

This document is a compilation of the Presentations presented at the 2015 WRAASA held in Area 78 at Pineridge Community Centre, Calgary, February 27- March 1. The format follows the Agenda and I have attached the PDF Copy at the bottom of this document.

I have attempted to make sure all AA members last names have been excluded.

Thank you all for participating in the weekend and sharing in building the Unity of our Four Areas.

A special thank you to Barb K for Chairing the WRAASA with such a gentle and experienced hand.

Diversity in AA - Our Heritage of Inclusion

Michelle DK Delegate Area 78:

Good evening, my good friends in AA! Welcome to those visiting members from all over Alberta, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan! A warm "Howdy" is extended to you all! Congratulations to Jim and WRAASA 2015 committee for their hard work and dedication in making this weekend a success in Area 78 for Alcoholics Anonymous in Western Canada.

So this evening, I have been asked to give a talk about "Diversity in AA - Our Heritage of Inclusion". Have you ever heard the word "**Stick-to-itiveness**"? Perhaps you have heard this word but do not recall where you heard it. Well, it comes from Dr. Bob's farewell talk, which he made at the First International AA Convention in Cleveland, Ohio on July 3, 1950. I now read the quote from Dr. Bob... *"I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness."*

What did Dr. Bob mean by using the word stick-to-itiveness? I believe Dr. Bob was referring to our inclusiveness in working together despite our differences. He was referring to our incredible diverse membership. Our mixture includes all races, colors and ethnicities. Our variety embraces all religions and all creeds. We are comprised of all ages and sex. We consist of those of wealth and of poverty. We take in all those of education, occupation, incarcerated, and those who suffer with mental, emotional and physical disabilities. **We relish that word "Stick-to-itiveness"**. Because we believe that if we stick together, we can help all those suffering with alcoholism find a design for living that works!

Spiritual stick-to-itiveness overcomes all race and language barriers. Inside every human being is the spirit. When we see people, we can choose to look at their outside or we can choose to look at their inside. Spirituality resides inside of others; we must be able to look at our own inside. If we see spirituality inside ourselves, we

will see spirituality inside others. The saying is, "What you see is what you get." Therefore, *"God of my understanding, let me see all my brothers and sisters through the spiritual eye. Race and language makes no difference; the barriers are gone when persons can come together on high spiritual levels."* (Rolling Thunder, Cherokee)

In Bill's essay (August 1946) *Who is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous?* (excerpt taken from the "The Language of the Heart", Bill W.'s Grapevine writings, page 39) *"If alcohol is an uncontrollable problem to him and he wishes to do something about it, that's enough for us. We care not whether his case is severe or light, whether his morals are good or bad, whether he has other complications commences to do anything at all about his problem, he is considered a member of Alcoholics Anonymous."*

Thank God the early pioneers of Alcoholics Anonymous were graced with the experience and wisdom of Tradition Three that we welcome everyone in our fellowship; that being, beggars, tramps, asylum inmates, prisoners, homosexuals, plain crackpots and even fallen women. However, these sometimes frightening individuals have made astonishing recoveries from their alcoholism and have become our greatest assets in our fellowship. Indeed, what a unique fellowship we have as we include every conceivable kind of character, and cut across every barrier of race, creed, politics, and language with ease.

So before we judge our members, consider our brotherly/sisterly love. As we grow in our recovery, we start to judge the newcomer less and less. We see how our Creator's love was given to us so freely and mercifully and his gentle loving hand of forgiveness was extended to us when we walked through the AA doors of hope to live a meaningful sober life. Let the unruly ones be welcomed and loved. If alcohol is a problem for him/her and he/she wish to do something about it, that's enough for us! We hope to be just as inclusive as we can!

In our pamphlet, *"Do you Think I'm Different?"* (page 7) *"A.A. won't work for me. I'm too far gone." "It's nice for those people, but I'm president of the P.T.A. I'm too old. Too young. Not religious enough. I'm gay. Or Jewish. A professional person. A member of the clergy. Too smart. Or too uneducated."*

At this moment, people all over the world are thinking that A.A. probably won't work in their case for one or several of these reasons. Perhaps you are one of these people. We in A.A. believe alcoholism is a disease that is no respecter of age, sex, creed, race, wealth, occupation, or education. It takes us at random. Our experience seems to show that *anyone* can be an alcoholic. And, beyond question, *anyone* who wants to stop drinking is welcome in A.A.

In another pamphlet *"AA for the Alcoholic with Special Needs"*, (Lynn's story) *"Drinking was no longer fun, but something I had to do to survive. I have been blind*

since several days after birth, but this didn't stop me from becoming an alcoholic. Alcoholism is no respecter of age, creed, religion or even disability."

So how did I feel when I came in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous? Well, I was raised a Catholic and very ashamed of my actions when I drank alcoholically. I was so afraid to share that I was a catholic when I arrived at the doorstep of AA. But I heard in many meetings how other Catholics were staying sober and we weren't all good-for-nothing hypocrites. I started to believe that I did fit in here and that I did belong in these rooms, and I remember having that "at-home, comfortable" feeling. I felt acceptance not shame. I had a sense of belonging and I'm grateful that I stayed in the AA rooms and returned to my religious faith. But I questioned myself -- Was I too young? I was only 28 years old when I strolled through the AA doors for a second time.

At the 64th General Service Conference in 2014, General Service Conference members participated in the second-part of an inventory process and "age" was discussed during the General Service Conference inventory. "Where are the young people?" as the average age of the delegates was 59 years.

You may ask yourself, "Am I Too Young? Too old?" Most people spent the first half of their lives saying they're too young for that stuff and the second half of their life saying their too old. Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Most men and women live quiet lives of desperation."

Don't say you're too young or too old! --- Tiger Wood was 3 years when he first broke 50 in 9 holes of golf; Mozart was 8 years old when he wrote his first symphony; Charles Dickens was 12 years old when he quit school to go work in a factory, pasting labels on shoe polish; Charles Dickens became one of the greatest authors of all times. Anne Frank was 13 years old when she began her diary. Paul McCartney was 15 years old when he met John Lennon who invited him to join a band. Bill Gates was 19 years old when he co-founded Microsoft. William Shakespeare was 31 when he wrote "Romeo and Juliet". Mother Teresa was 40 years old when she began her work in Calcutta. Picasso was 55 years old when he painted *Gernica* and created a revolution in the arts. Bill Wilson was 39 years old when he got sober, met Dr. Bob Smith who was 56 years old and they founded Alcoholics Anonymous who has helped millions of people get sober, giving them a design for living - that works. Oscar Hammerstein, 64 years old, when he wrote the Sound of Music. Winston Churchill, 65 years old, when he became Britian's Prime Minister and picked a fight with Hitler. Nelson Mandela, 71 years old, when he was released for more than 20 years in a South African prison. Four years later, Mandela was elected president of South Africa. Michael Angelo, 72 years old, when he designed the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome; 24 years old when he carved the *Pieta*. Benjamin Franklin was 79 years old when he invented bifocals and aren't you glad he did? Dimitrion Yordanidis, 98 years, when he ran the Athen's marathon. Do not sound too young or too old! Now is your time to serve and

be a part of Alcoholics Anonymous! *“We don’t stop playing because we got old; we get old because we stop playing!”* (Herbert Spencer)

One of the most important attributes in life is to feel at peace. AA and God has given me this peace. If I have peace within, my life makes sense. By being peaceful and inclusive in our journey, we not only get to know ourselves, but also we learn more about others. Some days we may need to sit in silence and ask God how I can be more inclusive in AA. Let your conscience and Holy Spirit guide you, coach you & encourage you. Take time to carve out a space in your life for spiritual development. Ask God to show you one way that you can be the best version of yourself. Listen in the classroom of silence to feed your soul. So “Let It Begin with Me”. This may be the best way to live inclusively. We will not regret investing in our spirituality and this begins with being honest, open-minded, willing and accepting of others and their ways. But it’s important to know when your group is most likely to succumb to conflict, you can protect the peace and experience God’s power & presence in your group.

So let us be **loving gossipers** for “**diversity**” in the rooms of AA for all ages, languages, creeds, races, and religions in helping anyone/anywhere find recovery. God will continue to bless our fellowship with the inclusion of all who have a drinking problem. There will always be many prospects.

To be inclusive, there are two ways of spreading light: to be a candle or the mirror that reflects it. Let us continue to shine for others, gossip about inclusiveness of belonging to a world-wide fellowship of love and continue in the **journey of stick-to-itiveness** in recovery, unity & service. Our Higher Power gave us a sign that any alcoholic is a member of our Society when he/she says so.

Jennifer K Delegate Area 79

Hi Everyone, my name is Jennifer and I am an alcoholic privileged to be serving as the Panel 65 Delegate for British Columbia/Yukon Area 79. Thank you Area 78 and the WRAASA committee for hosting this event and asking me to share on Diversity in A.A. - Our Heritage of Inclusion.

When I first heard the topic my mind went straight to Traditions 3 and 4 and our Responsibility Declaration. Next, I then picked up a dictionary and looked up diversity and found it is: *“the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization. The quality or state of having many different forms, types, ideas etc.”* I also looked up heritage: *“the traditions, achievements, beliefs, etc. that are part of the history of a group or nation.”* I then realized how diverse this topic really is!!

I am so grateful that through the trial and error and try again method, through shared experiences of A.A.'s first 10 years, came the Traditions. Prior to the Traditions, groups had rules and regulations for membership. From the Traditions pamphlet: *"We've thrown away all membership rules and regulations that might keep you out. We want you to have the same chance for sobriety that we had. All alcoholics are welcome. Our Traditions allow unparalleled freedom, not only to every A.A. member but to every A.A. group. In meetings I often hear newcomers say they are grateful for the third Tradition because they feel that allowed them to be a part of."*

At the 2014 Forum in Winnipeg I learned that A.A. is currently in 175 countries. The Big Book is in 72 languages with 17 in the making. Our pamphlets are in 92 languages. Those numbers to me were quite remarkable. I then go back to my group and see that the majority of the members are middle aged, white and male. My community has many ethnic groups, many young people, many people with special needs etc. So why are we not seeing them in our rooms? And when we do, why aren't they staying?

Our Tradition 4 states each group is autonomous, meaning there are vast differences among groups. Groups are free to work out their own formats/customs such as Big Book study meetings, speaker meetings, having greeters at the door, giving meeting list to the newcomer etc. With freedom comes responsibility, it's up to each group to avoid any action that might harm A.A.

Through doing regular group inventories at all levels of service we can look at how we are fulfilling our primary purpose and how we are meeting the needs of the group and attracting new members. These meetings don't just clear the air. Hopefully they teach members how to be of service not only as sponsors, one-on-one, but to A.A. as a whole; to be available to work on service committees in treatment, corrections, public information, cooperation with professional communities and more so that the A.A. message is carried to as many alcoholics as possible. I believe the key is communication and how we communicate. Are we showing love and tolerance, patience and acceptance? Are we being attentive listeners and allowing everyone to have a voice? Are we showing enthusiasm and working together?

In 1990 Michael A., then Class A chairman of the General Service Board said: *"in order to fulfill our expanding service role abroad, we must lead from a position of unity and support at home. From each individual member on through our groups, intergroups, districts, area assemblies and the general service conference, our Fellowship is only as strong as our weakest link. Let us take inventory of our weaknesses and strengths in some vital areas - including self-support, newcomers, minorities and other groups of people underrepresented in A.A. and international services."* He saw inventory taking as a

bulwark of A.A. unity. He said *“I am confident that our collective conscience will lead us in the right direction.”*

Now concerning the Responsibility Declaration. To be honest when I entered the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous all I wanted was to stop the pain and get my life in order. I was full of shame, had no self-esteem and felt all alone. I wasn't thinking about anyone else. As I stuck around and worked with a sponsor I learned that if I wanted to keep what I had gained I had to give it back. So I started helping set up and clean up at meetings and working through the 12 Steps. Time went on and deep down inside I felt that I was missing something. My sponsor then said it is time you got into general service. From there I got myself a service sponsor and learned about the Traditions and Concepts. My self-esteem was still very fragile but somehow trying to be of service to others helped. I did not feel alone anymore. As I continue to serve in different positions with the help of my service sponsor, past trusted servants and studying our literature I am learning to serve A.A. and it's members a bit more humbly with lots of love and passion. I endeavour to make service work attractive to newcomers by talking about the benefits of being active; when asked to facilitate a workshop, I like to research the topic thoroughly, give a short enthusiastic presentation then, most importantly, have as many members present participate. Having done these things, I believe I have been of service. With being so grateful for what has been so freely given to me, I truly feel that deep responsibility that when anyone anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of A.A. to always be there and for that I am responsible.

Clint M Delegate Area 80

Hi everyone my name is Clint and I am an alcoholic. I'd like to thank the WRAASA committee for inviting me to share with you today on the topic of “Diversity in A.A. – Our Heritage of Inclusion.”

BACKGROUND

Our fellowship, Alcoholics Anonymous, enjoys an incredible amount of diversity among our membership today.

As can be seen from any of our membership surveys or even by just looking around in most of our meeting rooms we form a very broad cross section of society in general. We are an assortment of all ages; occupations; marital status; gender; lengths of sobriety; education; social, cultural and religious backgrounds.

This great diversity that we enjoy can be attributed to the principle expressed in our third tradition which tells us that the only requirement we have for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

The long form of Tradition Three is a bit more specific. It states that: "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend on money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

Our traditions were first published in 1946 but this same principle goes back to the very beginnings of our fellowship and can be seen in the forward to the first edition of our Big Book when it was originally published in April 1939. In the forward to the first edition it states that "the only requirement for A.A. membership is an honest desire to stop drinking." If we drop the word honest, we have what we now know as our third tradition in its short form.

So, to become members, we only need to meet that one requirement and it's the only thing that we all need to have in common "...a desire to stop drinking." That's it! So if you are drinker and you want to stop you are a member from the moment that you say you are.

And, as members, we are all created equal. Even though we are so diverse, there are no different classes of members in A.A. and no one can be considered any better or worse than anyone else. We are mixed and very diverse but equal at the same time.

However, things weren't always like they are today. From looking at some of the early Grapevine articles and the readings in the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, the earliest groups had all sorts of restrictions on membership to protect them from harm by potential members that had complications other than just alcoholism.

The restrictions were originally created because of fear among the earliest members that their sobriety was so fragile that if we let people in that were anything other than "pure" alcoholics (or those whose only problem was alcoholism) that it would just be a matter of time before everyone's sobriety was derailed.

So if you had a criminal background and wanted to be a member you were probably not welcome at many groups of the day. Even a beggar or a panhandler alcoholic might not be allowed to join.

In fact Bill states in his writings that the protection rules of the earlier groups became so vast that if they were all actually applied at once nobody would be able to qualify for A.A. membership.

Fortunately for us, there were a few free thinkers among our membership at the time who were able to convince others to keep an open mind and so members with those other complications were allowed to start joining the groups.

These members got sober and went on to carry their message of recovery to other alcoholics who in turn joined our fellowship. Our society blossomed!

It was eventually realized that strict enforcement of the membership restrictions would not only prevent someone from having the opportunity to recover, and might, in fact, be a death sentence, but would also do more damage to our fellowship than the people that the restrictions were designed to keep out.

EXCEPTIONS

There are still a few exceptions today to the principle of being all inclusive in the form of what are known as "Special Purpose Groups." The most common example of these is probably the women's groups but there are also stag or "men only" groups and others that are based on profession or sexual orientation.

The general idea behind having a special purpose group, I believe, is to aid newcomers who might be able to more easily identify with others who are from the same background.

I was once a regular member of a special purpose group for people in the aviation community and still maintain some of those ties today.

I feel comfortable supporting special purpose group on the basis that if it helps someone identify and find a solution from our program of recovery than it is worth it.

One drawback that I have experienced from time to time with my aviation group is that we can tend to sometimes focus our thoughts and discussion on the latest news in the aviation community instead of our program and our primary purpose.

For me, my aviation group has always been something I do in addition to my regular activities with my A.A. home group and not a replacement for my regular group.

OVERALL

With the exception of special purpose groups, most of our groups today have embraced the concept of being all inclusive rather than exclusive.

I remember one of the first A.A. meetings I attended. It was at my current home group very early in my sobriety. I remember meeting members of all sorts of ages, cultural backgrounds, occupations and with different levels of sobriety.

Seeing so many different people that had found a solution with our program gave me hope that I might also be able to find an answer in A.A. At that point in my sobriety it didn't really seem to matter to me whether there may or not have been someone in the room with the same job as me.

I found that the members' discussion at my home group was focused mostly on recovery and through the sharing I found that I was able to identify with the others and eventually started doing the things I needed to do to get and stay sober.

I am very grateful that there were no application forms to fill out, no background checks to complete, and no interviews or fees to pay before being able to sit in and listen.

So in closing, I feel the principle of being all inclusive asks me to keep an open mind and be patient and tolerant when it comes to my fellow members or potential members but it also assures me that no matter what my background or current status there will always be a place for me and for future alcoholics who are looking for a chance to recover.

Kim C Delegate Area 91

Hello. My name is Kim and I am an alcoholic. I had previously served as the panel 63 Delegate to the Conference for Area 91. I now serve as Area 91's Registrar, which is the position that goes to the outgoing delegate.

Thank you to the 2015 WRAASA committee for inviting me to make a presentation on the topic Diversity in AA - Our Heritage of Inclusion. It is always a privilege and a pleasure to serve the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in any capacity.

I had many different thoughts regarding this topic and I guess I started to think about world history and then think about what AA actually survived...out there...in the world. It has survived the Great Depression, World War II, The Civil Rights Movement, Korean War, Vietnam War, a war against communism, men landing on the moon, feminism, several assassinations of various leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and the Kennedy's. AA has also survived the rise of the information age and all this electronic stuff we have at our fingertips. Obviously this is not an exhaustive list but it provides an idea of what was going on in the world throughout our fellowship's birth, its growth and where we sit today as a fellowship. I mention these things because I think that if the structure as we know it today was not in place, our fellowship would not have survived the things going outside of our meeting rooms. And although we went through growing pains trying to put our structure in place, it's still the same today as it was when we finished construction. Yes we have had to make little adaptations to the way we do business; however, we do not make those adaptations at the expense of our structure. We had to ignore the diverse nature of our world and all the goings on because our very survival depended by remaining unified. There is also no doubt in my mind that each of us has character defects that can get in the way of our usefulness to others.

Unity is one of the three legacies of Recovery Unity and Service. All three of these legacies point to getting rid of our character defects and continually setting aside our own plans and designs for the well being of our fellowship as a whole. I entered the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous at the young age of 21. I suffered from two problems. I was either better than or less than you. I was never, ever on equal footing with any of you. Each of those problems was based upon my huge ego. Well I've been sober for 27 years now. That doesn't make me any better than anyone else in the room; however, I learned a ton about myself by growing up emotionally and chronologically with all of you.

First, I applied the steps to my personal recovery and while that was going on, I quickly became involved in service. Through the steps I had to sacrifice my own crafty plans about how everyone should act and behave. By serving and making a personal sacrifice of my time to serve our fellowship, I further whittled away my ego that thinks it knows everything. It was through the legacies of recovery and service that I learned how vitally important it is that we maintain our unity. In its simplest explanation, I learned in my own recovery, that if the others in my home group and other groups weren't around for me, I would not be able to maintain my own personal recovery. Then I learned that if I wasn't there for each of them, they wouldn't be here either. I discovered through this process that we have to hang together and serve to keep this fellowship alive and fully functioning.

Our unity has been solidified by A.A.'s singleness of purpose and it was spelled out by co-founder Bill W., who in the February 1958 issue of the A.A. Grapevine wrote, "Sobriety – freedom from alcohol –through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost certainly collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

By being involved I learned about our singleness of purpose. I was taught through Tradition 5 that each group has but one primary purpose and that's to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. It seems that Tradition three does away with any notion of us being exclusionary, because our only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Alcoholics Anonymous welcomes people from every walk of life, from every culture, from every age and religious background, and we welcome those alcoholics with co-existing problems that go hand in hand with their alcoholism. All a member needs is a desire to stop drinking. Further to that when we are in our open meetings we confine our discussions to our problems as they relate to alcohol. When we are in open meetings we welcome everyone, but we still confine our discussions to our problems related to alcohol. Bill W. knew that in order to be 100% effective we had to deal only with alcohol and all the problems it causes. He also wrote that if you have other problems and need other types of help with those by all means go and get it. But in our meetings, we are going to talk about our problems with alcohol and how to apply the steps to dealing with those problems.

