – P-16; page 23**

**Special Needs Report:** Chair & Alt.- BOTH OPEN  
**INFORMATION – JOB DESCRIPTION:**

The special needs representative may coordinate any needed assistance to those with special needs within their home group. Many special needs representatives find it beneficial to communicate with their intergroup (central office) when trying to reach those with special needs.

Some areas or districts have special needs committees. While there are no special A.A. members, many members have special needs. A.A.s who are blind or visually impaired may need help with transportation to a meeting. A deaf or hearing-impaired member may need a sign language interpreter, or special listening device, in order to hear what is being shared.

A.A.s with special needs may also include those who are homebound, those who require a meeting with wheelchair access, or those who are unable to read.

Conference-approved literature and other service material is available in various formats to accommodate those with

special needs, such as Braille, large print, American Sign Language, or the spoken word on audiotape or compact disk. The service piece, "Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs" and the A.A. Guidelines "Carrying the A.A. Message to the Deaf Alcoholic" can provide direction and guidance for those interested in working with A.A.s with special needs.

**Taken from "The AA Group" Pamphlet – P-16; page 27**

**LCM Report:** John F, (Alt OPEN)

No report

**Workshop** John S. (Alt OPEN)

No report

## Updated

**Newsletter Report:** Editor - Dave G. (Alt OPEN)  
(I'm willing to help the Alternate with the everything needed.)

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF IA IS Sunday—March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012.**

THE THEME FOR THE April/May 2012 ISSUE OF INTOACTION IS; **INVENTORIES**, or anything you wish to submit.

**Webmaster Report:** Doug W, (Alt OPEN)

No report

## Old business

❖ **We still have some vacant service committee positions open.**

District 11: Treasurer – Alternate

District 11: Corrections – Alternate Chair

District 11: CPC Comm District Alternate Chair

District 11: Grapevine District Chair

District 11: Grapevine District Chair - Alternate

District 11: Special Needs Comm Dist Chair

District 11: Special Needs Comm Dist Chair - Alternate

❖ Sobriety and Job Descriptions pending – Carol H.

❖ Updated Schedules – Bill J.

❖ Update Job Description

## Upcoming events

- 1) Feb 10-12 39th Annual Conference of Delegates Past and Present
- 2) March 2-4, 2012, **NIA Spring Conference**; Georgios, Orland Park IL  
Mar 3 **Spring Assembly** –At the conference
- 3) Apr 7 **Pre-General Service Conference** Workshop  
Location TBA, District 12, Host
- 4) Apr 22-28 62nd **General Service Conference**, Rye Town Hilton Hotel, Rye, NY

## Up-dated

\*\*\*\* **The next district meeting will be held on Thursday, March 1st 2012/\*-**

*Respectfully: Secretary, Terry G.; Alt secretary Lynn V.*

## From Your DCM NOTES FROM WINTER COMMITTEE MEETING

January 28, 2012 in  
LaFox, IL.–

I attended Winter Committee Meeting in LaFox on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of January and after the Standard Opening our focus was directed to the Agenda Item of the Orientations Workshop.

The workshop lasted a couple of hours and, WOW – what a treat.

### Three topics were covered:

#### 1. General Service Structure/Conference

**Panelists** – Rich Healless our current Delegate, panel 62  
Cheryl Vassau our current Alternate Delegate, panel 62  
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#### 2. NIA Service Structure/Assemblies & Primary Purpose Finance

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Mike Frisbie our NIA 20 Treasurer

#### 3. NIA Service Structure/Standing Committees & Registrar

**Panelists** - Marcia Stiff our Past Delegate panel 50  
Larry Stiff our Past Delegate panel 56  
Marilyn Finn our NIA 20 Area Registrar

#### General Service Structure/Conference

**Rich H. spoke of:** his availability to speak at districts before and after the 62<sup>nd</sup> General Service Conference (GSC – April 22-28 in NY) and we have put our request in. The Pre-General Service Conference Workshop will be held on **April 7<sup>th</sup>, Hosted by District 12, location TBA.** The GSC is a yearlong event with motions presented to Trustees and Staff the prior conference, as their workload for the following year, plus new motions that arise from the groups, until the next conference.