So what would happen to the war vets from Vietnam and in today's age, from Afghanistan who come home with their addictions to alcohol and other things? Would we not allow them in our rooms? I think we would. What about the man or woman with different coloured skin than let's say white skin? Don't allow them into our meetings because of our own racism perhaps? What about the Buddhist or the Catholic or the Muslim person next to us? Don't allow them? What about the homosexual sitting beside us? They aren't allowed? That is simply not the case. All of those folks entering our rooms have the disease of alcoholism and probably other addictions going on too. But we welcome them with open arms, and share our experience, strength and hope with them. We don't share our religion with them, we tell them to believe in the God of their understanding. We don't call each other racist names if our skin colours do not match. We talk to each other about how we quit drinking and how to recover from a hopeless state of mind and body. What about the homosexual person? Do we tell them they are living incorrectly and tell that person how their life is wrong because of whom they love? No we don't. We talk to them about how to get involved in recovery and what that will do to ensure a happy, joyous and free existence. Concepts that are open to anyone to take advantage of if alcohol is causing a problem.

We have all heard that we are people who would not normally mix and that love and tolerance of others is our code. We effect that code through the way our structure is designed. I learned about the Traditions by involving myself in such things as traditions study

groups. I also learned by making mistakes and then being taught by the members who have gone before me about how we do things around here. I also learned about our structure by listening to these types of presentations.

I would like to end this presentation with what Bill writes in *AA Comes of Age* pp. 96 to 97. What he writes sums up how we do everything we do for the fellowship so that everyone is included and equal to each other. He writes:

Implicit throughout our traditions is the confession that our fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and these defects threaten us continually. Our traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The twelve traditions are to group survival and harmony what AA's twelve steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind. But the 12 traditions also point straight away at many of our individual defects. By implication they ask us to lay aside pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice. They ask us never to use the AA name in any quest for personal power or distinction or money. They guarantee the equality of all members and the independence of all groups. They show how we may best relate ourselves to each other and to the world outside. They indicate how we can function in harmony as a great whole. They ask that every individual, every group and every area in AA lay aside all desires, ambitions and untoward actions that could bring serious division among us or lose for us the confidence of the world at large.

The twelve traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous symbolize the sacrificial character of our life together and they are the greatest force for unity that we know.

Safety and Respect - Practicing Principles begins in the Home Group

David M - Treasurer Area 78

This is indeed a privilege for me to present on this topic of achieving safety and respect by practicing the AA Principles at the Home Group level. My thoughts are based on both experience and life-long learning, one day at a time, in sobriety. I am a slow learner so it truly is a life-long process! The experience part comes from when I felt I was not respected, or where I felt it was not safe for me to share at the group level for whatever reason (could be anonymity, or could be another member's anger or point of view).

My spouse and life long friend Sandra and I recently celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary on February 17. During these 20 years we have been blessed to follow along together in sobriety and under the care of the God of our understanding. The *Daily Reflections* thought on that day, *The Love in Their Eyes*, provides good background for the topic of encouraging *Safety and Respect* at the Home Group level. That love comes to each member of an AA group from practicing Step 3 and Step 11 on a daily basis, surrendering the personal will to the care of a loving Higher Power, and praying for the knowledge of His will and the strength to carry that will out during the day. That **love in each member in the fellowship of AA, led by the influence of a**

loving Higher Power, provides the foundation of the principles that support safety and respect. And the Home Group is the foundation of AA fellowship.

What principles are we talking about? According to p60 of our Big Book they are the 12 Steps that are suggested as a program of recovery. And I believe we can include the 12 Traditions in the full list of principles to be practiced at the Home Group level. I learned from my dear friend Fred S (who recently passed away from us) at the 84th Street Group in Edmonton that I should be practicing the 12 Traditions in my daily life, and that certainly applies to my Home Group. Fred used to chair a 10PM meeting every Thursday at the 84th Street Group on the Traditions.

And it points out on that page 60 of the Big Book that “perfect adherence to these principles” is an ideal that we strive towards but cannot fully attain. However, if each one of us as individuals in our Home Group practices these steps on a daily basis, we won't have any trouble with ensuring the safety of each member in our Home Group, and respect for each member of our Home Group. And this ensuring of safety and respect also goes beyond Home Group members to the visitors that come to see what our group fellowship is all about. These may be newcomers, or they may be members of families of alcoholics who have come to our open meeting to find out what the AA program is all about.

Ok, to say again, the foundation of safety and respect hinges on each member of our Home Group embracing the love brought by putting himself or herself under the care of the God that is understood and accepted by that individual. Now how do we put individual respect and safety into practice? We can't promote this, we have to practice these principles to attract others to practice them too.

Let's start by emphasizing the importance of Unity: Tradition One: *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.* If we attempt to be united, in harmony, in our Home Group togetherness, we will make all members feel comfortable and safe and respected. This will require personal PATIENCE with others that we don't agree with, and reading the paragraph on personal “ACCEPTANCE” on page 417 of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book OVER and OVER again (accepting person, place, thing, or situation being exactly the way it is supposed to be in my world today).

If we have acceptance then we will be learning willingness for “self-restraint”. On p91 of the 12 and 12 we read: *“Our first objective will be the development of self-restraint. This carries a top-priority rating. When we speak or act hastily or rashly, the ability to be fair-minded and tolerant evaporates on the spot.”* Our own self-restraint in our Home Group will lead to greater respect for the opinions of others, and provide the safety net for other members to share when their opinions are against our own.

This is what Bill W had to say about Group Unity and Tradition 1 on p76 of *The Language of The Heart*: *“Does this mean,” some will ask, “that in AA the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?”* Bill then goes on to discuss why this is not so, and concludes that *“--- compliance or non-compliance with any principle of AA is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct.”*

Although troublemakers in the group may be disrespectful and threaten the safety of members, Bill wrote a letter to the Grapevine in August 1946 pointing out that we can learn from them – they can be our teachers. He said: *“They oblige us to cultivate patience, tolerance, and humility. We finally see that they are only people sicker than the rest of us--.”* Troublemakers will often engage in *cross talk*, either interrupting and interjecting during a member’s sharing, or immediately stating a personal viewpoint after a member shares. So it is obvious that we must struggle to avoid cross talk if we want our Home Group to be a comfortable place, safe and respectful.

I don’t know about you, but I think we are all a lot of bloody-minded individuals. Often this self-centeredness has prevented me from being sensitive to the feelings of others, and from respecting their points of view. When I stopped drinking I had to do a lot of changing in order to relate to other recovering alcoholics, and to be of service to help another suffering alcoholic. In a 1955 Letter to the Grapevine, Bill said: *“The willingness to grow is the essence of all spiritual development.”* And as Bill said in a 1965 Grapevine article: *“—once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, in a group, or in AA as a whole, it has long since been found out that we cannot stand still and look the other way. The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails.”* So when it comes to making another member of AA in my Home Group feel safe and at home I must always be willing to turn my will over to the care of God as I understand Him in Step 3.

So the summary of things for me to do to encourage safety and respect in my Home Group is as follows:

Giving up my will and putting myself in the care of my Higher Power and so learning to love those around me that I may not like!

Practicing all of the principles outlined in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in my own life. If I do this I can hardly be disrespectful or unthoughtful of others.

Self-restraint and contributing to unity through acceptance, patience, tolerance and humility.

Willingness for spiritual growth through the willingness to change by setting aside self-centeredness and becoming a servant to others.

Gail P Chair Area 79

My name is Gail and I am an alcoholic. I am also privileged to be the Chair of BC Yukon Area 79, Panel 65. I would like to thank Jim and Karen for allowing me the privilege of speaking with you today. It was requested that I give a short presentation on “Safety and Respect - Practicing Principles begins in the Home Group”.

There has been much written on this subject lately and as I was reading through a lot of it I got to reflecting on my early days in Alcoholics Anonymous (I was much younger then). I was extremely fortunate in that the woman, who answered the phone, when I finally worked up the courage to call, became my first sponsor. She was older than me and had been sober for 5 years at that time. She seemed very wise and I will always be grateful for having her with me in those early years.

I remember her explaining “13 stepping” to me and more than that I recall her talking to me about trust. That I should not just blindly trust people in AA - that they needed to earn my trust. Very important advice I was to learn. She explained that we were in a program where there was much deeply personal information shared in a very short time and it would be easy to get involved in people’s lives without really knowing much about them. When I think about how important that lady was in my early sobriety, it makes me sad that in so many ways that type of sponsorship seems to be lacking today.

The next most important item from those early days was my home group. That was the place where I belonged (for the first time in a very long time) and where I gradually learned to trust people again. My home group was and continues to be the place that I feel the safest in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is also the place where I have a responsibility to do my part in keeping it a safe place for my fellow members, newcomers and visitors from out of town.

The long form of Tradition One says: “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterwards.” I want my home group to be a safe and welcoming place for all alcoholics who cross its threshold. We have monthly business meetings and try to do fairly regular group inventories. I believe this is essential to keep members aware of our primary purpose and also to remind us where we could do better.

There are so many things which we can do to make our meeting place safe, warm and welcome.

Greeters: these are often the first people a new comer or a visitor from out of town sees and has contact with - I think it’s important that a meeting place have greeters. I know for myself when I go to meetings in other cities or countries, I really like being greeted.

Group members: men for men and women for women, who make a point of welcoming newcomers or visitors from out of town. Show an interest in them,

show them where the coffee pot is and where the washroom is. All really important stuff!

At my home group we also have an unwritten “plan” on how to deal with disruptive members. As it is often difficult for the chair to deal with while chairing the meeting, we have a couple of members who are prepared to take the person away from the meeting room and chat with them in order not to disturb the meeting. It usually works well and often results in a better understanding for the person disrupting the meeting.

Getting back to that wonderful woman who 12 stepped me - she advised me of so much before I even got to my first meeting. She explained cross-talk; she told me about the various meeting formats; the difference between open and closed meetings. I knew a lot when I walked into my first meeting. I know that many people today show up at their first meeting alone; so it's even more incumbent upon us to do what we can to help.

If sponsorship is important and I believe that it is, how can we encourage sponsorship? Some groups have temporary sponsors who put up their hands at the end of the meeting to let others know they are available. Talking with new comers after the meeting and letting them know you are willing to help is another way; holding district workshops with the topic being the importance of sponsorship. We had one of these in Victoria a couple of years ago and the attendance was over 100 (the hall only held 60) so in terms of success, it broke all records for local workshops! I think the more informed we all are about sponsorship (both being a sponsor and being sponsored), the easier it is. Many of us think that we don't have anything to offer and yet when I think about Bill and Bob, way back when, it was as simple as one drunk talking with another. People just want to be heard and understood.

The pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” is important as well. We try to have this pamphlet available and try to encourage new comers to read it.

This presentation was supposed to be on Safety and Respect and it sounds more like one on sponsorship.

One of the items I read to prepare for today was the questions and summary from the 62nd General Service Workshop Safety in A.A.: “Our Common Welfare” - April 2012. The question that caught my attention was “How can sponsorship aid in keeping our A.A. meetings safe? And I quote in part: “Sponsorship leads to healthy people and healthy people lead to healthy meetings and groups. There are different approaches to sponsorship (by

example, guiding, directing, etc.) but no matter what the approach, having a sponsor makes a difference.”

Thank you so much for being here with me today. With love in service,
Gail P

Stuart S Chair Area 80

Hi my name is Stuart I am an alcoholic and I have been asked to present on Safety and Respect - Practicing the Principles Begins in our Home Group. My initial thoughts were fear and how to say no, but after a short discussion with my sponsor it was apparent that yes would be the only answer. Next was how was I going to approach the subject, and it was suggested that I tell my story. So here we are.

The topic Safety and Respect brings to my mind the policies that over the last few years that have been introduced in my work place, but what does it mean to my Home Group? This lead me to aa.org and a search of safety and respect and ultimately to Bills Last Message. Bill says (quote) “If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the “Concept of Anonymity” (end quote). Bill goes on further to say (quote) “Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical. On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the out side, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes” (end quote) The spiritual I believe is in the practicing of the tradition both in my own life and in the group; the practice of, principals before personalities as stated in the Twelfth Tradition.

Lessons on the traditions in my early sobriety started after only two or three meetings. It was at a meeting with my first sponsor (Brian) that I happened to make a comment on a young lady that had come in to the clubroom. I was very quickly ask by Brian as to why I was there, I replied that I was there to stay sober and was just as quickly reminded to never forget that. I have never forgotten that the only requirement for my membership or anyone else’s is desire to stop drinking and that I must respect that. Brian then suggested that attend meetings in Stonewall which was closer to my home. I reluctantly phone the group number and a person named Stan said he would meet me at the group, here I found a place where I felt as if I were at home. The Big Book discussion, the meetings after the meetings, the travelling to other groups and the getting of members involved created a great unity among the group members. This group eventually self destructed over the breaking of tradition 3 and 5, and was not capable of keeping its unity, or singleness of purpose. I then started attending meetings in another small rural group. It was at this group that I started my journey in service.

Eventually the more I became involved in service the greater the need for a new home group that was more involved. I found two groups that interested me, one small the other larger. While attending a tradition meeting one night at the larger group, it was obvious that some traditions were being broken, again tradition 3 and 5. I did express my thoughts and immediately was ridiculed. I did attend the group conscience meeting and left that meeting not feeling a part of or welcome. The smaller group became my new home group, there I feel welcome and once again at home. We study and discuss the traditions each month and have even had a study facilitated by our past delegates. I still attend the larger group as I have friends there, but have learned to let them be autonomous.

Again Bill says it best (quote)"A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace".

At one time I thought it was okay to bend the traditions that it was all right to be all inclusive. Today I believe there is no difference in bending the traditions or just outright breaking them. This has been proven to me many times as can be seen in my story. Each tradition if followed will ensure that I have a safe and respectful place to recover and that A.A. will be guarded from outside influences. I am grateful to the fellowship and the fact that the Twelve Traditions were adopted in 1950 in Cleveland. I am also grateful that my group practices the Twelve Traditions.

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to make this presentation; it has been an honour and a privilege.

Ed S Chair Area 91

I mentioned to an AA friend that I would be doing this presentation on safety and respect. He asked me what that really meant!

So, what does it mean, really?

When we speak of safety, most, if not all of us immediately think of "13th Stepping" or stalking.

I think most of us can agree that this can be and is a real issue throughout AA everywhere. Newcomers especially, are very vulnerable when they first come to us and can be willing targets to predators who prey on their loneliness and desperate desire to fit in and try to get what we have. They have no idea of what needs to be done and many of them crave attention, no matter in what form. This applies to both male and female members.

But 13th stepping is not all we need to be aware of.

For example, we have heard of some taking advantage to using our meetings and contact with members to conduct certain illegal activities, such as selling drugs or other things. There are those too, whose behaviour and attitudes can be threatening to our other members and can be very intimidating.

What about the fact that bullying can occur within our group. Some members are very set in their ways and try to push things on to newcomers who don't respond the way the member thinks they should. Again, more intimidation.

Wet drunks can be disruptive, intimidating and threatening in meetings which make many feel anxious and fearful. Some members even get angry over such behaviour.

Many of our meetings are held in the basement of churches and other facilities. Do we have any kind of plan in case of fire or other emergencies? What about emergencies involving the health of our members?

And then what do we mean by "respect"?

Tradition 1 tells us that our common welfare comes first but individual welfare follows close afterwards.

Over recent years, we have seen a very wide variety of people and personalities join our fellowship.

We have members with more than one addiction. There are those who have come to us with different life choices than our own. They all, however, have a sincere desire to get sober and stay sober. Unfortunately there are also some members who may not be accepting of these members and may try forcing their beliefs on to the newer members.

Tradition 3 says that the ONLY requirement for AA membership is the desire to stop drinking. It doesn't even require them to be sober when they come, but must have the desire to quit. It tells us that we cannot refuse AA to anyone who walks in our doors, no matter what their background may be. No matter how low they have gone, no matter how grave their emotional complications - or even crimes - we don't want to keep them out. We are not to be afraid of them but rather want them to have the same opportunity to get sober and stay sober that we all had.

So, whether we agree or not with their other possible addictions, life choices or any other personal issues we are obligated to allow and welcome all those who have the desire to stop drinking. That is reflective of our primary purpose..... To stay sober and to help others to achieve sobriety.

So now how does our Home Group address matters that threaten the safety of others or deal with incidents of disrespect?

Our home groups should be providing a safe environment for all who enter our rooms. The conduct of members will go a long way in making others feel safe, at home and welcome, no matter who they are. Our common welfare must come first.

A thorough Group Conscience will go a long way in providing members with guidelines of the group for not only welcoming members, but showing them tolerance and respect, and making them feel safe and at home. Our groups should have procedures on how many situations can be handled in the best interest of everyone in our meetings.

We should try to be alert to anyone known to be 13th stepping or stalking. They should be told that our meetings are only to help us maintain our sobriety and that it is not a place to be seeking "love connections". We should make other members aware of these people and be prepared to have someone, like a sponsor, warn newcomers to be cautious of these members.

Illegal activities should not be tolerated and the group should have procedures on how this would be dealt with. Do we just have the offender leave the meeting, or would their actions warrant contacting authorities? We need to be aware of illegal activities and be willing to ban such offenders if the illegal activities persist.

We are all here for the same primary purpose and many of us have attended meetings as wet drunks. However, those who are disruptive and abusive should be escorted from our meetings by at least 2 members. They should then be talked to outside about their unsatisfactory conduct. Depending on the results, the member may be allowed back into the meeting, or may be told that he or she will not be welcome back to our group in the same condition. If they have a sponsor, we might want to advise him or her about the behaviour of their sponsee.

The group conscience should also address what to do in case of a fire or other emergency. They should know where the nearest phone may be or have someone with a cell phone make that important 911 call.

As a group, it is our responsibility to allow anyone who comes to our meetings the same opportunities to get sober and stay sober that we were so freely given when we came through the doors.

We must have a group conscience that will have members make all those who attend our meetings to feel welcome.

We are AA and as such we are there to deal only with recovery from Alcoholism. Many in recent times have come to us with more than one addiction. AA, as such has no solutions to these other addictions. Our groups should be prepared to help these people get sober and stay sober, and then give them whatever information we might have that they can use to find solutions for their other issues. Effective sponsorship will be very valuable in these cases.

Tradition 3 tells us that we refuse AA to no one. So this means that our group conscience should also be very clear on love and tolerance to all and be sure that the welcome is always there for those who need us.

The “heart” of AA lies within our groups and our recovery comes from being a member of a group that we can call home. It needs to feel like home and the members our family. So if all groups work to develop their own effective Group Conscience, many of the safety and discrimination issues will disappear and ensure that everyone will have great experiences in recovery and in our wonderful fellowship and have the real desire to keep coming back!.

In Love and Service, Ed Area 91 Chair

Safeguarding Traditions through the Evolution of Technology

Larry M Alternate Delegate Area 78

Greetings, my name is Larry M and I am an alcoholic. I am also the Panel 64 Area 78 AB/NT Alternate Delegate and the Chair for the Area 78 Electronic Services Subcommittee. Before I begin, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the WRAASA committee for a job well done in organizing this weekend’s event.

When the Traditions were first developed there was concern about how the technology of the day would fit in with the fledgling program of Alcoholics Anonymous. There was so much concern that Tradition Eleven was devoted to the protection of our Anonymity in the use of press, radio and film.

Since the establishment of the Traditions there has been an explosion of technological advancements and we must now be even more vigilant in protecting our anonymity in the use of press, radio, film and now also television, the internet and social media.

But what about some of the other Traditions? Are we being as vigilant in safeguarding them?

I do a lot of self-talk and I held many interesting discussions with myself while pondering how to approach this topic on “Safeguarding our Traditions through the Evolution of Technology” and I just ended up with more questions than answers. I wish to share some of these lingering questions with you.

Tradition 1:

- In using today’s technological advancements do we remember that as AA members, our common welfare must come first?
- Before we post, email or text do we remember that AA websites, social media sites and the web are in the public domain and that we need to be even more mindful of AA unity to recovery?
- Does being in the public domain jeopardize our common welfare?
- Social media seems to be an entity onto its own and as such does it jeopardize our recovery through AA unity?

Tradition 2:

- Are our websites governed by our trusted servants or have they become the sole authority of one person or one special interest group?
- Do we use technology to make information available and not to limit it?

Tradition 3:

- Do we take care in what is posted on social media sites with respect to AA affiliation and information about the program?
- Are we always mindful that what may seem proper by the person posting or texting, may be a detriment to another's sobriety?
- Do we remember that our only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking or do we embellish it with other descriptors that we often see on social media postings, internet discussion, texts and emails?
- When we search for information on the web do we discriminate between AA fact and musings by someone not knowledgeable about the AA program?

Tradition 4:

- Do we insure that we have an informed Group conscience for technology decision-making?
- Do we have AA website guidelines approved by the membership at large?
- Do we have a website committee to administer those guidelines and maintain checks and balances within the Area website?
- Do technologies we use affect just our Area and District or do they have an effect on AA as whole?

Tradition 5:

- Is our primary purpose of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic ever clouded by too much extraneous information from outside sources on the internet, texts and social media?
- Does our implementation of technology enhance the carrying of the AA message?
- Is information that applies only to the alcoholic placed on secure access areas of the website?

Tradition 6:

- Do we take care to understand the property value and legal implications of technology used for AA purposes before making binding decisions?
- Does our purchase and rental of technology insure that we never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any outside enterprise?

Tradition 7:

- When we implement the use of modern technology at any level, do we insure that they are funded through Seventh Tradition funds?
- Are we responsible and do we assess the value of any technology when using Seventh Tradition funds for technology?
- Are we careful to safeguard funding to other AA Service Committees when using Seventh Tradition funds for technology?

Tradition 8:

- Do we use special workers to assist with the maintenance and establishment of technologies?
- Are our technical persons AA members?

- How do we safeguard that these positions keep the spirit of this tradition in remaining non-professional?

Tradition 9:

- Do we realize how vital it is to create committees to oversee technology services so that we can pay due diligence to clear and self-evident AA experience?

Tradition 10:

- To avoid any public controversy, is our use of technology transparent in discovery, implementation, and process?

Tradition 11:

- Do we protect our Anonymity at the level of modern technologies?
- Are we ever-increasingly more responsible when our anonymity is more vulnerable to a wider audience with greater speed and new sensation?
- Do we realize that breaking our own anonymity on social media sites ultimately affects AA as a whole?
- Do you keep in mind that what you post reaches far more people more quickly than ever before and is impossible to retract?
- Why would we want to advertise to the whole world our affiliation with AA?
- Why would we want to advertise meetings and events to the whole world when such activities are for those with an interest in the AA program?
- Do we post events and meetings and other AA activities on Area, District and Central Office websites so anonymity is more protected and you reach your intended audience?

Tradition 12:

- Should all postings on websites be sanitized so they are free of any last names?
- Are we careful to always place principles before personalities when using modern technologies?
- Are we careful not to attack an AA member through posts, texts and emails?

In closing, I wish to leave you with one thought that I hope we all keep in mind when we use the rapidly advancing development of technologies to deliver services to AA members. Let us hope that use of technology never replaces or diminishes the founding principle of our program and that principle is one alcoholic talking face to face with another alcoholic to maintain sobriety. Thank you, Yours in AA Loving Service, Larry

Trish L Past Delegate Area 79

Hi friends, my name is Trish L and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is February 19, 1994, and my home group is the Reflections Group on the downtown east side of Vancouver. We meet at Glenhaven Funeral Home on Hastings Street, Thursday nights at 7:30 and we have a seat waiting for you if you are ever out our way. I am a Past Delegate, having had the honour of serving as the Area 79 Panel 57 Delegate - which

means I was attended the General Service Conferences in New York in 2007 & 2008. Thanks very much for the loving invitation to participate with you at WRAASA. Thank you to the presenters last night – I enjoyed hearing them, and the discussions afterwards. I am looking forward to the rest of the presentations, workshops and the chance to connect with friends new and old in the Western Canada Region. The fostering of unity is a wonderful and necessary process, and it's great to be part of it. Many thanks to Area 78 and the WRAASA Committee for your commitment to our Region. And Barb, a special thank you to you for your service to the Western Region and helping us through a difficult loss.

Thanks to the committee for a great choice of topic. I like it because it is both general and specific. It touches on the historical and on the present. It's practical and it's spiritual, all at the same time.

There has been an amazing amount of technological evolution since Alcoholics Anonymous started back in 1935 with two drunks – our co-founders Bill W and Dr. Bob talking to each other to figure out what they could do about the alcoholism which had plagued both of them for so long. One of the first places I went to when preparing this presentation was to A0 Old technology and the book “AA Comes of Age” and then b) new technology the Archives section of our AA website (aa.org) and to the Archives timeline. But before I even went there, I had the image of Bill, standing in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel in Akron Ohio, using the phone in the lobby to call a pastor (Reverend Walter Tunks) in order to find a drunk who might need some help. Reverend Tunks referred Bill to Henrietta Sieberling, who of course, in turn, introduced Bill to Dr. Bob. Without that telephone (and the dime that made it work), that Mother's Day meeting in 1935 in the Sieberling gatehouse could not have happened. AA would not have happened. That was technology. Granted, it was not new technology (the telephone was invented in 1876) but it was technology nonetheless.

There are few things that make feel my age as much as the rapid evolution of technology that we face today. I don't think I am alone with that. And I don't think there is much new about that. There are days when I just want to give up, hide under the covers and say "Enough already! I cannot cope with one more digital device, or internet platform, or operating system, no matter how much "easier" it will make my life." That, however is my normal reaction to change. I don't do it well. That duck and cover reaction is also often due to circumstances such as the one where I was unsuccessfully trying to use the GPS in my car to get to an important work meeting, couldn't get through to anyone to let them know I was lost because my cell phone was dying, and I wasn't even sure what time it was because the clock radio on my car was wrong.

That's a personal reaction. AA has had to face all of the tumultuous change in its almost 80 years of existence through the lens of the Traditions – those spiritual principles, “forged on the anvil of group experience”, that have allowed AA to survive and grow in that time period. The 12 Traditions of AA in the short form we are probably the most

familiar with were formally adopted in 1950 (although Bill had been working on them since 1946 – you can see their development – in the long form - in the series of essays he wrote for Grapevine, collected in “The Language of the Heart”), but well before then, the Trustees had to grapple with new technology and new ideas. For instance, in 1944, there were overtures from Hollywood and the burgeoning feature film industry, after the success of the film “The Lost Weekend”, with 3 studios offering up to \$10,000 for the rights to the Fellowship’s story. The Alcoholic Foundation (precursor to the General Service Board), refused the offers on behalf of A.A. members. The fear at that point was violating the privacy of its members – so it’s possible to see the through line tying it to the development of Traditions 6 (affiliation) and Tradition 11 (anonymity at the public level).

As technology/mass media carried stories of AA success – for instance, Reader’s Digest carried an article in 1944 but it was published around the world for the next 4 years – a new challenge arose. While the article and others like it attracted the attention of people who were struggling with alcoholism, it also meant that AA’s success was attracting other kinds of attention. In an effort to halt attempts by various charities to ride the coattails of A.A.’s ascendancy, the Alcoholic Foundation issued a statement aimed at organizations that implied sponsorship by A.A. in their personal appeals to the public. It read, in part, “Alcoholics Anonymous not only fails to endorse the present solicitations of funds but looks with disfavour on the unauthorized use of its name in any fund raising activity.” Both of those tie into what would become Tradition Six. Again, an example that helped form Tradition 6 and even the principles underlying Tradition 7. The anvil of experience at work.

The first General Service Conference was held in 1951. In 1955, the St. Louis Convention affirmed the Fellowship’s maturity as Bill W. passed to the members the responsibility for A.A.’s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. In a few short weeks, our current Western Canada delegates will join with the other 89 Area Delegates to meet and deliberate over the concerns of AA as a whole. The mechanism of the Conference allows us all participation in the Conference process, where once again, the anvil of experience as well as both the historic and present guidance of the Traditions and Concepts will shape decisions.

And those are what help us with new technology. When asked, Alcoholics Anonymous has played an advisory role in the dramatization of alcoholism on television or in movies. In 1958, G.S.O. New York staff members worked closely with scriptwriter J. P. Miller in preparation for the October broadcast of “The Days of Wine and Roses,” on “Playhouse 90”. The play, examining the lives of an alcoholic married couple seeking help from A.A., reached an international audience when it is produced as a movie (with Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick) in 1962. That’s an example of embracing new technology and being friendly with our friends – while not affiliating.

In 1979, AA's first public information film, "Alcoholics Anonymous: An Inside View" was produced. It was 20 minutes long and was designed specifically for local members to take to local television outlets for airing. Today, there are a number of 30 and 60 second Public Service Announcements available for distribution (AA pays for the production of the PSAs but not the air time. Television stations provide air time to any number of not-for-profits as part of their licensing agreements). And they are developed at using the Conference process, with special attention paid to the Traditions. You may remember the discussions about not using full faces, even when actors are used – keeping the principle of anonymity in full mind.

There is no doubt that we are living in the middle of a paradigm shift in how we communicate with each other. That may be a fundamental truth beginning with humans' first verbal communication, but it certainly feels like the change has been especially rapid in the past couple of decades. As the Fellowship has expanded rapidly around the world, some A.A. members have turned to their personal computers to give and receive the message of recovery. Since the mid-1980s, electronic communication has been an updated and expanded version of the "telephone therapy" of A.A.'s earlier days. Primitive electronic Bulletin boards were set up on home computers were linked through national and international networks, enabling local users to join instant "meetings" with A.A.s all over the world. A number of international networks were listed with G.S.O. New York. All of this activity led to some new questions, new fears and new understandings. I don't think that, as an A.A. member, I am alone in not doing change all that well. I was around when Area 79 was grappling with the idea of having a web page in the 90's. There was a great deal of fear about this new internet technology and what it was going to do to AA and our face-to-face meetings. Slowly, with information, discussion and wide consultation (in other words, our normal process), we came to not only accept but in fact embrace the idea of a web site as both a communications and as a Public Information tool.

Yes, change is happening all around us. Yes, there are some real game-changers - social media like Facebook and Twitter - that have us all a-twitter. But the necessity to understand and live in and through our key spiritual principles remains intact. It casts a bright light to guide us, and shows us the best path to take. Nothing about our Traditions has changed, whether we are using a pad & paper, an IBM Selectric or an i-Pad. The world has changed, but we need to learn to use the template that has been created for us, to apply it to these shiny new toys and tools that we have, to harness the power of new communication in the best way possible. We can't bury our heads under the covers (the way I want to), but we do need to use our normal process - information, discussion, wide consultation - to come to an understanding of how we practice these principles in all our affairs. And panels and discussions like we are having this weekend are part of that process. We need to learn from our newcomers how to use those shiny new toys, and share how we can keep our principles intact when we do use them. The spirit of rotation,

embedded in Tradition 9, the constant influx of newcomers and new trusted servants is what keeps AA from atrophying and allows it to respond to the changes we face in the world.

And together, all of us - Trustees, GSO staff, trusted Area servants, home group members, will keep this Fellowship of ours alive and vital. And of course we will make mistakes. And of course we have the right to be wrong. But no hammer will come down, there is no such thing as "AA police" – Warranty 5 of Concept 12 guarantees that. We do however have a loving Higher Power, expressed through our group conscience.

This is from Bill's talk on Unity at the St. Louis Convention in 1955, where responsibility for AA was handed to the Fellowship. You can find it in "AA Comes of Age".

"Today we in AA are together and we know we are going to stay together. We are at peace with each other and with the world around us. So many of our conflicts are resolved that our destiny seems secure. The problems of yesterday have produced the blessing of today.

Ours is not the usual success story: rather it is the story of how, under God's grace, an unsuspected strength has arisen out of great weakness; of how, under threats of disunity and collapse, world-wide unity and brotherhood have been forged. In the course of this experience we have evolved a set of traditional principles by which we live and work together and relate ourselves as a fellowship to the world around us. These principles are called the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. They represent the distilled experience of our past, and we rely on them to carry us in unity through the challenges and danger which the future may bring."

Godspeed to the Panel 64 and 65 Delegates as they prepare for the 65th General Service Conference. Our Region is in good hands.

Again, thank you all so much for the privilege of sharing with you this morning.

In love and service, Trish L, Panel 57 Delegate, BC/Yukon Area 79

Cate W Past Delegate Area 80

Hi, I'm Cate and I'm an alcoholic. And I'm very happy to be here and to be seeing so many of the people that I've met at these events over the years, people who I see so seldom but know so well.

I would like to thank Jim and the WRAASA Committee for inviting me to share on this panel, it is such an honour to be sharing the podium with my regional cohorts.

Over the years I've found it fascinating how we are all given the same topic to share about, we often ultimately say the same things, but we always seem to come at it from completely different viewpoints. So here are my thoughts on the subject.

When I first came into the program, I suffered not from alcoholism, or so I thought, but from an attitude of belligerent denial. I didn't want to be here, I didn't want to be an alcoholic, I didn't want to be like you, I didn't want to even talk to you and above all I didn't want to quit drinking. But I did have this little problem with alcohol. The way I drank, the things I did when I drank, the things I didn't remember doing when I drank. So really I was here to learn how to drink like a lady. And since I was not like the rest of you I didn't really feel the need to follow any of the suggestions made. But after many months of trying it my way and not being able to control my drinking despite my best efforts, I eventually came to accept that, in order to learn to drink like a lady, I needed to do the things suggested, like get a big book, get a sponsor, do the steps and come to lots of meetings. And I also determined I had to do them in 90 days, because that's all the time I was willing to commit to Alcoholics Anonymous.

I looked at the steps and thought they seemed easy and straightforward and I was fairly sure that I would have no problem knocking them off in the 90 days I had allotted. But I encountered trouble from the start, with the unwillingness to admit that my life was unmanageable in step 1, the inability to understand the insanity of my life in step 2, and all of step 3 where I couldn't even figure out a way to cheat to get through it, it was so completely foreign to me. I ultimately found that I had to work through these steps with a sponsor at my side every step of the way, I had to listen to people talk about their experiences with the steps, I had to read the book over and over. I had thought the steps were black and white, but when I started doing them the right way, I found that my perceptions of black and white were faulty and I had to come to terms with a lot of things that were not straight forward to me: things like figuring out a way to find a god of my own understanding, developing a method of prayer and meditation that worked for me, being able to identify and accept my character defects. It was only after I went through the program with an open mind and the willingness to learn that I could finally understand how the steps worked. And when I made the effort, that's when I started staying sober. Only after that could I see that the steps really were simple. But not easy.

My experience with the traditions was very similar. They seemed at first glance even more black and white than the steps. I didn't really understand why we had to have tradition meetings. Those were the meetings I tried to avoid in early sobriety because I thought there would be nothing I wanted to say and very little I wanted to hear. And of course, once again I found I was wrong. Many of the discussions I heard in my early sobriety opened my eyes to the depths of the traditions. Such

discussions as what really is an alcoholic, what constitutes anonymity and why is it so important to us, what are the issues that affect AA as a whole versus my own home group, what constitutes an outside issue and where is the fine line between cooperation and affiliation? There was a lot to learn.

And so I found I had to study the traditions in as much depth as I did the steps. In the Language of the Heart I read about how and why the traditions were developed, through the experiences of our founders and by the mistakes they made. I gained a great respect for the traditions and an understanding of their importance to our ongoing existence. And the reason I talk about this is because the willingness to live by the spirit of the traditions and to protect them for future generations is the first step in safeguarding them, whether in light of changing technology or the changing world.

I will now talk a bit about technology. Unlike the traditions, which haven't changed since they were first accepted in 1950, technology is in a rapid and constant state of change.

I have a technology background, the first half of my career was spent as an IT specialist. I took computer science at University of Manitoba the first year it was offered. Usually when I share a bit about what the state of technology was like then I get quite a mixed reaction, with some in the crowd smiling and nodding and saying yes, I remember and others looking in amazement, scratching their heads and saying really? Talk of my university days was talk of punch cards and assembler code and understanding bits and bytes and hexadecimal coding. I remember dropping off my box of punch cards and picking them up the next day because it took that long to run them through the compiler. And I remember always being aware of high tightly we needed to code because memory was so expensive. When there was talk of computers on every desk and computers in the home, I think the computer geeks were the last to believe it would ever happen. And yet here we are today carrying our lives in our pockets and purses and linked to people everywhere with the swipe of a keypad. This gives us tremendous possibilities for carrying the message. And equally tremendous challenges in determining, in light of this, how to ensure it's done within the spirit of traditions.

On the topic of safeguarding our traditions through the evolution of technology, I am going to refer to information available through our General Service Office. Our GSO has guidelines available on many subjects of interest to the fellowship as a whole and I find I often need look no further when faced with such issues. These guidelines are put together with input from the fellowship, serve as a source of

accumulated information and experience and are available to everyone on the AA Website. One of the Guidelines they have published is a piece on the Internet. It shares information on the many ways that AA members are using technology to carry the message and includes such topics as social networking sites, websites, email, meetings on line, speakers available online and more. One of the things I especially like about this piece is that, in true AA fashion, it talks about practices GSO uses on our websites and in our communication. And it identifies appropriate ways to use these technologies while respecting the spirit of the traditions.

Probably the most often considered tradition when talking about use of technology is that of personal anonymity. Just a few examples of suggestions made in AA Internet Guideline to address these concerns include taking care on social media sites, which are public in nature, not to identify ourselves as alcoholics; taking care not to use full names and phone numbers when posting events flyers on public websites, taking care when forwarding AA related emails not to publicly show recipients email address, taking care when selecting an email address and many more, things that I may not have been aware of before reading these guidelines.

There are many other very specific suggestions made in the guideline, and discussion of traditions other than that of anonymity. But what is clear is that technology offers us a very powerful tool to carry the message, we are already using that tool in very many different ways and are able to reach more people, more quickly and with more information than ever before. And that it is very possible to do this and still practice the vigilance required to do it within the spirit of the traditions.

However we also do sometimes like to move slowly and cautiously in AA. And not every AA member is going to be comfortable with the use of technology to carry the message. And that's ok too. The guideline offers a final caution:

“because the spiritual nature of one drunk talking to another is an ongoing source of concern when discussing technology as a source of A.A. information...it is helpful to remember that there is no need to let the speed of technology dictate the speed of our actions”. So there is something for everyone.

So I think the three things needed in safeguarding our traditions through the evolution of technology:

First is an understanding of the **importance** of the traditions to the future AA and the **willingness** to safeguard them.

Second is an **awareness** of information and experience already available to us such as that provided by the A.A. Guidelines for the Internet and

Third is **constant vigilance**. The traditions were developed from the experience and mistakes of others. No doubt more mistakes will be made. But if we learn from them, then we can be sure that the traditions will be safeguarded, the message will be carried and AA will be here for the generations to come, no matter what happens in our ever changing world.

Glen N Alternate Delegate Area 91

Good morning. My name is Glenn N and I am an alcoholic, currently serving Area 91 Saskatchewan as Alternate Delegate.

Why is this topic important? Because as many people before me have said, and I agree, following the Twelve Steps will keep me alive, following the Twelve Traditions will keep AA alive.

There is a wealth of information available regarding various aspects of safeguarding our Traditions in this digital information age on such online sites as aa.org and aagrapevine.org (especially the digital archive section) plus through published items such as the A.A. Guidelines regarding use of the Internet, some General Service Conference Final Reports, the Understanding Anonymity pamphlet, the Grapevine, Box 459 and so on. I recommend all of these as excellent resources for anyone interested in becoming more familiar with this issue.

Some examples of technology when I was growing up were communication was primarily face-to-face, or by a hand cranked telephone mounted on the wall, or by handwritten letter, or by a weekly newspaper, or by Morse code on telegraph or over a static-filled radio that picked up about 3 stations. As is very obvious, technology (and I) have changed a lot over the intervening years.

The Twelve Traditions have not. And although it is guaranteed that technology (and I) will continue to change in the future, hopefully, the Twelve Traditions will not.

It seems that throughout the history of AA, our respect for our Traditions has always been tinged with a certain amount of fear and uncertainty. And in 2015,

this is still certainly very much the case, especially when it comes to Traditions 11 and 12 regarding the importance of anonymity.

I'm going to read a quote in part regarding this matter of anonymity attributed to a member of Alcoholics Anonymous when writing about our Traditions:

"The spirit of anonymity calls upon each of us for personal sacrifice in every level of our fellowship's undertakings. Only through such willing sacrifices can we AAs meet our responsibilities to ourselves, to the victims of alcoholism everywhere, and to society as a whole."

"A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches."

"...nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA *than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication.*"

Who do you think might have written these words? One of our Delegates? One of our Class B Trustees? The General Manager at GSO?

No, these words were written by Bill W., and were published in the November 1960 Grapevine. Yes, 1960! Of course, at the time, Bill was referring to television, but it's just as relevant today when applied to the Internet.

So now the important part:

"What can I - and you - do to help safeguard our Traditions through the evolution of technology?"

To start with, I looked at two things that we often hear at meetings, but perhaps sometimes don't always spend enough time thinking about each time before we take an action on something.

First was our Responsibility Declaration:

"When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there; and for that I am responsible."

Second was the Serenity Prayer:

"God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

Looking at the Responsibility Declaration first, what do I feel is the basis for the hand of AA always being there? I feel strongly that it is preserving the integrity of our Twelve Traditions. So, for that, I am responsible.

Why do I feel this way? Because my home group has held one Tradition meeting per month since I joined AA.

Looking at the Serenity Prayer, what are the “things I cannot change”?

Well one thing for sure that I cannot change is the evolution of technology, nor can I control any of the hundreds of social media sites. And even if I could, to do so would conflict with Tradition 10 “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues”.

So, what can I change?

My attitude. I need to embrace technology, not run from it. It’s important for me to remember that, generally speaking, the oldtimer has knowledge of the Traditions; the newcomer, or more specifically the younger newcomer, has knowledge of digital information; and communication between the two is very important, perhaps crucial.

At this point I’ll mention the importance of technology for me personally in relating to some of the younger newcomers. I have found that smart phones may be the only way some young people can communicate and open up. In fact I probably spend more time carrying the message of the Steps and Traditions through one-on-one texting than I do at meetings. And to me that’s ok.