He spoke of e-mail as a great form of communication in carrying AA information and AA data rapidly and helps to get the “word” out to the various groups. That makes it better for informed group knowledge for an informed group conscious.

**Cheryl V. spoke of:** as Alternate Delegate, she has the task of helping set-up Service Orientations throughout as many Districts as we can handle at any given time. The hope, of course, is that these events are self-supporting through contributions.

But Districts will be helped financially with funding from the Area if needed. As long as we are encouraging service, we will need to help members understand how the service structure works.

She also spoke of the “how-to’s” of getting a pamphlet revised and used the example of “AA and Women” as a possible project. Other examples were given of revisions, i.e. “Revised A.A. Medications”. The New York webpage of the Grapevine was briefly mentioned regarding its attractiveness.

How Area Chairs relate to the GSC and she also briefly discussed the Conference Workbook.

**After the breakout session with the DCM’s Cheryl sent out an e-mail RE: breakout sessions at the Spring Conference. March 2-4 in Orland Park – READ BELOW -**

Hey all -

For those who were unable to make the Committee Meeting yesterday, or stay for the break-out meeting after lunch.... we missed you!

It was decided that we would have our break-out meeting half an hour after the Assembly at the Spring Conference. I spoke with Debbie, chair of the Spring Conference. We can stay in the same room that the Assembly is in. We will need to be finished by 1:45 because the Al-anon speaker at 2pm.

More to come later, but we know we want to talk about preparations for the Pre-General Service Conference Workshop. Just a reminder that everyone should send me how your District prepares. I'll combine all these and send them back out to you.

Service? Woohoo! \*Thanks -  
Cheryl Vassau  
NIA Alternate Delegate  
Panel 62/Area 20

(↑ Highlights added by editor/dg)

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

### WINTER COMMITTEE NOTES CONTINUED

**Ray M. spoke of:** the “Freedom to Service”; remembering his position as GSR in 2004 and transitioning through other service positions to Delegate in 2010. His sponsor was strong in service and told him that he would never have to drink again and he could live happy, joyous and free; relieved from the bondage of self. He also mentioned the after he had gone through the 12 Steps he was told, “Go with God and figure what you need to do for others.” (I think that is pretty close to the quote – dg) “A Passion”, he says, for Freedom to Serve.

**He then read a piece from the A.A. Service Manual – the next to, and the last page of the manual.**

“The sum of these several attitudes and practices is, in our view, the very essence of democracy—in action and spirit.

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

To a man, we of A.A. believe that our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live—the freedom in which we have our being.”

From: A.A. Service Manual, Page 74-75, 2010-2011 Edition.

### 2. NIA Service Structure/Assemblies & Primary Purpose Finance

**Kelly shared about Service Structure via Power Point, Brandon spoke about Assemblies and Mile discussed Primary Purpose Finance.**

Kelly informed us of the various admin positions and the necessity for sobriety qualifications and job descriptions at all levels of service; group, district, area & GSO. Brandon reminded us that the agenda for the Assemblies are set at the committee meetings. GSR’s or their alternates are encouraged to attend. Mike, our NIA Treasurer, spoke about **the Primary Purpose Motion** and how Quick Books online has really automated information flow.