However, when it comes to using social media and online meetings, that’s a different matter. I do not personally use any social media or online meeting sites. But that does not mean that I have no responsibility to help protect Alcoholics Anonymous by those who do.

I do know how to take pictures with my cell and forward them to someone else as part of a text or email. I have to become more cautious even doing this, as those pictures too might well still end up on a social media site.

Anonymity is often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth and assures our members that their recovery will be private. Often, the active alcoholic will avoid any source of help which might reveal his or her identity.

I should point out that I’ll be using the word Facebook from time-to-time, and when I do, I’m really using it to cover all types of social media.

As I found out while preparing this presentation, there is wording in the Facebook unblocker and privacy policy which can be interpreted to mean that whatever is shared on their site can be accessed by the general public and that they cannot be held responsible for whatever happens as a result. In other words, there is really no privacy guaranteed when using this site. And Facebook alone has an estimated 900 million unique monthly visitors.

So let's look at an example, and assume that I am on Facebook. I'm here this weekend having a great time renewing acquaintance with some friends that I haven't seen for some time. I take my cell phone out and snap a few pictures in the lobby of some people that my friends back home know too and get ready to post them on Facebook.

What do I do next?

- Do I simply post them so that my friends back home can see what a good time I'm having and will wish they were here too?
- Do I ask the people I just took a picture of if it's ok to do what I'm about to do?
- Do I explain the potential consequences, remembering that there is no guarantee of privacy regardless of my or my friends privacy settings?
- Do I check the picture closely to see if there is anyone in it other than the intended people?
- Do I check the picture closely to see if there's anything in it regarding AA, such as a sign by a door, an agenda lying on a table, a conference room meeting notice, etc. etc.?
- Do I stop and think "How important is it that I post this picture at all?"

What about the person who may be on the verge of reaching out for help seeing a picture of me on Facebook at an AA function and is scared off by feeling that his picture too might sometime appear on Facebook if he came to AA? Or seeing such things shared as sobriety birthday announcements, or "glad to hear you're sober", or "are you going to the AA roundup this weekend?". How does this help to fulfill our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers as expressed in Tradition 5?

I personally believe that breaks in anonymity are rarely done with ill intentions. I believe they are usually the result of either our carelessness or simply not thinking about or understanding the full implications of our actions.

And what about the person who may not be an alcoholic, but is assumed by my friends or friends of their friends to be an alcoholic by appearing in a picture on Facebook with me?

A workshop participant once related the story of a person who had been exposed on Facebook through careless posting, and felt strongly that doing so was violating the intent of Tradition 1, feeling that the desire of the individual posting was not in the best interests of our common welfare.

Regarding Tradition 1 and the importance of group unity and our common welfare, what about the use of cell phones during meetings?

How many times have I noticed someone using their cell phone below the edge of the meeting room table to text or email or whatever they're doing smiling at their lap while someone else is sharing? Is that kind of action respectful to other members and conducive to group unity? I think not.

So what can I do about any of these things?

- I can talk to newcomers about Traditions, especially Traditions 1, 5, 11 and 12; why they're in place and what they mean. It's not me that I need to protect – it's AA.
- I can work to ensure that my group and my sponsees understand the importance of the anonymity Traditions when using any method of transmitting any kind of information be it by voice or written word or pictures or whatever, including even such things as newsletters, posters, birthday meeting announcements, directories and so on.
- I can encourage a discussion on this topic at a District workshop or other AA service function
- I can encourage other groups to hold Tradition meetings
- I can encourage people to use cell phones to communicate, but not during meetings, perhaps by discussing with an offender after the meeting, or displaying a card on the meeting table regarding cell phone usage or maybe having it as an item in the opening remarks.
- There are so many things I can do, if I choose.

I believe that if we, as members of Alcoholics Anonymous, do nothing, we actually are doing something. I believe what we are really doing is turning the future for our children and grandchildren who may suffer with the disease of alcoholism over to the care of whatever is put out on the social media that the evolution of technology has spawned.

Do we really want Facebook to be the God of their understanding?

A.A. members are frequently learning as they go, and technology and applications change practically on a daily basis.

However, as a delegate from Oklahoma said at the General Service Conference in 2012, "It is helpful to remember that there is no need to let the speed of technology dictate the speed of our actions."

But I believe it is important that we do take action.

As Bill so aptly inferred, it's not this colossus of communication that will be the problem for the future welfare of AA, it's the manner in which we use it.

I believe it is our responsibility (mine and yours) to work toward ensuring that our members use it in a manner which is in the spirit with which the Traditions were intended and have served us so well for so many years. It is our responsibility to use it in a manner which displays humility and is respectful for both the oldtimer and the newcomer in AA, for our non-alcoholic friends and, most importantly, for all people who may reach out for life-saving help from AA in the future.

Thank you all for being here. Yours in love and service Glenn N

Inventory - Looking Back to Move Ahead

Peter K Registrar Area 78

Before I start, I would like to welcome everyone from out of town to my home town - the city of Western Hospitality - Calgary! YAHOO!!! If you are not leaving our city until Monday, a good meeting to catch on Sunday evening at 8pm would be my home group - the Ogden Group!!! See ya all there!

I hope that everyone enjoyed the chilli!!! Our volunteer cooks did a great job, didn't they, lets give them all another big hand.

Good afternoon friends, my name is Peter K and I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. A grateful member, in fact, due in large part to Step 4 - my inventory - my searching and fearless moral inventory of myself, my look back at myself, in order to move ahead. At the time I was faced with doing my Step 4, I could not see my way to the end of it. It was extremely daunting. Today, I cannot see myself, or my recovery, without my first inventory. My first real look at myself.

When I was asked to be a panelist on today's agenda, I was skeptical, as usual. My sponsors and my mentors had always just said to say YES to AA Service. However I balked. I looked back at some of my service to my fellow man, and realized that it was due to that service which I had performed, that I am where I am at in my

recovery, and in my life today. So moving ahead is what I was compelled to do. I returned the call to our organizing committee chairperson and said YES. It was refreshing however, to hear another panelist last night that had the same thoughts go through his head, the thought “NO”, and of course with fear attached. The fact that he was an Area Chair, wow that was awesome. Guess my self centeredness was showing. Once again I felt part of this great fellowship.

Inventory: Looking Back to Move Ahead! What does that mean? Often in Alcoholics Anonymous we think of Inventory, and our minds immediately go to our Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Also what might come to mind is the Group Inventory which ensures that our group is being true to the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, in particular, Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. As well, at this point in time, the General Service Conference is taking its inventory over a 3 year period. This is what was forefront in my mind when I set about to prepare this presentation. How well is the Conference living up to the the Twelve Concepts would be the subject in that case. In each of these thoughts is a benchmark. The first is the Twelve Steps. The method we all have adhered to in attaining that spiritual awakening, which in essence started with Step 4, the start to our housecleaning. Then there are the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for World Service. Vital bench marks for our fellowship to ensure that our groups and our world service resources are being used in the most effective way possible. Another possible benchmark is “Gods Will”. Whatever that might be. Looking back is always a good place to start to ensure that we effectively Move Ahead.

Patrick Claymore, southeast Texas delegate, in his 2014 address “Inventory - A guiding Tool to our Future” said “Learning from past experience will grant us vision for tomorrow.” He also indicated that information needs to flow up and down our service structure.” Not just DOWN. And not just UP.

The Keynote address at the beginning of the 2013 General Service Conference indicated “Self-assessment is a pervasive part of our AA program; fully half of our Steps are directly related to it.” It went on to say: “Honesty, both with ourselves and with others, is a core value of AA. We don’t take inventory simply because it is, in and of itself, a good thing (like kindness, or generosity), but rather because it is an important element of our continued sobriety. The same holds true for our service inventories, including the Conference inventory which we are now undertaking. We are not here to take pride in doing the responsible thing by taking an inventory. We are here to help assure the UNITY and effectiveness of AA in its mission to carry the

great message of hope to anyone, anywhere, who has a desire to do something about his or her drinking problem.”

With regard to the above mentioned Unity, I recall what Bill W. writes in the Language of the Heart on page 34 - “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare must come first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.” *This is recognition, common in all forms of society, that the individual must sometimes place the welfare of his fellows ahead of his own uncontrolled desires. Were the individual to yield nothing to the common welfare there could be no society at all - only self-will run riot; anarchy in the worst sense of that word. That stark assertion carries a world of meaning for every member of Alcoholics Anonymous. While it is perfectly true that no AA group can possibly coerce an alcoholic to contribute money, to conform to the Twelve Steps of our recovery program or to the Twelve points of AA Tradition, each AA member is, nevertheless, most powerfully compelled, in the long run, to do these very things. The truth is, that in the life of each AA member, here still lurks a tyrant. His name is alcohol. He is cunning, ruthless. And his weapons are misery, insanity, and death. No matter how long we may be sober, he always stands at each man’s elbow, ever watchful of an opportunity to resume his destruction. Unless, of course, the AA citizen is willing to live unselfishly, often placing the welfare of AA as a whole ahead of his own personal plans and ambitions. Apparently no human being can force alcoholics to live happily and usefully together. But Mr. John Barleycorn can - and he often does.” I need to look back to that passage, from time to time, to remind myself that as I move ahead I need to keep in mind that my dis-ease is always at my elbow, willing to take over from my higher power, just as it once was - my master.*

Those were some thoughts that went through my mind when I was sitting down to write this presentation. Again the topic is Inventory: Looking Back to Move Ahead. That is what the above statements were referring to.

I would like to explore the last part of that topic: *Looking Back to Move ahead* - further.

A woman, M.C., from Hollywood, CA, writes in a Grapevine article of April, 1952, “If you are like me, if you spent as much time as I did at a bar or at home with a bottle, it takes awhile after you find AA before the fuzz gets out of your head. You don’t look beyond today; you don’t try to see what direction you are taking. You don’t try to look ahead; you move carefully, trying a few new program-taught habit patterns today; you go to another meeting tonight.

It's enough, at first, to be assured over and over again that other people got sober and like it that way. It's enough, single day after single day, to realize that maybe you can too.

And then, after two months, or three, you begin to look back and see patterns, to realize that things have happened to you. Good things.

She goes on with this analogy:

Knitting's a pleasant thing to do evenings, if you don't happen to drink any more-- maybe the pleasanter because you can remember the time when your hands weren't steady enough. If you don't mind any more asking for help in the puzzling spots, you can learn easier ways, and new patterns.

Suddenly I looked back and realized I'd crossed a bridge of some kind. Evenings weren't a problem, to me anymore than to anyone else, except that suddenly there weren't enough of them. I was part of the lively, useful world, the world MOST people live in."

There she was looking back to see her advances had been blessed with her experience from the past and was able to understand how to Move Ahead with grace.

The following is an excerpt from an August 1974 Grapevine. It struck me as it is a very similar story to my own. This gentleman writes so much more eloquently than I. As usual, I was amazed to see one more time that I am just the same as all of you.

"Arriving at the Fourth Step, I needed time to understand what was wanted. No one suggested examination of conscience or mentioned sin. I finally realized that the goal was a clear picture of my ethical condition, i.e., how I stood in relation to common standards for just and decent living. Meditation followed, and then a slow look back as far as I could remember, to about age five or six. Gradually came knowledge that all had not been as rosy as conceit had tinted it.

Youngest of a large and loving family, I had a natural slant toward self-will that had increased with the years. There were soft spots in me that had set me up as a possible alcoholic long before the first drink. Gradually, I began to see myself in a new light, not as a golden boy, but as a stained, grey, gloomy figure.

The truth became clear--here was someone proud to a painful degree, often angry, lazy, self-indulgent, prone to daydreaming, bitter instead of thankful for great gifts, greedy, seizing anything as my right, and so on. The list was long, and the picture grew darker.

One thing kept hope going. I recalled what the Big Book said about taking inventory to find the facts about a business. So I knew that any assets should be listed, too. There were some: skills and confidence in my line of work, good education, a cheerful

disposition (if I could revive it), many friends who had helped and would help again, and physical health despite the bottle years. These things were lifelines eagerly grasped.

Nonetheless, what had started in a shallow way became a well of sadness. Near a breaking point, I looked up. If ever salvation appeared when needed, there it was: the Fifth Step and hope--hope of being honest with the Higher Power and myself, and of escaping an awful burden by admitting to a fellowman the exact nature of my existence.

It became possible to admit without reservation that alone I was without the ability to control alcohol.

This was a gradual thing, but by the grace of God, I had two sponsors. Both were blunt and caustic at times, and I had known one of them for many years. For a while, I hated everything they told me, until at last honesty pointed out the reason for my resentment. It was this: When alcohol was the topic, they were always right and I was always wrong. Here was the beginning of wisdom. I surrendered to the First Step.” So much of this unnamed man’s story is similar to my journey, *before - and after - my last drink*.

Even Bill W. tells of a Looking Back to Move Ahead story in Language of the heart . He relates a story he was telling some members in Baltimore. “I kept referring to our drinking experience as a great calamity, a terrible misfortune.” After the meeting I was approached by a Catholic clergyman who genially remarked, “I heard you say you thought your drinking a great misfortune. But it seems to me that in your case it was your great good fortune. Was not this terrible experience the very thing which humbled you so completely that you were able to find God? Did not suffering open your eyes and your heart? All the opportunity you have today, all this wonderful experience you call AA, once had its beginnings in deep personal suffering. In your case that was actually no misfortune. It was your great good fortune. You AAs are a privileged people.” *I am so with that Clergyman. We are a privileged lot.*

One of my spiritual mentors, a 12 step member for many years, is a minister in the faith community I belong to. His simple approach to life is the holy trinity: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. OR The Seed, The Soil and The Harvest. I can plant an idea, and I can harvest the result, but I have absolutely no control in how that seed will manifest into its result. That is totally Devine intelligence’s territory. He continually says that if I plant a weed, I will not get a succulent sweet green pea. No matter how much I try and control the situation. The fertile soil can be made more fertile by me, it can be watered by me, but the seed will still manifest into what

god's intention for the seed planted was, Weed or Green Pea. In my faith, we think that thoughts are just as powerful as deeds.

Taken in a slightly different context, Looking back to move ahead, can be called REFLECTION. This reflection is what I find myself doing often. Especially since completing my first step 4. As a practicing alcoholic and in early sobriety, I had no idea what or who I really was. The simple task of taking an honest fearless moral inventory shed such light on who I really was. It was then that I could look at the facts and DO SOMETHING about them. Until I knew about my defects of character, there was no way any one of us could do anything about them. And for me I needed the help of my higher power to make the changes. For so many years I had been telling myself that I was "this - or that - or something else". Usually all negative thoughts. When I put that into the context to Reverend Doug's "Seed-Soil-Harvest" analogy, I had been using gods divine intention for me to destroy myself. It has taken me these few sober years to achieve some level of reprieve. A reprieve that only comes from doing the work. For me that is spiritual work. And working unselfishly with others. Allow me to pray:

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.

It was by Looking Back, that I was able to Move Ahead. I am so grateful to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous for showing me how to do this.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of some upcoming Alcoholics Anonymous events:

Hope to see you next weekend at the Calgary Intergroup Banff Roundup.

For all us Area 78'ers, March 20-22 is Pre-Conference Assembly in Red Deer.

In June, on the 12th - 14th is Calgary General Service Committee's Gratitude Roundup.

You are all, of course, welcome to attend.

Then there is July 2-5 in Atlanta, Georgia. That will be my first Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention, and I am so looking forward to see many of my Canadian AA friends there, amount the estimated 80,000 or so recovering drunks that will descend on Atlanta.

Thank you for being here today. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak to you and to be of service to my fellow alcoholic.

Carolyn W Past Delegate Area 79

Hi Friends! My name is Carolyn W. and I am an alcoholic. I am thrilled to be here with all of you at WRAASA! Thank you to the committee for the “loving invitation” to participate on this panel on “Inventory - Looking Back to Move Ahead”.

This is an exciting time regarding inventory in AA, as this year the General Service Conference will complete the 3rd and final year of a comprehensive inventory. This inventory has dealt primarily with the bottom of our “upside-down triangle” and has generated a timely and necessary examination of our effectiveness at these levels (the Conference, AAWS, AAGV and the GSB). While I am very excited about this process, I am much more excited to see what the outcome of these discussions will be and what the plans are to resolve any issues that have been identified.

Isn't that always the way with Inventory? Whether it is a personal inventory, a Group inventory, an Area inventory, or an inventory at the Conference.....the effectiveness of the process comes down to what we are prepared to do with the information we have gathered and determine how we can set things right.

I know that until I completed my personal inventory and made my amends there was not going to be any lasting sobriety for me. Sure I was coming to meetings but nothing else had changed. I was still stealing from work, I was in 2 relationships, and I got to meeting by siphoning gas into my uninsured car....and I couldn't stay sober. In fact, it was around this time a longer timer in my Group said to me “Carolyn, the only thing changing with you is your sobriety date”. Sure enough, once I committed to the steps and really tried to work them I changed. I strongly believe that we don't change ourselves, but rather the process changes us....and that the work is never done. Although I am nothing like the lost and dishonest newcomer I was, I am not cured. Like you, I have a daily reprieve contingent on the growth and maintenance of my spiritual condition. I must continue to take personal inventory daily and set right any new wrongs as they arise. In my experience this is as true for our groups and services as it is for the individual.

I had the good fortune to belong to a home group that did an annual inventory and the importance of taking stock of how effectively we are fulfilling our primary purpose had been explained to me. I have since come to understand that unity is dependent on the spiritual condition of the group and that inventory is an essential part in the maintenance of the groups unity.

I am happy to report that the district and the area I belong to also do inventories. The main thing is that we continue to seek out ways we can better fulfil our primary

purpose and strengthen our unity....and that we do this at all service levels from the group down to the GSB.

I am thrilled to see some of the matters I consider to be important to how AA moves ahead on the agenda here this weekend. Matters such as “diversity in AA”, “Safety in AA”, and “Anonymity and technology” are of paramount importance to our current and future functioning as a Fellowship. Yes, we need to look back at the lessons we have learned in the past, to our shared experience, and to challenge ourselves to apply those lessons to our current and future needs. Although our WRAASA panels and workshops are not an inventory - they do provide an opportunity to face our challenges and talk about them. It is my experience that with the difficult issues we need to talk about them, and then talk about them, and then talk about them some more if we are ever going to reach the point of really taking stock and finding a solution. As we all know the solutions can always be found in our group conscience. Participating in these discussions leaves us better informed to participate in a more formal group conscience be it at the group, the district, the area or the conference.

One issue that concerns me is that I frequently see AA members jumping to AA's defence online. This occurs when there is a negative opinion expressed about AA in an online forum (comments sections of online newspapers, facebook posts, twitter comments, the list goes on...). This is a slippery slope. In *The AA Service Manual combined with the 12 Concepts for World Service* you can find Concept 12. Within Concept 12 Warranty 5 advises us well about what to do in these situations. We are told that we “should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Our experience has shown that, providentially it would seem, A.A. 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 world-wide good will which A.A. enjoys....” These are lessons we have already learned and this is certainly a case of where we could be looking back to inform how we move ahead.

Another concern is about the levels of contributions and Self-Support. There is much debate about whether literature sales constitute self-support. No matter what your thoughts are on that question the fact remains that we must accept that the sales of printed materials are decreasing world-wide across all demographics. Our current (and past) practice of relying on this revenue is no longer sustainable. What do we need to do differently to effectively get this message to the Fellowship? What are we doing to ensure all groups and members are informed about the 12th Step value of their contributions? Is it working? We will be celebrating AA's 80th birthday June 10th this year, if we are to remain available to the alcoholic who suffers during the next 80 years we are going to have to take a long and hard look at these questions and figure

out what self-support without literature revenue will need to look like as we move ahead.

What about being “Friendly with our friends”? Looking back, anyone who has read AA Comes Of Age will understand how critical our Cooperation with the Professional Community efforts were to our beginnings. In The Language of the Heart Bill W writes: “So let us work alongside these projects of promise to hasten the recovery of those millions who have not yet found their way out” (p190). When we “look back” can see the emphatic need for our continued cooperation with the professional community for the welfare of AA as a whole and for the recovery of the alcoholic who still suffers. Yet “moving ahead” there is very little on the Conference agenda for the CPC committee again this year. The ideas are not coming “down the triangle” from the Groups. Maybe this is a subject where we need leadership at the Conference level and at the Area level to stimulate the important discussion about what AA’s relations with the professional community need to look like in 2015 and beyond? Once the spark is ignited I am sure that the Fellowship will make their thoughts known and share their experience and needs at the local level.

Well, my time is nearly up. I hope I have provoked some thoughts that might lead to further discussion on these and on any other matters you consider important to AA’s future. In Bill W’s last message he said “A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock.” So, Yes! Let’s continue to look back, BUT let’s not forget that we must also have the courage to change the things we can and so ensure that our lifesaving program of recovery remains available to those who will need it.

With love and service, Carolyn W.

Brad F Corrections Chair Area 80

Good afternoon, my name is Brad F. and I am an Alcoholic.

I started research on this topic and my sponsor asked me how it was going. I said not well and he replied maybe I should be looking in not out.

There was a time in my sobriety where I became very ill. The feeling of being an untreated alcoholic reared its head after several years in AA.

The anguish and turmoil from a lack of knowledge and action nearly caused my downfall. While not craving a drink, I was still in a full blown relapse. All of the alcoholic symptoms which usually precede the drink were alive and kicking.

After relocating to Alberta it was decision time; time to get an active sponsor and join a home group. I was told to enrol in a 14 week step series and then a 14 week traditions series right after.

I opened my mind to the world of AA again with vigour. The time had come to “reflect and take stock”, and take stock I did. The Traditions checklist allowed me to move beyond the study of the Traditions & have a better understanding of the action necessary.

My understanding of being a responsible member of AA became ever so clear.

It all began with the 12 Traditions Check list:

I had to **really** ask myself:

1. Do I compare or criticize other groups or members?
2. Am I as considerate of others as I wish them to be to me?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age or other such things interfere with carrying the message?
5. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? **EXPLAIN** I.e: other groups or meetings in my district. Conflict / start time or nights.
6. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose? (5)
7. Do I remember that AA long-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? (5) **EXPLAIN** Genuine love and concern
8. How important to my recovery is self-respect rather than being under obligation of charity received (7) **Paying our own way.**
9. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On Recovery? Am I a lawyer? A doctor? A marriage counsellor?
10. Do I exercise patience and humility?
11. Do I promote AA fanatically, to the point of making it unattractive
12. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering alcoholic?
13. Is my sobriety attractive enough for a sick drunk to want this quality of life for himself.

It is with great comfort that we can rely on our Archives and literature to reveal the trials and tribulations we experienced in the infant years of AA.

The book Comes of Age was a wonderful resource for me. Those before us have discovered the danger in “straying or grandstanding” and remind us ever so gently that: Each Group has but one primary purpose.

Learning from our experiences will grant us vision for tomorrow.

The Twelve Traditions relate to AA as a whole and to AA in its various parts, particularly the groups. They constitute AA’s guide to unity

For group purposes we had to look at the following:

1. What is the basic purpose of the group?
2. Do you get the proper percentage of men and women?

We struggled with a gender balance and decided to take the following action. Some of us were in Prince Albert at my Grampa sponsor's (Cec C) home group. On the wall was a phrase that read: The continued use of foul language is an unwillingness to grow.

We decided thru Group conscience to announce at the beginning of every meeting to please try to refrain from using profanity when sharing.

Our attendance of ladies increased immensely. The result was an increase in ladies to our Group and to also offer female members & new comers more sponsorship.

3. Do your members stick or is turnover excessive? Do a lot of new prospects come in but fall by the wayside quickly? Are you complacently sure that part of this is not due to group methods.
4. How effective is your sponsorship system? How much of a sense of sponsorship responsibility, does your group have?

What does it do about a prospect who comes in without a sponsor?

5. Do you pick officers with care and consideration on the basis that officership is a great responsibility.
6. Do you elect someone because you think it might be good for him or her, forgetting that our common welfare should come first?
7. Does your group lend its fair share of support to intergroup and the General Service Office?
8. What has your group done during the last six months to carry the message.

As a result of the Group Inventory - there were a lot of changes - far too many it seemed.

It was decided thru our group conscience to implement these changes with a piecemeal approach.

This would reduce pushback and allow the changes to take root before implementing more.

A longtimer once said: "inch by inch life is a cinch, yard by yard life is hard". Small changes, but changes none the less.

When newcomers come over the stairs they are greeted by 2 or 3 group members who are usually laughing and smiling. They tell us later they thought they were in the wrong place - these people appeared to be far too happy to be Alcoholics.

Whenever we pass information on to newcomers or members, it is usually in the form of a book or pamphlet. A piece of AA literature is rarely questioned as it is not my opinion.

We read and explain the blue card and the green card at every meeting.

We get people's names at the door and ask if they are new. This goes directly to the chairperson.

Under the Group conscience we have 2 meeting formats which we follow. We have a term position in our group to work with the chairperson, to help them understand their role. Members chair for 1 month each.

We offer temporary sponsorship - right away.

We also conduct 3 - 14 week step series and 3 - 14 week traditions series annually.

Many members who have taken these previously, are attending again to offer support and temporary sponsorship to those currently enrolled and in need.

Education and implementation are the keys to success.

We also spend a lot of time on outside functions such as annual curling fun spiels, standing tee times for golf (no experience necessary - just show up and go). Many times the AA discussions on the course are so interesting we forget to keep score.

We especially invite newcomers to these outings to let them know as soon as possible they too can have fun without drinking. This also creates an environment for them to share something they may not share at a larger gathering, like a meeting.

We love road trips & meeting new members & offering support wherever needed. We celebrate Gratitude night - a wonderful platform for family and friends to experience AA in action.

This is not to say we don't have issues that need to be addressed, but not nearly the amount we once had.

Our issues today are a little more uptown, like should we buy chairs to match the drapes at our home group - I'm kidding. We still have concerns but they are not of the magnitude they once were.

These changes took time, but were necessary to preserve our primary purpose and not get caught up in the small stuff.

We are always reminded of The Home Group Pamphlet P-16 - which states:

The entire structure of A.A. depends upon the participation and conscience of the individual groups, and how each of these groups conducts its affairs has a ripple effect on A.A. everywhere. Thus, we are ever individually conscious of our responsibility for our own sobriety and, as a group, for carrying the A.A. message to the suffering alcoholic who reaches out to us for help

Collectively we have looked back to move ahead.

We have discovered the answers were there all along.

You see I was involved in service years ago, unfortunately without a good foundation. The difference today is that I have a firm foundation as a result of active sponsorship, knowledge of what I belong to and what my responsibilities are as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Participating in a Group inventory and the implementation of change was in invaluable experience.

Gatherings like this provide the opportunity to gain so much knowledge. We have amongst us Past and Present delegates, Alternate Delegates, Trustees, Chairs, Table Officers and more. These people love to share their experiences, just ask.

A word of warning: they love to share their experiences so much, don't dare ask them what time it is, they may tell you how to build a watch.

In closing: LET'S be as honest about our groups as about ourselves. Let's admit to ourselves, anyway, that even in the most circumspect (cautious, unwilling to take risks) groups all is not always well. I love my sponsor, my home group, service and Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be of service. God Bless

Rick W DCM Area 91

Hello friends my name is Rick and I am an alcoholic. Area 91 District 11, Home Group is the Nipawin Big Book Group.

When asked to do a presentation and said yes, I immediately started to prepare a fantastic report in my head. Then reality set in along with nervousness. Then I did an inventory of my travels in service and I have shared at meetings, did a group report at district meetings as a GSR, reports of groups at area assemblies as DCM. This is the first time of doing a presentation of a topic. I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity for growth.

The topic: **Inventory: Looking Back to Move Ahead** took me back to a time in my life that was very difficult and I need to change, but change what? As it said on page 64 of the Big Book "There, we started on a personal inventory. This was Step Four: A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact finding and a fact facing process." That process was an inventory I can look back at now, Smile and can move ahead and learning to carry the message to suffering alcoholic.

The next inventory I look at is what part do I play in my home group which is my life line for staying sober and happy .The traditions are my guides that help take an inventory of what part I play in my home group and how it keeps me reminded of Tradition 5 which says "Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry the message to the alcoholic that still suffers." So when I look back, smile and remember when I needed help the group was there for me.

Then I look at my part of how I am of service to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. A past Delegate of Area 91 Jerry F. Approx. 17 years ago I had heard say in a presentation at an election Assembly in the my beginning of service as a GSR said "If I have the time and the willingness to be of service I have no choice"

When taking the inventory I have to honestly say I did not put a check mark on the, are you willing to volunteer on the registration form. Our Rotated on last delegate panel 63 Kim emailed the committee saying I would participate if asked and I thank her for that.

Today I do not have a service position, I rotated out as DCM for district 11, at our elections I can look back and smile I put my hand up for all positions and left the decision to my Higher Power.

So far in my presentation I have talked about my part. As a look out at everyone here and take your inventory I want more of what you people have and had already given me so I can look back and smile As long as continue with the willingness to learn, take part when asked, moving ahead just happens

I am closing with a Reading from As Bill Sees It page 86

I hope to continue to be able to attend more WRAASA's in the future continue to learn more about the 3 legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous to be able to become a better person for it and be a better example to others

Thank you all for this opportunity.

Carrying the AA Message in the Information Age

Jan M - Secretary Area 78

Good day everyone, my name is Jan and I am a grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous currently serving as Area 78 Panel 64 Secretary.

I would like to begin by commending the WRAASA Committee on an outstanding job of planning, organizing and carrying off this weekend thus far.

Also, I would like to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed listening to all the presenters on each of the well-chosen topics I have heard yesterday and today.

I feel truly blessed to be a part of this wonderful fellowship, which has resulted in my having such incredible connections with other spiritual beings having a human experience whether alcoholic human beings or normies. I know those **connections** would never have happened without my finding AA. But I am jumping ahead of myself so I will start at the beginning of my talk on **"Carrying the AA Message in the Information Age"**.

When I first accepted this assignment / topic, I initially considered it in a somewhat preconceived way before I thought I better make sure I define some things first and set it in context for myself before I start shooting my mouth off without truly reflecting. So, I backed things up and began with first asking - what is the "Information Age" and is it synonymous with other terms I've heard, such as the Electronic Age or the Digital Age etc. and also - I was curious to set it in the context of the chronology of other eras or "ages" that we humans have evolved through and what defined those eras and why, which of course I won't get into but helped me to understand how eras become delineated.

I discovered some brief definitions on the Electronic Age, the computer age, the digital age and the information age. I wanted to understand if they were all referring to the same thing so I would base my understanding of Information Age accordingly. What I found is that they are all distinct and are basically inter-related. However, I'll first talk about the term "Carrying the Message"; and will consider the term in as inclusive a manner as I can since I

have heard the loving arguments had among we-of-many-opinions about what this actually refers.

AA members consider "*Carrying the Message*" to mean one thing or another but fundamentally it can be summarized as the idea of Twelve Stepping - sharing the solution to Alcoholism as found in the Steps and Traditions of AA including sharing 'What AA is and What AA is not' to both AA members and members of the public whether agencies and professionals who come upon suffering alcoholics in their practice or to people just genuinely interested in understanding what Alcoholics Anonymous is because they have a friend or family member in AA. Quoting Bill W. from p 195 in *As Bill Sees it* - "Twelfth Stepping is not a narrowly defined end in itself . . . from the beginning, as Bill W. pointed out, "Every aspect of A.A.'s global unfolding can be related to a single crucial word... 'communication.' There has been a lifesaving communication among ourselves, with the world around us, and with God." (*As Bill Sees It*, p. 195) This is the connection that I am so grateful for since I was completely disconnected from myself others and my spiritual source.

After 25 years of AA's existence (in 1961) and before the coming of the Information Age, Bill contemplated on the future 25 years in an article entitled *The Shape of things to Come* (*Language of the Heart*, p 321). He points out that first we must realize that we can't stand still believing that "now that our basic principles seem established, now that our functioning is fairly effective and widespread" and concluding that "AA is fine, just the way it is" (*ibid.*). He cautions that "it would be temptingly easy to settle down as merely one more useful agency on the world scene" just like on a personal level we might want to sell ourselves short by declaring we are sober and happy mistakenly ready to settle for a level of existence that is far short of where we might go if we continue to grow and work in and for the fellowship. Likewise with AA he goes on to say:

"We know that the price of such self-satisfaction is an inevitable backslide, punctuated at some point by a rude awakening. We grow or else deteriorate. For us, the "status quo" can only be for today, never for tomorrow. Change we must; we cannot stand still.

Just how, then, can AA go on changing for the better? Does this mean that we are to tinker with our basic principles? Should we try to amend out Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? Here the answer would seem to be "no". Those twenty-four principles have first liberated us, have then held us in unity, and have enabled us to function and to grow as AA members and as a whole."

And further on he says "While we need not alter our truths, we can surely improve their application to ourselves, to AA as a whole, and to our relation with the world around us. We can constantly step up "the practice of these principles in all our affairs."

As we now enter upon the next great phase of AA's life, let us therefore rededicate ourselves to an ever greater responsibility for our general welfare."

Bill ends this article by suggesting that we continue to take our inventory as a Fellowship and "above all, let us remember that great legions exist who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. **Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found - a new life of freedom under God.**" Since this includes the communication to Friends of AA, being doctors, clergy, police, and counsellors etc. who can pass on or refer suffering alcoholics to AA. I doubt Bill was focused

on what would occur in the upcoming Information age leading eventually to where we are now with “friending” and “unfriending” people, tweeting etc.

So, on to defining the Information Age. Most basically, **The Information Age** refers to the idea that access to and the control of information is the defining characteristic of this current era in human civilization. ”, I was surprised to find in several places that this “age” is considered to have started around 1975! However, it does make sense since computers did exist then, it was the PCs or personal computers that began to appear in the following decade. What started back then was the **increasing ability to store massive amounts of information** so vital to preserving our history in print, video etc. as Nell Wing (nonalcoholic), G.S.O.’s first archivist, wrote: “The A.A. Fellowship is one of the world’s major sociohistorical movements. We owe it to future A.A. members, as well as to historians, scholars and researchers, to maintain as complete a record as we can of this society at all times, so its message, meaning, and contributions, not only to alcoholics but in other problem areas, can be recalled and assessed for whatever future purpose, fully and accurately.”

In regard to Electronic Age - *‘the electronic age refers to the period characterized by electronic technology that began when electronic equipment, including computers came into common use’* - synonymous with the **“Computer Age”**. The **Digital Age** appears to refer more so to the transmission of information - the conversion of data in various forms - images, text audio to binary digits that can readily be transmitted on increasing numbers of electronic devices resulting in massive amounts of information at your fingertips. Drawing a distinction is irrelevant here. What is relevant is that which Trish L. so comprehensively outlined for us in her report this a.m. on the history of technology adoption by Alcoholics Anonymous. This illustrates how trusted servants before us continued to follow the example of others before them and follow the words of our founders, particularly Bill as quoted above to utilize this advancing technology without fear of harming AA in some way.

I found on our GSO website - aa.org, under the general area of “Archives and History”, a link to “Timeline of AA History” and under the year **1985 it says:**

“Joining the fold...

Fortuitously for A.A., two world-changing events coincide as the 20th Century draws to a close. The dawn of the Electronic Age facilitates **communication** between A.A. offices and, in turn, country-to-country sponsorship, while the transformation of governments in Eastern European countries allows A.A.s to meet openly.”

In 1994 the World Wide Web become a reality. We joke about AA functioning with purposeful slowness however, the historical timeline at aa.org under “1995”, it states “With approval of the General Service Board, **G.S.O New York launches a site on the World Wide Web on December 22, 1995.** With a click, users can now instantaneously access information about the Fellowship in English, Spanish, and French. G.S.O.’s A.A. Web site is constantly evolving. In spring 1998, G.S.O. New York shares the experience of computer-savvy A.A.s when it issues a list of Frequently Asked Questions for A.A. entities looking to set up their own Web sites. In 2000 and 2006 “aa.org” will undergo major expansions.”

Out of interest on the impact that the *Information Age* may have had on increasing AA’s reach I began compiling the Members Stats that Box 459 puts out each year after the annual General Service conference. What I found is that numbers of groups and members have had a steady increase with a rapid rise that may be contributed to by technology but may also be due to other things such as advent of treatment centres or just basically more boots on the ground particularly in new countries that AA has reached and mentored. So, then I looked at

Membership Surveys. In the 2011 Membership Survey, a question asked regarding how members were introduced to AA. The data on the answers show:

INTRODUCTION TO A.A.*

Through an A.A. member	34%
Treatment facility	32%
Self-motivated	29%
Family	25%
Court order	12%
Other	8%
Counseling agency	7%
Health Professional	7%
Employer or fellow worker	4%
Non-A.A. friend or neighbor	3%
Correctional facility	2%
Al-Anon or Alateen member	2%
A.A. literature	2%
Newspaper/magazine/radio/TV	1%
Member of clergy	1%
Internet	1%

It appears as if the internet plays a small part in how new people are introduced to AA. But when I examine the question and categorized answers with my research design and analysis training, I believe the categories may not be mutually exclusive meaning the top category says “through an AA member” but that member may have communicated via digital technology and the internet, which allowed an immediate communication not otherwise possible which carried the message of AA to a suffering alcoholic at the favourable “window of opportunity” or more commonly referred to as “the jumping off point”. Also, if you add up the categories of treatment facility, health professional, corrections, courts, employer and counselling agency - these are all categories that have been majorly and positively impacted by the wonders of the *Information Age* to tell these groups what AA is and is not and where and how people can get connected to AA so these people can introduce their patients or clients to the idea that the solution for their drinking problem may be found in AA. Additionally, we sent a couple delegates up to NWT on a canoe and snow shoes back in the day, now new or potential AA members can be connected to AA through the wonders of the Information Age. We were limited to letter writing so AA Loners could have the message carried to them. Now loners can “virtually” have the message carried to them in real time as part of meeting by audio or video.

Like the paradoxes in AA, the paradox that exists with all these wonders of technology is that which has served to connect and improve our communication can also serve to disconnect us

and possibly reduce face to face communication. As someone who was becoming more and more inclined to disconnect from anyone in my life while progressing in alcoholism, I needed a LOT of meetings and after meeting meetings where human feelings were palpable. I needed that first meeting where I could feel the power of a group of alcoholics sharing from their heart to begin the process of opening mine. But as I was preparing this report I know from my experiences in AA that we all come here by different routes and what was vital for me might now be what is vital for others. So, I wondered if someone could start off in AA through internet media via an online meeting and I thought there is very likely those that required the safety of non-human delivery of the message through streaming speaker websites where they could listen all they and then later feel safe enough or inclined to venture out to a face to face meeting. I would never want the fear of what technology might prevent to result in AA not expanding anyway to reach as many suffering alcoholics as possible. Bill's words in 1961 guide us here to be open to allow whatever change required through our principles. So my contemplation told me that I should seek to understand not to be understood (in this case being a politer version of "listen to me I know what is good for you") and let those who have grown up on technology beyond my comprehension to guide what works to Carry the Message in the Information Age (provided they are also well versed in our guiding principles as our founders used in the early days of AA). So imho, I must always keep in mind that the one thing we have in common is that we are all different and thank God for that because through each different person and approach to carrying the message we keep the door open for a wide spectrum of alcoholics.

To end, I will quote from an article in Vol 47 No. 2 of Box 459 wherein it says:

"While face-to-face contact will remain A.A.'s most valuable form of communication, the benefits of having full-time information about our Fellowship available to the universe are just beginning to be realized . . . Wisdom and information are two different things. In A.A. our wisdom is found in the group conscience which is formed from our shared experience."

I also have faith that we will always be among one another in meeting rooms no matter how the message is carried to get us there. The language of the heart is best felt in the rooms.

Arnie G Secretary Area 79

I'm Arnie and I'm an Alcoholic, I'm also privileged to be the BC/Yukon Area 79 Secretary for this term. First I'd like to thank the Committee that is hosting WRAASA this weekend, you've done a fantastic job. It's been a great time so far and I'm learning a lot here. Most of my career life has been involved with technology, that makes our topic today of "Carrying the AA Message in the Information Age" a topic that is near and dear to my heart. So I'd like to thank the committee for asking me to share on this topic.

Technology has greatly changed the way way we communicate and reach out to newcomers. While the message that we carry hasn't changed over the years the way we reach out to new people certainly has. Of course the largest driving force behind that change has been the internet. I sobered up 24 years ago and it was about 12 or 13 years before that, that I first contacted AA. So I

think it's safe to say that was pre-information age or at least the formative years of the information age. I first learned about AA from someone who asked if I'd like to go to an AA meeting with her. I have no idea how she got the idea I might be in need of help. After that first meeting I made many pit stops at AA over the next decade. Every time I'd have to pick up that 100 lb. telephone to find out where to go.

Today things are a little different, almost all-meeting information is available on-line. It has been quite a process that has got us to this point. Did you know our Western Canada Region was a pioneer in this regard? The very first Area website was created by our own BC/Yukon Area 79. Today it's a given that an Area in AA would have a website, but it wasn't always like that. When we first started talking about it, it was a very contentious and controversial idea. At the time we had an Area Chairperson that thought it would be a wonderful thing to do, but it was a small number of people that agreed with him and were gung-ho for it.

The first time it was brought up at an Assembly that we should create an Area website there was a lot of anger expressed at the idea. There was a line up at the microphone, almost reaching out the door, of people that wanted to let us know in no uncertain terms what a horrible idea it was. And that sentiment at the time was completely understandable. Most people didn't have computers at home. Many rural communities didn't have any local Internet access at all. People fear what they don't understand and most people had no idea of what the Internet was. They thought we were trying to replace A.A. meetings. They thought we were trying to eliminate the essential face-to-face contact of one alcoholic helping another. Needless to say the idea of creating an Area 79 website didn't go any further that day.