### 3. NIA Service Structure/Standing Committees & Registrar

**Marcia S.** aided by Power Point spoke of the role of service committees and how to become one and develop one; the importance of District Guidelines and Job Descriptions. Being in service or wanting to be, is not just going to the Spring Conference but to

**PARTICIPATE** in the Spring Conference.

Marcia spoke of, the importance of Service Committee Workbooks and holding workshops; sharing ways to carry the message; **ATTRACTION** rather than **PROMOTION**; **the availability of purchasing E-Books (Big Book and 12X12 ) and making donations on line:**

**<http://www.aa.org/?Media=PlayFlash>**

**Larry S.** talked about the Primary Purpose Motion section and wants us to, “Don’t think budget – think about the fundamental duties and engaged in carrying the message.” AA materials in libraries, public service announcements on local radio and TV, bus benches and bill boards.

And by **COMMITTEE CONTINUITY** we won’t have to change everything, every two years due to the spirit of rotation. Primarily talk about the **ACTIVITY** and not the money. Share with others what they can do. He added that we have the right people because they are here. **He reminded us, “to just share your enthusiasm and that will attract people”.**

**Embrace the Primary Purpose. –**

**(inserted by dg -to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.)**

**Marilyn F.** our NIA 20 Registrar spoke of her and her alternates (Jodi) duties and responsibilities and the use of a new computer program called FNV = Fellowship New Vision.

FNV allows instant updates to New York. **ONLY** the NIA 20 Computer is licensed to have FNV.

Updating the District Rosters by using the third column and then sending it to the registrar was mentioned.

We broke for a great lunch, (\$9.00) and then reconvene for committee reports and then our break-out sessions. **(Breakout Sessions are where various Service Committee Chairs and interested parties, “Break-Out” into separate rooms for focused discussions.)**

Discussions of NIA Committee Agenda items were discussed; Conference reports followed and then adjournment and close.

**What I enjoyed mostly was that it seemed to me, that EVERYONE at the committee meeting was there to sacrifice! “EVERYONE” was either CARRYING the message to others or FITTING themselves to be of maximum service to others. We were all there because we thought it was the most important place in the world for us to be on that Saturday. What a comfortable, safe and humble place to be.**

**THANKS-DAVID GILBERT – DCM DISTRICT 11**

# 449/417

**SHORT BIO OF: PAUL OHLIGER, MD,**

LAGUNA NIGUEL, CALIFORNIA.

DOCTOR, ALCOHOLIC, ADDICT –

**(RETILED “ACCEPTANCE WAS THE ANSWER”**

IN THE 4TH EDITION)

[3RD EDITION: ORDER – 17TH, PAGE 439]

[4TH EDITION: ORDER – 16TH, PAGE 407]

**Heading:** "The physician wasn't hooked, he thought - he just prescribed drugs medically indicated for his many ailments. Acceptance was his key to liberation."

Paul's story is one of the most frequently quoted in the 3rd edition because it talks so much about acceptance (pages 449-450).

His original date of sobriety was December 1966, but he slipped until July 1967. He didn't think he was an alcoholic, he just had problems. "If you had my problems you'd drink too." His major problem was his wife. "If you had my wife you'd drink, too." He and his wife, Max, had been married twenty-eight years when he entered A.A. He said she was a natural Al-Anon long before they heard of either A.A. or Al-Anon.

His story in the Big Book, and tapes of his talks, show that Paul had a great sense of humor, and was a very humble man.

Paul had begun to drink when in pharmacy school to help him sleep. He went through pharmacy school, graduate school, medical school, internship, residency and specialty training and, finally went into practice. All the time his drinking kept increasing. Soon he began taking drugs to pep him up and tranquilizers to level off.

On occasion he tried to stop completely, but had convulsions from withdrawal. When he went to Mayo Clinic he was put in the locked ward. Another hospitalization was in the psychiatric ward of a hospital, on which he was on the staff. But there he was introduced to A.A.

It took him awhile to get off the alcohol and pills, but when he wrote his story he said: "Today, I find I can't work my A.A. program while taking pills, nor may I even have them around for dire emergencies only. I can't say 'They will be done,' and take a pill. I can't say, 'I'm powerless over alcohol, but solid alcohol is okay.' I can't say 'God could restore me to sanity but until He does, I'll control myself -- with pills.'"