But the subject kept coming up at every quarterly and assembly. You could see as time went past that the number of people who were for the idea was growing. We started working on creating the website and so when it finally did pass a vote it was ready and we were able to get our website up the day the motion passed. There was no going back at that point. We brought a computer to the next quarterly that had the website on it so that people who didn't have Internet access could see it. After that pretty much everyone was on board with the idea.

A little while after the Area 79 website went live GSO did an article in Box 4-5-9 about it and when our Delegate attended PRAASA shortly after that she was inundated with other Delegates asking her about how we did it and if it was okay if their Area used our website as a template to build there own. It was obvious that the cat was out of the bag.

At that time websites were so much simpler than they are today, so to keep up with the times our website has had to evolve and we now have a team of seven volunteer members working on it in various capacities. But today the pages with the most visitors are still the same pages as when it was first put up and that's the meeting lists. What a great resource it has proven to be to help newcomers and members find meetings wherever they go.

Today we use our website in Area 79 for much more than that. In this information age it has become a critical component of getting information out to our Trusted Servants. We created a password-protected section that we use as a repository for all kinds of materials that DCMs and GSRs can access. We even use it (with GSO's permission) to distribute the background information for the General Service Conference to our DCMs. It saves so much time and expense over having to print and snail mail everything.

Today we have so many ways to reach out to newcomers and to members in remote communities. We can chat on-line with fellow alcoholics around the globe. We can email just about anyone anywhere. I think it's safe to say that many young people use their phones more for texting than for phone calls. Like our responsibility pledge states: When anyone anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there and for that I am responsible. We need to be there when the still suffering alcoholic reaches out, and that means that we need to stay abreast of the technology curve to be there. That can be a little scary because technology changes so fast and we don't always fully understand it. When we were building that first Area 79 website, there were no Internet guidelines. We made a few mistakes along the way, that's for sure, but the rest of the world isn't going to wait for A.A. to catch up, we need to stay up to date, the risk to those people reaching out to us is greater if we are not there at all than if we make some wrong turns on the road.

Today it's just a fact that this is how people are reaching out for help and we need to be there. I believe that many of our Central Offices are seeing a decline in the number of phone calls and twelve step calls as newcomers are now reaching out in more modern ways. Many of those Central Offices are seeing a decline in literature sales as more and more people go on-line to purchase books or download pamphlets for free. I must say, I like having the Big Book and the 12 X 12 on my phone. There is something comforting about having those books in my pocket at all times.

I found it interesting to see how much of the agenda for the General Service Conference this year will be dealing with new technologies of this information age. In reading the background material I saw that our Delegate's will be

discussing things like how AA members are using technology within our traditions, if we can use any types of social media like twitter or Instagram within our traditions to establish a presence, distributing P.S.A.s via video streaming platforms like Hulu or YouTube, improving the informational ecosystem among AA.org, AAGrapevine.org and local AA websites. There is so much to explore, if any of these avenues pan out it could give us much broader means of reaching out to the still suffering alcoholics. When you boil it all down, It's all just plain, simple old twelve step work, it's what AA exists for.

Personally I feel we are living in exciting times, I am ever so grateful to have been given the wonderful sober life I have lived for the past 24 years and I am just as grateful to be able to pass it on through any means at my disposal. I feel blessed to live a miraculous life in a miraculous age and I thank you for being there when I was ready to reach out for help.

Arnie G. BC/Yukon Area 79 Secretary

Noni M DCM Area 80

Hello everyone. My name is Noni and I am an alcoholic. I am the DCM for District 11, Area80 and a member of the Welcome Group in Winnipeg. I'm here to talk to you today about Carrying the AA message in the Information Age.

Thank you to the Committee for inviting me to speak. I have to admit when I got the topic sent to me in an email my first thoughts were OMG. I laughed because after working as a systems analyst for more than 30 years I was on a break from technology.

OK, so God had a different plan. I started searching and sifting through the plethora of information available on the web. I went to aa.org to read the Guidelines on the Internet and to aagrapevine.org to read all the articles about online meetings, social networking and anonymity.

You'll find some great articles about using new technology to carry the message in the March 2012 Grapevine. The article 'Open 24 hours' talks of how the online Intergroup has been helping alcoholics for nearly 15 years. If you search 'online AA meetings' they will be near the top. There are over 100 English-language AA meetings as well as approximately 60 listings for online meetings in 14 other languages. It states *"Since many groups offer multiple meetings, or round-the-clock email lists, chat rooms, or discussion forums - and*

membership is often international - there's always someone to share with online. The heart of the Online Intergroup is its 12th Step Committee - affectionately called 'Steppers'. The members come from all over the world, and they answer the 400-700 requests that arrive each month from still suffering alcoholics." Carrying the message in the online groups can range from chairing a meeting to being a temporary online sponsor. The Online Intergroup emphasizes it is simply a different means of carrying the message. Of note, it has had a hospitality suite at the International Convention since 1995.

As Bill W so aptly states in a 1960 Grapevine article "A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches... Therefore nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination." These words were written in 1960 long before we could pin, post, tweet, snap, tag, check in, and share, before there were online meetings. Yet these words still apply.

So, using Bill's words how **do** we use this colossus of information in carrying the message, unselfishly and well? As he also says on page 139 of Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age 'A.A.'s Twelfth Step, carrying the message, is the basic service that our fellowship gives; it is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence'. On page 140 he goes on to say 'Regarding any particular service, we need to ask only one question: "is this or that service really needed?' If it is not, then let it be eliminated. But if it is **needed**, then maintain it we must or fail in our mission to those who want and seek A.A.

Bill's question "***is this or that service really needed***" should be applied as we wade through the myriad of options available in the Information Age. Indeed, discussions are taking place all over the world as our Groups, Districts, Areas, WRAASA's and the Conference discuss the use of information and technology.

Just as it is up to each of us how we work our program and sponsor others, it is up to each of us to determine how we use modern technology in carrying the message. Are the online meetings needed? Read the March 2012 Grapevine and you will have no doubt that we are effectively carrying the message in this manner. Do I need a smartphone? I'm reminded of the need to stay current as I text a sponsee regarding our next meeting time. She responds immediately and we have a date and time set. If I had tried phoning her she would not have

answered. Yes, for me texting is a service that **is needed** if I wish to communicate with this generation.

Do I need to follow public groups on social media? Following a discussion with our delegate regarding anonymity breaks, I determined this is **not needed**. I unfriended a group advertising A.A. functions that I had been following on a Social Network site. When you enter the group in a search engine it comes up with information on Alcoholics Anonymous. I didn't necessarily want someone viewing this page and making this connection to me. Our Guideline states that *"As anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, we practice anonymity on public websites at all times."*

In Manitoba it has always been a challenge to carry the message to the remote and isolated districts. The people in these communities often attend treatment and when they return to their communities have no support. A service we provide to alcoholics in these remote communities is a teleconference meeting, held every Thursday night at 8 p.m. They attend their local nursing station where Manitoba Telehealth equipment is used. For some, this is their only connection with others in A.A. I had the opportunity to attend one of these meetings while on a trip up north. It was amazing to sit in the Nursing Station in Cross Lake First Nation and see all these faces pop up on the television as each location joined in the meeting. It was an amazing meeting. The topic was service. I believe that carrying the message to those in remote locations using teleconferencing equipment is a service that **is needed**.

When I mentioned to my son that I was coming here to share with you today, he made a suggestion that we should have an APP using the GPS on our phone to find a meeting. I thought it was a great idea. Surely someone had thought of it. I went to the APP store on my tablet and downloaded the free APP 'Find a Meeting'. Once installed, to my surprise up popped County Antrim, Ireland. This is the County where my grandparents are from. What a coincidence. The only App I found that would find a meeting was only useful when in Ireland. Oh well, this was a good lead in to a personal story.

Several years ago, I was looking for sober people to travel with so I searched 'sober travel'. I found a website and off I went on my first sober cruise with Joe and Charlie and a week of step workshops and meetings. I was less than a year sober and was able to have this experience because I found this connection in cyberspace. I went on to enjoy several more of these cruises.

During one of them the Irish maitre d noticed my circle/triangle necklace and told me of his Dad's involvement with AA. He was the reason we have 'Friends of Bill W' meetings on cruise ships. I mentioned I was going to Ireland after the cruise and he gave me the address of his Dad's group. Well, I could have used that Find a Meeting App because when we got to the address given, there was no group to be found. I got out of the cab and saw a young man walking down a pretty deserted street. I took a leap of faith and yelled 'do you know where there's an A.A. meeting around here?' He said it's down the street in that flat. I was having trouble understanding him so I asked him to take me there. As we walked towards the meeting he told me about his wife, in her 20's, who had died from alcoholism a few months earlier. He said he wished that she had found her way to this group. He was happy to help me find my way that night. I'll never forget the sound of the Promises being read by a young girl with an Irish lilt. And now you know, if you're ever in Ireland there's an APP for that.

I've been told and I quite wholeheartedly agree that doing these speeches really is an opportunity for us to learn. So what did I learn from writing about carrying the message in the Information Age? I learned that I could use the colossus of communication available to increase my knowledge of Alcoholics Anonymous. I could learn about the history, the Guidelines, the many pamphlets available to both non-alcoholic professionals and members. I could purchase and read literature on my tablet or smartphone. I learned that this appealed to the younger generation where I prefer a book. I learned of many examples of newcomers first finding us on the internet, and often receiving encouraging words that led them into the rooms. I learned I could join a chat forum such as the 'What's on Your Mind' on aagrapevine.org and provide encouragement to newcomers who were as yet afraid to attend a 'physical meeting'. I learned I can join the Online Intergroups 12th Step Committee and respond directly by email to people who are searching for help with a drinking problem. Or, I can carry the message by participating in an online or teleconference meeting.

But bottom line, I learned that for me, I need to continue to sponsor women in my group by sitting face to face, usually after a meeting, reading the Big Book and sharing my experience, strength and hope as I take them through the steps. And I need to remember, I'm not going to have a sponsee walk by my couch as I sit surfing the net on my tablet.

If you come to the Welcome Group in Winnipeg, and I hope you do, you will be welcomed at the door with a friendly handshake, a tradition unique to our group, that's withstood the test of time for 45 years. Yes, in this Information Age we may have more information at our fingertips to help us carry the message but the picture of the handshake in our clubroom is a good reminder that the best place for me is in front of another alcoholic with a kind word and a shared experience.

Lesley W Web-servant Area 91

Good Afternoon, my name is Lesley and I am an Alcoholic, currently serving as Area 91 Webservant. First of all, I would like to thank the WRAASA Committee for the opportunity to share with you this afternoon.

In early sobriety, I struggled with the term "carrying the message", had to ask myself a number of times... what is the message that I have to carry? When there was a new comer my sponsor would graciously remind me to "Carry the message and not the alcoholic" and push me in the direction. Being new in sobriety, I was confused and would ask: "What is this dang message that everyone keeps talking about?" Slowly, my sponsor introduces me to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and how to get involved with service work. The fellowship taught me that I was not alone, and service work taught me how to make others feel like they are not alone. I came to the understanding that the message is in Chapter 5 of the big book, "Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided that you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps." By sharing my experience, strength, and hope with another alcoholic we are both walking the path of recovery - a daily reprieve from alcohol that contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

The information age is defined as a time when large amounts of information are widely available to many people, largely through computer technology. When I came into Alcoholics Anonymous in 1996, the information age and I were entering the 21st year of existence. My knowledge of computers and information was secondary as my major in university changed to the Arts of Drinking! Technologies predominate at this time were VCRs, CD Walkman, creating a Hotmail or Yahoo e-mail account, and you were rich if you had a "PC". With the information age about to explode over the next 20 years, who

knew if you were to search for Alcoholics Anonymous on the Internet that a vast amount of information would appear in the matter of seconds.

Back in 1999, trying to carrying the message to newcomers or suffering alcoholics meant we had to call each other on the "telephone", meet in person for coffee, and show up at actual meetings - from paper listings. If your sponsor was anything like mine you had to remember the "sponsor rules": "Don't call before 11 am on Saturday or Sunday"; "Call before 10 pm on weekdays"; "meet me at least one meeting per week"; "when I call you better pick up", and "before you pick up a drink call me first, I will join you". Today, I am fortunate to still have the same sponsor and that the "rules" still apply.

As the days turned into years, my communication world transformed from a cordless telephone, to a brick cellular phone, to a mini cell phone, to text message, to instant messages, to sending emails, and finally having my entire world exist on a 5" x 3" electronic device called a "Smart Phone". During this change, I tried my best to continue the teachings from my sponsor by meeting with newcomers and my sponsees in person for coffee, talking on the phone, and being available when needed. With the convenience of the new technology my sponsees don't call me on a weekly basis; instead, they send me really long text messages. However, when times are tough, the emotions are challenged, or wanting to pick up the bottle, I insist we still do the old fashion coffee and meeting in person. When I invite a newcomer for coffee, they prefer the simple "texting" interaction and inform you about the great on-line meeting they participated in last night and met some great people. Really???

Call me old fashioned but with technology today is it making it easier for the message to be carried to the alcoholic still suffering and is the "right message" of Alcoholics Anonymous being delivered?

Box 459 from Oct/Nov 2008 provided an update to G.S.O.'s aa.org Web site. The web site delivered a vast array of A.A. information made available on-line, it stated: "The Web site can never replace the magic that happens when one alcoholic shares his or her experience with another face to face, or when a newcomer—shaky and unsure—is handed a warm cup of coffee and offered a pat on the back, yet, in the age of computers and electronic communication, the Web site exponentially increases the opportunities for alcoholics to get help. With a commitment to providing the most effective on-line environment for the wealth of A.A. information that has been added to the Web site over the years, G.S.O.'s latest reorganization incorporates a wide range of input, information, comments and "loving suggestions" from all corners of the Fellowship, resulting in a more positive experience for visitors to the site."

Today, the web site offers members copies the pamphlets, literature, links to Areas, Central Offices, and Guidelines in the matter of seconds.

Web sites created for local Intergroups and Areas has offered a great opportunity for instant access to meeting locations (including virtual maps and directions), conferences/round up information, and links to other areas throughout Canada. Last year I visited Winnipeg - this was the first time I was there sober and was in need of a meeting. With technology today, I used my smart phone and visited the Area80.org web site. I was able to find a number of meetings near me, link to my GPS and have directions from my current location to the meeting, and meet some new friends.

When updating the Area 91 web site - similar to the other sites - we have a list of guidelines to follow. These guidelines pay respect to Tradition 11, the long form state "Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us." You won't see a blog from me that include selfies with other members at the various round ups giving thumbs up or duck lips! Nor will there be icons or links that state: Like it, Share it, Tweet it, Pin it, or #AACoolKids.

Finally, as I was preparing for this presentation, I was in deep thought about the "AA Message", I decided to *Google* the following question: "What is the AA message?" With the web consisting of 60 Trillion web pages, my question had about 406,000,000 results appear in 0.22 seconds.

The first link was to a non-affiliated web site; however, the second link was Bill's final message from October 10, 1970, from the aa.org web site, it stated:

"If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace."

With all the information available on the Internet, nothing will replace the warm fuzzy feeling I get by sitting with another member of Alcoholics Anonymous, sharing our experience, strength, and hope over a cup of coffee knowing that I am not alone. The information age is just making it a little bit easier for you to get that warm fuzzy feeling anywhere in the world.

Thank you very much. In love and service, Lesley W.

Celebrating our Journey of Unity

Scott H Past Delegate Area 79

My name is Scott and I am alcoholic. It was my privilege to serve the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as the Panel 61 delegate for Area 79 British Columbia/Yukon. Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you this weekend celebrating regional unity.

“This we owe to A.A.’s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.”

This Declaration of Unity was first heard at A.A.’s 35th Anniversary International Convention held at Miami Beach in July 1970. It was heard by the 11,000 members in attendance in several languages.

When this declaration was introduced, our then General Service Office Manager, Bob H, said “A.A. unity is the special quality that makes our Fellowship unique. It is the cement that holds our society together, the platform that makes A.A. ‘Service’ possible. It is more than an agreement on basic principles, more than freedom from destructive strife. It is a bond fashioned of shared experience, such as this one we share tonight.

Unity is our most precious possession, our best guarantee of A.A.’s future. May we all value and preserve it, today and all the tomorrows to come.”

As we approach A.A.'s 80th Anniversary International Convention to be held in Atlanta, Ga, July 2 – 5 this year, we are reminded of what a precious gift, and vital principal, unity is in our Fellowship. A.A. has survived 80 years and helped millions of alcoholics recover and have a chance to lead productive, useful lives.

Most of us have heard the story of the Washingtonians. For those who have not, it was an abstinence movement founded in 1840 by six alcoholics who recognized that their drinking had them headed for real trouble. They found that by relying on each other they could stay sober. They focussed on helping other drunkards who would pledge to abstain from alcohol. They were wildly successful, at least in their growth, and after about 6 years had a membership that was greater as a percentage of the U.S. population than A.A. has today. However, within a couple more years they had all but disappeared, due largely to the failure to maintain a singleness of purpose. Really, a lack of unity.

A.A. has survived 80 years where the Washingtonians appeared and disappeared in a little more than a half dozen because we value unity so highly. As well all know, the central principle of all of our traditions is unity. The Washingtonians are an example of what we do not want to do.

The great challenge to unity we have in A.A. arises from the fact that A.A. is full of alcoholics. We are, in turn, full of those character defects that might tear A.A. apart.

I remember being new and listening to people read the Traditions wondering why we were wasting time on this when we could be discussing important things – like me! Little did I understand at the time that but, for those Traditions, it is unlikely that there would have been an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for me to come to with my tattered life and all of my selfishness and self-concern.

I am fortunate that I have had an opportunity to be involved in general service where I had an opportunity to have an even greater experience with the Traditions. Not only in learning and practicing the spiritual principles contained within our Traditions, but the history of our Traditions and what they mean to our Fellowship.

I came to see that our Traditions arise from the spiritual mistakes we have made as individuals and as a Fellowship. In reading the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have seen the spiritual damage that arises both to individual A.A. members and

to our Fellowship as we strayed from those spiritual principles that are now our Traditions.

Dr. Bob's son has described Bill W. as one of the most forward thinking men he ever met. I wonder if we see any better evidence of this than in our twelve Traditions. Groups had been on rule making benders, but instead of rules, Bill comes up with a set of spiritual principles that truly has assured A.A.'s future.

In his essay on Tradition 1, Bill says the Twelve Traditions which guarantee A.A.'s unity contain not a single "Don't". They repeatedly say, "We ought...", but never "You must".

Imagine for a moment what it would have been like if Bill W. had taken all the rules that groups had made and came up with the definitive set of rules. I am not sure how any of you do with rules, but I tend to rebel against them, look to push the outer limit. How many of us drive 10 km. over the limit because that is about as fast as we can go without a ticket? Or 20 over? I do not do this, at least consciously, with spiritual principles.

Instead what I see is a set of spiritual principles written by a man with the same character defects that I have to ensure that those character defects don't win out and destroy A.A. and destroy my life.

I need to always remember that they are not rules that I am forced to obey, nor are they rules that I can try to force anyone else to live by. They are a set of spiritual principles that, when integrated into my own life, and my group life, make my life better and assure that A.A. may survive. These are spiritual tools, not spiritual weapons. I need always remember that a spiritual tool looks more like a hug than a hammer. I need always remember that others in A.A. may, like me, not do so well with rules. That when I treat the Traditions like rules I need to enforce, I will meet resistance. I need to remember that trying to get me to understand spiritual principles with rules is like trying to open a flower with a hammer. Not that I am really some delicate flower.

What I might do, instead, is to share my experience with the joyful changes these principles have brought in my life just the same way I do with the Steps. I get a chance to share and show, by an example, that the Traditions address the same character defects in me that the Steps do. To show that when I learn to act in a way that is best for A.A., it turns out to be the way of acting that is the best for me.

Just the same way I learned, through the Steps, that the best way to help me was to help someone else.

I get a chance to see, and show others, that the character defects I exercise that might harm A.A. are the same defects that harm all of my relationships. Having to have my way, or be the centre of attention, instead of being a “part of”. Having a different purpose than those around me. Making decisions that affect others without consulting them. Being either irresponsible or controlling about money. Trying to lead without doing so by being of service.

One of the things I find to be truly wonderful about A.A. is our story telling. It is the only way I seem to be able to understand spiritual principles and how they apply in my life. People tell stories about how the Traditions work in their home life and I can see not only how they work in my home life, but also how they work in my group. The same when they tell stories about how the Traditions have worked in their group or assembly.

Simply throwing spiritual principles at me without a story explaining it does not work for me. It was like when I was new, it seemed like talking to me about character defects, was like asking a fish how is the water? In this example, the fish can talk. The fish says “What water?”