*(Continued on page 10)*



**They say, “You can’t think your way into right acting but you act your way into right thinking.**

On page 93 of our basic text it mentions why FAITH is sometimes not enough.

**“To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action.”**

**DO THE TRADITIONS ASK US TO SACRIFICE, TAKING OURSELVES OUT OF THE EQUATION? ANONYMITY IS THE....**

**Tradition One.** Unity is the most precious thing we have. Without unity we die. This tradition asks us to make personal sacrifices for the good of the whole. These sacrifices are found in The next eleven traditions. These are the things we and our groups do to insure that UNITY will be maintained at all costs!

**Tradition Two.** We are asked to sacrifice being number one; being the best, being the boss. The ultimate authority is a loving God as He expresses Himself through each one of us as the group conscience. Alcoholics Anonymous will not tolerate human authority. We do not govern, we serve.

**Tradition Three.** We sacrifice all membership qualifications except one: a desire to stop drinking. We have no social class, no financial standing, no color, no sex, and no background requirements. We are not people who would generally mix, but we have a common problem and a wonderful common solution. That is all we have and all we do!

*(Continued on the next page)*

**449/417** *continued from page 9*

He started Pills Anonymous and Chemical Dependency Anonymous, but did not attend them because he got all he needed from A.A. He did not introduce himself as an alcoholic and addict, and was irritated by people who want to broaden A.A. to include other addictions

He wrote an article for the Grapevine on why doctors shouldn't prescribe pills for alcoholics, and because he had a dual problem was asked to write his story for the Big Book. It was originally published in the A.A. Grapevine with the title "Bronzed Moccasins" and an illustration of a pair of bronze moccasins. It was eventually renamed and included in the Big Book. His book, "There's More to Quitting Drinking than Quitting Drinking," was published in 1995 by Sabrina Publishing, Laguna Niguel, CA.

Paul complained in an interview with A.A. Grapevine that the story might have "overshot the mark." One of the most uncomfortable things for him was people run up to him at a meeting and tell him how glad they are the story is in the book. "They say they were fighting with their home group because their home group won't let them talk about drugs. So they show their group the story and they say, 'By God, now you'll have to let me talk about drugs.' And I really hate to see the story as a divisive thing. I don't think we came to A.A. to fight each other."

But he denied that there is anything in the story he would want to change. The story "makes clear the truth that an alcoholic can also be an addict, and indeed that an alcoholic has a constitutional right to have as many problems as he wants! But that doesn't mean that every A.A. meeting has to be open to a discussion of drugs if it doesn't want to. Every meeting has the right to say it doesn't want drugs discussed. People who want to discuss drugs have other places where they can go to talk about that."

How did he work his program? "Pretty much every morning, before I get out of bed, I say the Serenity Prayer, the Third Step Prayer, and the Seventh Step Prayer. Then Max and I repeat those prayers along with other prayers and meditations at breakfast."

He had a special meeting format for early morning meetings. He called them Attitude Adjustment Meetings. They consisted largely of readings from the Big Book, prayers from the Big Book and 12 & 12, and a short session of positive pitches. The meetings were at 6:30 am or 7:00 am each day.

Paul died on May 19, 2000. Max, died on July 1, 2001.

Some of the information about Dr. Paul is taken from his book "There's More to Quitting Drinking than Quitting Drinking," and from his tapes.

# 449/417

*(continued from page 9)* SACRIFICES

**Tradition Four.** Once again we are asked to make sacrifices if the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous is threatened. Otherwise the group can govern itself. The group must adhere to certain principles, as must the individual, if both are to survive.

**Tradition Five.** As with Tradition Three, once again all sacrifices are made to protect the primary purpose of the Group: carrying the message to alcoholics who still suffer. It is the only thing in which we are experienced.