Sometimes we may find ourselves frustrated, other times we may just laugh, at how long it takes for things to change in A.A. The reason is that we make decisions in such a way as to ensure we are all moving together in unity. We begin by requiring substantial unanimity, then give the minority the opportunity to be heard. We discuss, then discuss some more, then more. We move slowly, but we move together. It is kind of like going on a holiday with a large group of family. It seems to take forever to get anywhere, but when you do get there and you look down the table, you see you are together as a family with the ones you love. So it is with my Group or at an Assembly. When we are done, I look around and see all of the people I love.

I am fortunate that my home group is a step and tradition group where our topics each week are one of the Steps and one of the Traditions. We rotate through them in order. I have an opportunity each week to hear about how the spiritual principles work in the lives of people I know and respect. I am also fortunate that my home group takes part in an inventory process so we can see how those spiritual principles are at work – or not – in our group. We have a GSR to keep us united with A.A. as a whole.

And isn't that where unity, like recovery begins? At the most basic level of our Fellowship. At my Home Group. Is that not where we provide the safe harbour for those hopelessly adrift on the sea of alcoholism. Is it not there where we first learn something of a genuine humility through the practice of the spiritual principles contained in our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts that is necessary to ensure this priceless unity. Is it not where we celebrate unity?

In July, a number of us will have an opportunity to travel to Atlanta to celebrate A.A.'s 80th Anniversary with the theme – "80 Years – Happy, Joyous and Free". We are only able to attend this celebration because of our insistence on Unity. I am only able to attend because my Home Group was there and taught me about this priceless gift that we never want to squander.

The celebration of our journey of unity happens every time I get to walk through the doors to my home group.

Thank you for my life.

Pamala V Past Delegate Area 80

Hello everyone, I am Pamela V., an alcoholic and past delegate Area 80, panel 62. I am pleased to be here and honoured to be asked to share today. I'd like to thank the committee for all of their hard work and the result has been tremendous, great food, great hospitality and great sharing!

My topic, "Our journey into Unity" implies ongoing unity as a result of ongoing recovery and service and I think that has been demonstrated here throughout this weekend. We are forever moving towards better unity in all of our relationships.

Our Unity and our primary Purpose are to me, so closely linked that I feel I can hardly talk about one without the other. I think that Bill really knew what he was doing when he wrote our Primary Purpose into our Traditions.

Bill had good examples of extraordinarily successful organizations who had worked with chronic alcoholics in the past, notably the Washingtonians, founded in 1840 by six alcoholics in Baltimore they once enjoyed a membership of over half a million. They became involved in the running of treatment centres, the temperance movement, sectarian religion and the abolition of slavery. In just a few years, they all but vanished and the alcoholic returned to the darkness.

The Oxford Group, was a Christian group founded by Dr Frank Buchman a Lutheran minister who had a life changing spiritual experience in 1921, Based on the four Absolutes: Honesty,

Purity, Unselfishness and Love, They believed that all personal problems were caused by fear and selfishness and the answer was to surrender our lives over to God's plan and control. Many of AA's spiritual principals were derived from the Oxford group, such as " personal evangelism- one man talking to another-no membership dues, no paid leaders, no organization, rather, they called themselves an organism. Rolland Hazzard joined the Oxford group after returning with Carl Jung's devastating diagnosis of hopelessness and he talked the judge into letting him bail Ebby out of jail. Ebby , of course, talked to Bill and the rest is AA history! But since there was no AA at this time, lots of the early alcoholics attended Oxford group meetings at the old Calvary on Gramercy Park in New York and there was an active group in Akron. The idea of self examination, acknowledgement of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others, came straight from Sam Shoemaker .Political activity and diversification seemed to be the reason for the loss of Unity in the Oxfords, plus the alcoholics found all those absolutes kind of hard to swallow, and the Oxfords found the alcoholics kind of hard to take, so there was a parting of the ways but the lesson in singularity of purpose was unmistakable

When Bill and Bob structured our Fellowship equally around Recovery, Unity and Service, they knew that the one thing that brought us together must remain our sole concern.

As a young person, I felt the separation and loneliness of knowing that I was different, and therefore not as good as, other people. Carl Jung said that the thirst of the alcoholic is the thirst for wholeness, or Unity. When I discovered alcohol, I felt that at last I belonged in this new society of drinkers, but I soon found that I did not drink like most other people. No matter how often or how much I drank, I could not fill the vast emptiness in my soul. Once more I was different and ashamed, booze had failed me and I was too chicken to kill myself so as a last resort, I came to AA. Finally I felt that people understood me and talked my language and not only that they didn't tell me what to do, only what they had done. I loved the idea of no rules, but I could see that things ran in an orderly manner, meetings were held, coffee was bought and ready, clubrooms were cleaned. I got a sponsor, did my steps and started attending business meetings and I learned that the health of the group depended on the unity of its members and that individual members cannot survive without the group. I got into service and participated in watching the effectiveness of the principal at the District , Area and Conference levels. I guess the best way to really appreciate unity is when there has been disharmony that has been overcome, and we have all had many examples of this at Area assemblies and Conference rooms. To be able to walk out of a room after a heated debate has finally been decided and be in harmony with everyone there, is commonplace in our rooms.

I am always moved by the wonderful feeling of oneness whenever our four western provinces join each other at our Assemblies, Regional Forums and for WRAASA's like this one, when we come together to share our experience , strength and hope. It's kind of funny at the Conference when the new Panel delegates are introduced, cause in the other regions there will be ten or fifteen new delegates being introduced, then in our Western region, we have two! I was on the Regional Forums and International Conventions committee when BC- Yukon put in their bid for the 2025 International Convention and what a tremendous feeling of Unity when the whole western region enthusiastically supported their successful bid. There were only six of us there from the west but we felt like half of Canada!

Irma V Past Delegate Area 91

Good morning everyone I am Irma, I am an alcoholic and privileged to have served you as a Panel 59 Past Delegate Area 91. I would like to thank Jim and Karen for the loving invitation to participate in WRAASA and the committee for doing such an excellent job of hosting. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to come and celebrate with each other as we travel along our journey of recovery, unity and service, which I believe are all vital parts of our journey of unity. A special thank you to Barb K. our Canada Trustee at Large for chairing this weekend, her dedication and service.

First and foremost I want to remind you all that what I am about to share is my own personal opinion and comes from what I have heard, read and researched as I have found my way in AA with the loving guidance of my Higher Power and my sponsor and many of you who I am grateful are here this weekend.

When asked to do this presentation Celebrating our Journey of Unity I had to contemplate what did this mean to me. When it comes to celebrating I thought about what this used to mean before I came to Alcoholism Anonymous. I remembered how celebrating resulted many times for me in the four horseman showing themselves- terror, bewilderment, despair and unhappiness that is spoken of in the chapter A Vision For You in our Big Book. The journey I was on was definitely precarious and I definitely did not have a feeling of being one with the universe or of being in harmony.

Many of us have tried other avenues on our own to quit drinking before A.A without much success and many of us have lost family members or friends due to this disease. A.A .must continue to live or most of us will surely die. That stark assertion carries a world of meaning for every member of A.A. who has experienced the depths of despair many of us did before we reached this fellowship. Experiences have shown that unity is crucial to ensuring A.A. does survive. So I ask, "What can ensure unity within our fellowship?" Unity: As summed up in the Webster Dictionary "Unity is the quality or state of being or being made one, in harmony, in agreement."

I have come to the realization that nothing could ensure Unity like practicing the AA principles in all our affairs. "While it is perfectly true that no AA group can possibly coerce an alcoholic to contribute money, to conform to the Twelve Steps of our recovery program or to the twelve points of AA Tradition, each AA member is nevertheless, most powerfully compelled in the long run to do these things." (Language of the Heart pg 34) Keeping in mind no one was going to punish me or compel me to do anything. I was attracted to what you had and was willing to go to any lengths. "We are united by our common problem, alcohol. Meeting and talking and helping other alcoholics *together*; we are somehow able to stay sober and to lose the compulsion to drink, once a dominant force in our lives." (Pamphlet What Is A.A.)

Early in sobriety when I got upset or thought about not coming to AA I would talk or shall I say complain and wine to my sponsor and I am so grateful she would suggest the Traditions offering some guidance as to which one I needed to focus on. And as it is stated in Long form of Tradition 1: "Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare

comes first. But individual welfare follows close after words.” In other words I needed to conform to AA principles -or else. I did not want to drink again or feel the way I did when I came through the doors of AA full of dread, fear, and remorse. I did not want to live like that anymore. I believe the answer lies in the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts. The principles that come from these are a guiding force that lights the way for any alcoholic who reaches out for help in Alcoholics Anonymous.

In regards to group problems we have learned they seem to generally have to do with our relations, whether the relation between the AA member to another member or to the group, or the relation of the group to AA as a whole. Our future may well depend on how we feel and act about things that are controversial and how we regard our public relations. The Traditions and Concepts came about thanks to Higher Power guiding us and years of experience and learning in the fellowship from our mistakes and challenges. Am I willing to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of the past?

During my time as a trusted servant I have seen where action at various levels of service preceded due diligence, not the usual legal due diligence or financial due diligence, but diligent concern for our First Tradition, “Our common welfare must come first...” and our Declaration of Unity, “This we owe to A.A.’s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on AA unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.” For example when decisions are made hastily or without giving time for discussion and to take it back to the fellowship. The cost can be disharmony, distrust and a sad undermining of our most precious principle, unity.

If a debate on a practice, or proposed practice, turns to questions of principle, it has been found beneficial in many cases to delay action until there is a broad and searching discussion allowing for an informed group conscience. In this way there can be substantial unanimity brought about when the action proceeds, or dies, in an atmosphere of unity and harmony.

Are not these the principles we are concerned with first and foremost. Our practice will match our principles if our practice is: Act only after checking with our “one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. Put our common welfare first and give each question the widest possible hearing, seeking an informed group conscience and substantial unanimity.

An example of this is how Alcoholics Anonymous agreed to hold our first General Service Conference. Bill W. felt very strongly that we needed a structure to ensure that A.A. continue and it was quite a process to convince us alcoholics of this initially. In the Twelve and Twelve p. 133, he says, “The unity of A.A. is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives and the lives of those to come, depend squarely on it.” Sometimes we experience contempt prior to investigation and oh how we hate change. Members had to be informed before they could make an informed decision to proceed and then they held four trial conferences before deciding at the one in 1955 to make it permanent. It is in this body and through this structure that the groups of A.A. oversee the management of their service affairs.

“We believe that our Conference, when securely linked to similar conferences in every distant land, can guarantee absolutely, the survival, unity and functioning of AA throughout the world. We feel the deep assurance that this new beacon of light of service can endure every storm and peril that the passage of years may cast upon us. For the first time AA is safe and

secure. Therefore the great event of 1955 when AA was 20 years old made the General Service Conference a permanent part of AA's life. This irrevocable step marked the completion of AA's structure-Recovery, Unity and now Service. It marked the day when before God and the world, we declared ourselves fully responsible and come of age. Then through the third and last Legacy- the Legacy of Service- AA will have passed from the hands of the old timers to Alcoholics Anonymous of today and tomorrow." (Language of the Heart pg. 137)

At the 59th and 60th General Service Conference I got to share in the wonderment of witnessing how a bunch of recovering drunks from all across Canada and the United States would join together, putting aside our ego's and personal agendas, to do what is best for Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

The AA spiritual life is broad and inclusive founded on experience, not doctrine, and the fundamental spiritual experience of AA is the movement away from self-directed – toward being directed by a power greater than self. All three sides of our triangle-recovery, unity and service-coexist on equal footing which is crucial since neither recover nor can service long survive in the absence of unity. As it says in the short form of Tradition 1 Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.

I have experienced a new life, one with hope and some peace and serenity as long as I keep the AA principles first and foremost in my life. Glenn and I recently had the privilege of attending AA meetings in Belgium and in England. We easily found meetings thanks to the A.A. websites we accessed. In Belgium the GSR of an English speaking group shared some of the challenges they are experiencing in their service structure and how remembering our primary purpose is so important in keeping unity for them. We were invite to attend a service function in England the following weekend and would have loved to but were returning home.

I believe we have a lot to celebrate as I look back through our history and the journey of alcoholics anonymous and the unity we experience in our fellowship. I find it fascinating and comforting as well that today there is AA in over 180 countries, that the Big Book is in over 60 languages, and A.A. literature in over 90 languages. For me personally it meant a lot to know A.A. was alive and well in Belgium since I have ancestors and relatives in Belgium and alcoholism runs deep in our blood. And also you see we recently had a son marry in England and he plans to reside there. It is comforting knowing A.A. has safeguards in place to ensure it will be available if he or one of our other family members ever needs AA and reaches out for help. This Sunday, March 1st is his 23rd belly button birthday and we have an awesome relationship thanks to you helping me become the mother I always wished I could be.

I believe we are privileged people and that it is because of our misfortune and sufferings that today all our opportunities and blessings are thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous and our Higher Power. It has been quite a journey that began with our two co-founders and the sharing of experience, strength and hope to fellow alcoholics to what we have today. I look forward to celebrating 80 years of Alcoholics Anonymous with you and hopefully 50,000 more recovering alcoholics from all over the world at our International Convention in Atlanta Georgia in July 2-5, 2015. The theme of the convention is Happy, Joyous and Free. And we can be thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for my recovery.

In love and service, Irma V, Past Delegate Panel 59 Area 91

Treasuring the Gift of Service

Vic P and Ray M both Past Trustee spoke from their hearts based on their experience of the gifts being of service has brought them. Ya had to be there!

Tom K Past Trustee

Good morning everyone, my name is Tom and I am an alcoholic!

I would like to begin by thanking the WRAASA committee for the opportunity to participate in this awesome service assembly. Placing me on a panel with two individuals, for whom I have immense respect, and also the privilege of calling friends, is an added bonus.

"Treasuring the gift of Service". As I pondered this topic, I asked myself, "what does the word 'treasuring' imply to me as it pertains to our life giving legacy of service?" I got several mental pictures of what came to my mind when I first pondered the term 'treasure' or 'treasuring': phrases such as "accumulating or possessing", or "to lay up in store" or "to retain". These images did not quite fit with how I understand and experience the legacy of service in my life today. The word treasure seemed to imply to me "keeping" rather than "giving away", "holding on to", rather than "sharing".

The gifts of service that I receive today, that I treasure and appreciate, are contingent on my daily application of a forward moving set of actions and principles. They are clearly and specifically outlined in steps 10 and 11 in our Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.

Those gifts of service only accrue to me through a continual and ongoing application and adoption of certain attitudes, and continual daily practice of thinking of others and their needs.

The greatest gift of service that I receive and treasure the most, is the freedom from self that is the result. Freedom from those obsessions with self, from fear, resentments, anger, self pity, envy, jealousy, worry, and many more children of the ego too numerous to mention. You see, I cannot be in two places in my mind at one time. If I am consciously thinking of your needs and how I can be helpful to you, I am not stuck in self.

As I consciously seek throughout the day, to "add to" the lives of every single person I meet, interact with or even think about, I am a free person, free from all the debilitations of self thinking. For an alcoholic wishing to recover, self thinking is insanity.

I cannot be thinking "poor me" when I am thinking about how I can add to your life and then taking the necessary actions to do so.

The attitude and action of living a service oriented life is liberating and freeing for me as an individual. I could not think my way to a place of peace and freedom from my obsessions with self. I ask daily in my morning meditation for guidance and

direction, and ask that any obstacles of self-thinking that stand in the way of my usefulness be removed. I then go out into my day and seek opportunities to contribute to, not detract from, the lives of all those I meet. I am granted a daily peace and sense of purpose that is unobtainable for me in any other manner or process.

The flow of power outward through loving actions of service to others can be likened to a flowing river. It rolls downstream, over a dam and onto a set of turbines and generates power. That power spreads, bringing light, comfort and warmth into the lives of those around.

What happens though, when the flow of that river is diminished. As obstructions build up in the stream, gradually the current slows. As it slows, its power decreases and its ability to turn the turbines and generate life-giving power to others is lessened. As the power ceases to flow outward we begin to see the results of this in others. Their lights start dimming and people return to the cold and darkness of previous days. Those who have not yet been connected to the light of recovery remain in darkness.

What are the results of this diminishment for us who make up this flowing river of recovery through service? As our outward flow slows, we, like the river, become more stagnant. Lacking the infusion of new water that we receive when we are steadily giving it away in service, our current of life becomes murkier and darker. When once it was clear, life giving and sparkling, it has now once again become gloomier and darker. Without the strong current of service moving through us, debris continues to accumulate and pile up, further slowing its movement. The toxins and pollutants of resentments and fears begin accumulating in my thought processes, compromising my ability to be useful to those around me. The outward flow of the power through me ceases to be life supporting or live giving. The river of service through me is in effect dead, dead to itself and dead to those it once provided warmth, light and hope.

This need not be the outcome though. We acknowledge our powerlessness over these obstacles to service and ask a loving higher power to at once remove them. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts again to someone we can help, and once more we resume that life giving outward flow of thought and action.

We continue working the first eleven steps, one day at a time, so our channel remains clear and free flowing. As we continue to flow outward in loving service to alcoholics and all those about us, we stay fresh, vibrant and spiritually alive ourselves. We need never fear a return to the darkness, hopelessness and despair we once knew, as long as we stay on this daily path of thought and action, this river of service.

Through action we will continue to treasure that gift of freedom, the gift of service!

Ian R Alternate Delegate

Hello, my name is Ian R and I am currently serving as the Area 80 Manitoba Alternate Delegate. It is always an honour and privilege to be asked to share in Alcoholics Anonymous, so I want to thank the chairs of WRAASA for asking me. I always look for god's sense of humour

in all that I do. Originally I was asked to share on a different topic at a different time. I called and suggested, I was going to be arriving late and I could prepare my share and someone else could read it. What's the result, I was asked to share on a different topic at a different time. Here's the humour or gods humour for sure. It's with two giants in AA. Tom K and Vic P These two men have been a great example and guided me through service over the last number of years and I have a special relationship with each. They are driven by the principles we are taught in the steps, traditions and concepts of AA. Therefore when I was asked to speak on how to treasure the gift of service, I immediately thought about how I have been shown how to treasure this precious gift from those men that have walked before me. So, Tom and Vic, thanks for the gift.

When I think about the 3 legacies left to us, the legacy of recovery, the legacy of unity, and the legacy service, the word that comes to mind is grace. To me I must cherish and serve all 3 legacies if I am to treasure the gift of service.

My greatest example in Alcoholics Anonymous was my sponsor Tom. I know that there are no Heroes in AA, but Tom was my hero. His example, as well, provided me a foundation to understand the need for action, the implementation of the principle of anonymity, and that without Recovery, (the base of our triangle), my ability to serve those around me in every aspect of my life would not be complete.

He was always teaching me about anonymity. Understanding that this meant to "be where you were supposed to be". "Do what you said you were going to do".

And, lastly. "Mind YOUR own business." I'm still learning, but on the right path.

He would say "it's not good enough to do service, you need to do with a smile"

Or as St Francis de Sales said "its not enough to do gods will. We must do it cheerfully"

What incredible lessons that have shaped my sobriety to this point. In my opinion, Alcoholics Anonymous is a service organization. Our main objective is to be effective and lead by example in all the relationships in my life. I think back to the bedevilments written in the big book. Isn't the first one, "we are having trouble with personal relationships". When I got to Alcoholics Anonymous and looked closely at my life, wasn't that really the issue. I couldn't relate to you, to my family, to my peers, to people I worked with, guys on my sports teams, I felt as though I didn't fit anywhere. Like an alien. I recall looking at the last 5 chapters in the big book and realizing that they were all on different types of relationships. It started to make sense to me. Through all of you I started to see how my alcoholism manifested itself in all my relationship's since I was a child. Including my relationship with myself and God, and how "the discovery of self and the discovery God" in AA are one and the same thing. It was only in recovering that fundamental relationship with the power that I was able to move forward and learn how to treasure service. Grace, -- unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration, transformation or sanctification.

Bill knew us alcoholics well. It always amazes me. He knew me and everything I needed. "every good and precious gift comes from the sunlight of the spirit" and through Bill I was granted freedom and happiness.

The freedom, happiness and joy only came through what I learned later to be the sacrifices I

learned to make serving my fellows in Alcoholics Anonymous and later serving all of gods kids, anywhere and at any time.

I think about our 12 th Step. Having had a spiritual awakening... “ as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics... and practice these principles In all our affairs..” It tells me my new job, I was not always psyched to find out what was in store for my life, that I was destined for a life of service in Alcoholics Anonymous. I recall sitting in meetings in those early days of my arrival to all of you and thinking ...’really--- this is what my life has come to. How did I end up here ? I would have never had that first drink”. I can only imagine what all of you thought of me. Patience , love, tolerance and understanding. Thank you all for being of service in Alcoholics Anonymous, because I understand today and was taught by all of you through my experience, that you were sharing that gift with me. Your gift of service, allowed me the time to learn why am I here and what my journey was going to look like. Sorta...