**Tradition Six.** We sacrifice any endorsement or affiliation with any other entity, no matter how noble or worthy it may be. We cooperate with practically everybody, yet we decline to connect our society to anyone. We lend the name of Alcoholics Anonymous to no one, instead we sacrifice our human instincts for money, property, and prestige. By doing this we maintain our primary purpose of carrying the message of recovery to alcoholics.

**Tradition Seven.** We sacrifice charitable monies, donations, or contributions from outside sources and instead pay our own way. We are self-supporting so that we can always govern ourselves and call our own destiny. We limit donations to \$1,000 from our own members so that individuals in the fellowship will not become a power from within our structure.

**Tradition Eight.** We sacrifice professionalism. We do not charge money for our services. We sacrifice the idea of making money on this gift we've been given. We give it away for free and for fun!

*(Continued on the next page)*

# Terminal Uniqueness

(Continued from page 10 )SACRIFICES

**Tradition Nine.** We sacrifice rules and regulations. But out of this comes a divine order that reaches beyond understanding. We deny ourselves personal government. Groups and Committees can not issue directives. All groups and Committees are responsible to those they serve: US!

**Tradition Ten.** We abstain from all public controversy and will not quarrel among ourselves about those things that so often rip a society apart: religion, politics, and reform. Therefore, the Alcoholics Anonymous name does not get drawn into public controversy. We sacrifice our opinions. We just involve ourselves in recovery.

**Tradition Eleven.** We sacrifice getting on our "soapbox" about Alcoholics Anonymous and shouting our stories to the world at the level of press, broadcast, and film (including radio and television). We are anonymous, nameless, and faceless. Anonymity at this level saves us from those who would use Alcoholics Anonymous for personal gain. It keeps us all equal. We have no superiors, no inferiors, no advisor, and no spokesperson for Alcoholics Anonymous. Instead we have a promise of protection and privacy to all. This represents a great sacrifice to many alcoholics who would like to shout their stories to the world. Our track record speaks for itself!

**Tradition Twelve.** In Bill's last message, he states that he believes that the "Concept of anonymity" is most responsible for our blessings. The spiritual substance is sacrifice, placing principles before personalities. We give without thinking of return. We do something because it is the right thing to do. We sacrifice our natural desires for personal distinction as Alcoholics Anonymous members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. Our leadership is transitory and rotating. This sacrifice is difficult for many. We let others express opinions and realize that their opinions are worthy of our consideration. We try not to judge others. We try to trust one another.

A term used primarily within 12-step programs. The meaning differs by context. The most fundamental of the definitions is a person's belief that he is so unique that the usual rules do not apply to him. Those who use the term believe terminal uniqueness to be a form of pride or egotism. While this sounds at first glance like a person who believes himself to be better than others, it does not have to be.

It is commonly used for the person who believes that nobody in the world has ever had problems as bad, sins as unforgivable, or circumstances as unusually grotesque as his before. "You people couldn't possibly help me, I'm too messed up. You could never understand what I've been through. And I'm an all-around bad person." Through talking to other people who have been through similar things, he usually finds that he shares both shortcomings and circumstances with at least some of them.

It can also be used for the person who wanders into an AA meeting and says, "I'm not like any of you. I never lived on the streets. I never resorted to crime. I never did injectable drugs. I have a job that makes good money." As in the first case, prolonged exposure to others in the group reveals similarities the person was not expecting.

Terminal uniqueness is said to hold a person back from making the progress he/she needs to make his/her life better. In an artificially elevated or degraded position, she believes that the advice others give him cannot possibly apply to him/her. The possibility of his/her death if he/she does not improve his/her life gives rise to the word *terminal*.

By Zifendorf

**Example usage:** "When I first started coming here, I had no clue why I was even here. I didn't seem to be as bad off as anyone there. But once I got over my *terminal uniqueness*, I found out that they had a lot of useful advice."

## Gossip History

Why alcoholics should not gossip: Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some Ale and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term 'gossip.'

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