I recall allowing my name to stand for Alternate GSR, that was the perfect job for me. I really didn’t know the job description. All I heard was alternate, which meant I didn’t have to do anything at all. Well God , in his grace and sense of humour had a different plan than mine, Thankfully. Our GSR quit 10 months in and I was GSR for 3 years. You see, I could not change the reality of my own being, ‘I am what I am, and that’s what I am’. Thanks Popeye, but WE can and do change our experience in Reality. The program does that for us and for me, by changing my self centred, selfish, negative actions, for positive, loving, other-centered actions. When my actions change, my attitude changes and with that change in attitude my thinking changes and so does my experience.

Service means putting other people first, we have the greatest “people first” program in the world. Everything we have is based on sharing. As we share, we begin to care. ‘People first’ is part of our primary purpose. Carrying the message is the basic service that the fellowship gives. Our 3rd Legacy of service must be treasured. How I treasure that gift, is to pass along to those behind me the most meaningful example of service that I can provide. That comes with scrutiny and errors. I recall not to long ago in service, I was to be provided with the greatest lesson. I am provided many incredible lessons from this gift if I am conscious to them.

I was Area 80 Chair, I had recently attended some other assemblies in our region and back with ‘ the knowledge of exactly what our area need to prosper and grow” I was to immediately implement all of these new found wonderful ideas. Much to my dismay, the plan did not go off as I had planned and I was hurt. ‘How could these other service alkie not see the benefit as I did. I recalled a reading from the service manual written by Bill on leadership. He had suggested ‘Once assured that it has, or can, obtain sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility’

Although, great ideas and thoughts, without the support of those that I serve or serve with me, I Have no business trying to implement or impress what I think is right on my fellows. And boy did I get that message loud and clear. What a gift that all of you provided me, the grace to learn that lesson and use it in all my affairs and everywhere in my life. A true gift of service.

Here are some perfect gifts given to me by the Power through the efficacy of the action program, the love of the fellowship and the sacrifice of service- our 3rd legacy.

Physical Sobriety which is the basis of all sobriety and often the surrender in Step One.

An Open Mind, the gift begins as I start to fulfill the conditions Bill gives us in Chapter Four of the Big Book where he counsels us to sweep away prejudice, to think honestly and to search diligently within ourselves. The fundamental idea that God is In Me. AA tells me that the only place I will find God is deep within me. God in me, as me, is me – my sponsor would say. This simple powerful gift that my sponsor shared with me changed my entire life. Service in Alcoholics Anonymous has given me a purpose in life to carry the AA message of hope to everyone in Love.

I have a new motivation and a new action pattern, that gets my sobriety into Action. Service is love in action. Our real purpose, as stated in our Big Book, is to become of maximum service to God and to all others, i.e., to all of His Kids (not just alcoholics) I learn that Love is the only reason for doing anything and everything we do in love adds to our life and the lives of those around us.

This is true of service in AA or outside of AA, in every such place that the Power may place us. Prayer is the real powerful Action and is the beginning of the Relationship with the Power. Prayer opens the door to the Spiritual Life and guides the process of intuitive living and unconditional service to others.

Anonymity in recovery, unity and service, this law of sacrifice or of giving up of Self. Anonymity is a river of power that binds every member to every other member, every group to every other group. I believe it is the unity of AA, it teaches me to place principles before my personalities, and it teaches me to listen to others and to the Power. When in service, the relationship continues to prosper and grow as we persist in the living and practicing our incredible program.

I want to close with a story that my sponsor shared with me many times. It was shared by his sponsor Chuck and he wanted to pass it along.

It was called “The Two Pillars”. Many times I sat and listened to him recount that the Ancients had said that there were two pillars that stood before the Temple of Solomon and that they were called Jachim and Boaz, which is to say Law and Love. He said that the Ancients ordained that it was necessary to pass between the two pillars in order to enter into the Temple and on into the presence of the Holy of Holies. Over a period of 10 years I must have heard that story over and over always wondering what it had to do with me or Alcoholics Anonymous. Tom told me many stories over and over. I always thought he had forgotten that he had shared them before, because he was so old. When I reminded him that he had told me before. He would say “yeah, I know, you need to hear it again.” And laugh

One evening not too long ago, sitting alone and reminiscing, I had a burst of clarity. Tom wasn't talking only about the Temple of Solomon. He was making a critical point about AA, Suddenly, I understood Tom meant that in AA we need both the Law, the Program of Recovery, Unity, and Service on the one hand, and the Fellowship, the Love of Alcoholics Anonymous, on the other.

Those are our two pillars, the Law (the Program) and Love (the Fellowship), and we need both to enter into the Good Life (the Temple) and on into the Holy of Holies (our own personal relationship with the Power). We need both the Program and the Fellowship, and we need each other.

So it is with this story in mind, the service of those men and woman that came before me and taught me, loved me and shared with me, that I have a great respect and understanding of why I too treasure this divine gift of grace --- SERVICE in Alcoholics Anonymous and to become of maximum use to all my fellows.

Workshop Reports:

Anonymity and the social media

Facilitator – Robert E. – Treatment Chair Area 78

Present:23

- What is social media
 - Media = anything you can look at
 - Social = interaction
- Social media has really taken off with “young people” in the program
- Social media generally has no guarantee or privacy
- Dr. Bob said don’t be anonymous in our communities – Where do we draw the line?
- Very easy to communicate and send vast amounts of communication through social media
- We come to AA because of our drinking , but stay because of the living problem
- Social media can promote the healthiness of our change without stating that we are in AA, if we practice the program in our lives it will ricochet into how we are perceived in public
- Social media accounts are not anonymous are not anonymous because of multiple access points that many people can see it
- Online sights can allow aliases to be used because some people don’t want to be known
- Maybe when interacting in social media use “12 step program” instead of “AA”
- Maybe AA is using social media to make life easier rather than trying to carry the message – Not everyone has access to social media and have to carry the message to these people face to face
- There should be no notice of affiliation on social media sites and refrain on commenting on when AA type posts are made – no rewind when anonymity is broken
- Anonymity is our spiritual foundation – this helps us to practice humility

- Some people use social media for work and don't understand what social medias is used for so acknowledging it can get it in the wrong hands
- Prefer to break anonymity on one to one and not out in the public, nice to have this discretion.
- Really easy to exploit social media in what you are doing so we need to keep away from exploiting and practice the principles
- Some of us get to a bottom where we are so open minded that it doesn't matter where get the message from
- Sometimes it is so easy to click and send congratulations about sobriety events but we must remember who this will affect
- In regards to sending groups/quotes, is "This Day in AA" quotes crossing the line?
- Sometimes we get caught up in self seeking and we can slip when using social media for selfish means.
- Texting and social media can really improve communication and keeping in touch if used properly, also can be useful for connecting after relapses.
- We can talk about our "isms" and speak the language of the heart but we don't have to say we are in AA unless asked one on one face to face.
- The Breakdown is not that newcomers don't care, they just don't understand, this is the responsibility of the sponsor to educate
- Sadness about the ego driven self promotion of how we accomplished birthdays and 12 step calls – we don't take the credit for what AA has done for us.
- Accepting the social media connections can not only imply AA affiliation, professional connections are not made due to outside issues why should it be any different with anonymity
- AA as an organization cannot be anonymous, the individual has to be anonymous – Tradition 11
- Our profession does not depend on us being in AA and breaking anonymity can jeopardize our view from professionals
- With anonymity how can we get public information out there in this respect?
- Once it is out in social media you can not take it back
- Social media can be good to make the initial meeting, but can become really good face to face friends eventually – social media is no replacement for real face to face and physical working of the program
- We have to remember we are sober because of god and the fellowship
- Anonymity is the ability to do something good without telling the world about it
- Anonymity becomes more important the longer we are in the program – our responsibility it to inform the newcomer about anonymity

- We need to look for social media sites that adhere to the principles, we have to grow and adapt as the technology advances
- We can't be so anonymous that we can't be reached by other members or newcomers

Sobriety is Just a Start

Facilitator - Char L. - DCM District 18, Area 91

Recorder - Elizabeth P. - DCM District 61, Area 78

Char opened session by reading from As Bill Sees It, Pf. 13

- Suit up & show up. Rely on Higher Power.
- AA symbol - 3 sides of the triangle.
- Seeing things in a new way, a better way.
- Get into a group, feel loved, feel part of group. Work steps. Door opened into service. Moved through positions. Have a desire for more service.
- Coming to WRAASA. Being willing to come to Calgary to keep the program going.
- Getting sober physically was only 15%. Other 85% was the mind game. Steps helped with this.
- Gift of serenity. Learning life skills. Learning to have a full life. More than just not drinking.
- Ego. Even after considerable length of sobriety still felt wasn't good enough. Step up to the plate and do service to get over that.
- Emotional sobriety - cease fighting anything or anyone. Continue for a life time. Process of getting closer to higher power... seeking a relationship daily. Continue step 10 & 11 on a daily basis. Now has gratitude and humility.
- You loved me until I could love myself.
- Removing alcohol from life was not enough. Had to grasp the two parts of step one.
- Your cup cannot get filled if you don't empty it. Share with everyone everywhere, so you can empty your cup and then get your cup refilled.
- There is a difference between being in AA and being around AA. Do all the things recommended, don't cherry pick.
- Becoming stagnant in AA is dangerous. Get involved.

- Learned what alcoholism is after got into AA. Didn't know what it was before coming to AA. Stop doing what used to do when drinking and start doing what I'm scared of. Needed traditions to learn to get along with others. Learning to be happy by being of service to others... carrying the message to others.
- Found happiness, joy and freedom through admission and acceptance, carrying the message to still suffering. Living the principles outside in the real world.
- Young people's events create attraction. Practice traditions and love and tolerance.
- Made a decision that this was life or death, pulled up sleeves and worked the steps ASAP. Got into service work, did everything that was suggested.
- Know where he wanted to get to and revise his actions as needed, to get there. Look for people who had what he wanted and copied them.
- Not just the message we carry but how we carry it. Sponsorship helped. Learning to listen.
- AA is a journey. Starts out hard but gets better. Looking forward to going on. It is an Exciting Journey.
- Getting involved in service work. Had to trust process. Service work taught her how to play nice with people.
- "If you don't grow you go." Had to get out of her comfort zone and do the things asked of her that she didn't want to or that she was comfortable with or thought she was able to, especially in service work.

#3 - Attraction Not Promotion

Facilitator: Daryl D, Past Delegate, Area 78

Recorder: David R, Archives Chair, Area 78, Brenda M Area 79

- My community knew that I was drinking. I started going to AA and tried to hide because I was ashamed. When I joined AA, people knew that I had changed. People came up and asked me what I did.
- Show me don't tell me
- Set an example. What our actions are is what people will be attracted to.
- Use and read the pamphlets and other literature. Quote facts not opinions.
- Act with integrity, tolerance, love and acceptance toward others. Walk with dignity and strength.

- Be enthusiastic. Seeing people passionately involved is attractive. There is a job for everyone. Enthusiasm means God inspired. Do the job and leave it in God's hands.
- You may be the only Big Book someone sees, so be careful how you present it.
- Read the Drs. Opinion.
- My medicine for kidney failure is with my dr. My medicine for alcoholism is AA.
- When I came through the doors everybody reached out to me.
- Read Step 12, and tradition 12. Be humble. Going to meetings, doing service work and sharing my experience is how the magic happens.
- Be vulnerable. Show openness and honesty and sincerity. People will identify and connect.
- I might be the only person that someone may meet who is in AA. Present myself as a better person than the one I was when I was drinking. Inside AA it's ok to promote service work. Carry the message.
- I don't like being told what to do. Actions speak louder than words.
- If you are not sure about a tradition, read the long form.
- Put other people before yourself. Explain the program to new people.
- Share the experience and growth you receive by doing service work and then take that back to your groups. Share the benefits of sobriety. The third legacy is part of the program. The quality of our sobriety improves from doing service work. It is important to rotate out and create a vacancy for the next person. Then be a mentor. Remain available to assist the person coming in. Have an alternate, so that they can seamlessly rotate in.
- People around me were doing the steps. I saw them getting better and I wanted what they had.
- Have greeters. Make sure you talk to the newcomer. Unconditional love keeps them coming back.
- Show your love for the program.
- You can't keep it (and I'll add my own thought here, you don't even have it) if you don't give it away. Practice principles before personalities. Practice the essence of the program.
- Take good care, and I look forward to running into some of you another time.

With gratitude, Brenda

Keeping Our Meeting Rooms Safe.

Facilitator: Allison M

Recorder: Cassandra K

Thank to the 2015 WRAASA committee for allowing me to be of service to Alcoholics Anonymous, and to you this weekend. As well thank you to Allison for facilitating this workshop and to all who participated. There are many aspects to safety in our room and this is what we discussed. What do we allow to happen when there is a outside issue, and do we discuss this at our business meetings? Do we keep the contents of our sharing not to graphic when newcomers are present? When we are harsh, judgemental, critical, and gossipy do we meet with those members to make amends? Allowing trust and a safe environment to evolve as a result. Do we know how to handle a fire in the building we have our meetings in? Do we discuss at our business meetings what to do if someone is in medical distress? Are we inclusive to make people of all faiths feel welcome? How do we confront a member who is promoting a specific religion? Do we explain in a loving way we are a spiritual based program of recovery, not a religious organization. How do we meet someone in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous for personal reason? Do we discuss 13 stepping at our business meetings, and if necessary do we need to do a 14 step to address the 13 stepper? Sponsorship is vital to share information, healthy people make healthy meetings. be a information sharer, seek advice from members who are active in service. Contact GSO. How do we handle bullies? Do we chip away their rough exterior with love and tolerance? If you see a wrong do you address it, take a stand? Be the change you want to see. How do we handle predators? Do we discuss this at our groups business meetings so our GSRs can address it at the district level. Do we spend adequate time with our newcomers to let them know dangers can exist? inside our meetings our group conscience over rules a individuals rights out side the meeting room. just because we are members of Alcoholics Anonymous we are not above the law. We do not have to be victims, tell

someone. If you see someone struggling talk to them. Remind yourself of the responsibility pledge. Continue to figure out problems through group and district inventories. Talk to people not at people, remind ourselves not everyone is at where we at. Our we tolerant of others who might not yet be aware of our traditions? Do we train our group members who will be chairing meetings on how to handle distributive members? Do we have group guidelines in place to address this issue and discuss it regularly at our business meetings? Do we carry our approved pamphlets and literature to address this issue? Be aware that some people do not want to be touched. We suggest that women work with women, and men work with men. We must be respectful of all people who come to the rooms especially newcomers. With out respect for others our new members will not feel safe. Are we conducting ourselves as productive members of Alcoholics Anonymous, and society? We all have defects of character, but we come to the rooms to change. In summary we should always air on the side of caution. Your negative thoughts, words, and actions may cost the still suffering alcoholic their lives.

Practicing Our Principles through Our Singleness of Purpose

Facilitator: Jim E

Recorder: Lyn P

We started with introductions of names, groups and positions or area of members.

- **Jim started the meeting by explaining what he thought practicing our Principles through our Singleness of Purpose means to him:**

Steps & Traditions best summed up By Bill W in Chapter 5

A: We were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.

B: No human power could have relieved our alcoholism

C: God could and would if he were sought

One alcoholic sharing with another to stay sober.

- **Went to Akron founder's day the Speaker at the Mayfair Hotel, and saw Dr. Bob's house. He explained that was part of his serenity of singleness of purpose.**
- **Hope of coming to A.A. through the others that had come before her with the willingness from the principles in the 12X12.**
- **Attends meetings that are open enough to accept all attendees.**
- **Singleness of Purpose is best serviced by principles in closed meetings that can be lead by selflessness, love and tolerance.**

Another great tool is Cooperation with the Professional Community to get the message out to the public.

- **Met a woman that attended AA meeting disclosing she was actually an overeater and couldn't find a meeting in that town. By letting the meeting know what her true needs were she went on to create her own program for OA . Sometimes that is what other addictions might need to do instead of AA meetings too.**
- **Talked about the difference between open and closed meetings and outside issues. Try sponsoring an outside issue meeting to give others their own meeting to understand how much better they might feel, so AA can get back to a closed meeting.**
- **Why do I go to an AA meeting? It's irrelevant If I'm called upon, I'd rather talk to the same problem as my own, but I can't do anything about what's going on in anyone else's world. I would rather someone relate to the Big Book of AA because I did. I ended up here.**
- **We have two treatment programs in our area. Someone in our area thought they'd lay down the law to these new comers.**

We need to help newcomers find a singleness of purpose to find a higher power and a way into the program.

- **Singleness of purpose and a new life, How to quit drinking and be open minded. Not so Ridged.**
- **I don't know I'm an Alcoholic! Singleness of purpose is doing the next right thing. I came in a car with 3 other people, came into this building, met people I only see at conventions, How fun! Singleness of Purpose to me is knowing the people that come through the door are going to help me.**
- **I was happy when I got to AA. If I hadn't have heard my story I wouldn't have stayed. I'm a nurse in detox, I share a piece of my story once they can identify, and you can talk to them about anything.**

- **Drank out of control from a very young age. She's young and has a healthy fear of turning people away from any meeting.**
- **I am in love with the power of example in AA, the Grace, the ease, the gentleness. I want to give the message back. Sponsorship is such a great power of example.**

Generosity of wanting to give it away. Be the example you see. We are lucky to have the experience we see.

- **AA Relates to me through example of positive attraction.**
- **At the time, I didn't know what alcoholism was. I saw hope, learned more after 12 years of sobriety. Service Structure best teacher I could have hoped for.**
- **Service structure, from a treatment perspective, provides a fine line to recovery.**



February 27 – March 1, 2015

Pineridge Community Association

6024 Rundlehorn Dr. NE Calgary, Alberta

AGENDA

The purpose of WRAASA is to develop greater unity among members, groups and areas of the Western Canada Region; to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences; and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of A.A. The Assembly should always foster the RECOVERY, UNITY and SERVICE legacies of A.A.

Friday February 27, 2015

4:00 pm Registration Opens 7:00 – 10:00 pm Friday Evening Session

7:00 – 7:15 pm 7:15 – 8:30 pm

8:30 – 8:45 pm 8:45 – 10:00 pm

Chair: Barb K., Trustee-at-Large/Canada

Welcome and introductory remarks by Barb K and Jim C., WRAASA 2015
Committee Chair

Presentation and Discussion:

Diversity in AA - Our Heritage of Inclusion

Moderator: Barb K., Trustee-at-Large/Canada Presenter: Michelle D-K., Delegate
Area 78 Presenter: Jennifer K., Delegate Area 79 Presenter: Clint Mack., Delegate
Area 80 Presenter: Kim C., Delegate Area 91

Coffee Break

Presentation and Discussion:

Safety and Respect - Practicing Principles Begins in the Home Group

Moderator: Barb K., Trustee-at-Large/Canada Presenter: David M., Treasurer Area
78 Presenter: Gail P., Chair Area 79 Presenter: Stuart S., Chair Area 80 Presenter:
Ed S., Chair Area 91

Saturday February 28, 2015

8:00 am Registration Opens

8:00 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast – 7th Tradition Observed

9:00 – 10:45 am Saturday Morning Session

9:00 – 10:00 am

10:00 – 10:30 am 10:30 – 10:45 am

Chair: Barb K.

Presentation and Discussion:

Safeguarding Traditions through the Evolution of Technology

Moderator: Michelle D-K., Delegate Area 78

Presenter: Larry M., Alternate Delegate Area 78 Presenter: Trish L., Past Delegate Area 79 Presenter: Cate W., Past Delegate Area 80 Presenter: Glenn N., Alternate Delegate Area 91

What's on Your Mind? (Sharing Session/Ask it Basket) Coffee Break

Saturday February 28, 2015

10:45 – Noon

Workshops

#1 – Practicing our Principles

through Our Singleness of Purpose

Facilitator: Jim E., Corrections Chair Area 79 Recorder: Lyn P., CPC Chair Area 78

#2 – Sobriety is Just a Start

Facilitator: Char L., DCM Area 91 Recorder: Elizabeth P., DCM Area 78

#3 – Attraction Not Promotion

Facilitator: Daryl D., Past Delegate Area 78 Recorder: David R., Archives Chair Area 78

#4 – Keeping our Meeting Rooms Safe

Facilitator: Allison M., Archives Chair Area 91 Recorder: Cassandra K., DCM Area 78

#5 – Anonymity and the Social Media

Facilitator: Robert E., Treatment Chair Area 78 Recorder: Randy C., Secretary Area 91

Chili Lunch Break - 7th Tradition Observed

Saturday Afternoon Session

Chair: Barb K.

Presentation and Discussion:

Inventory: Looking Back to Move Ahead

Moderator: Michelle DK., Delegate Area 78 Presenter: Peter K., Registrar Area 78
Presenter: Carolyn W., Past Delegate Area 79 Presenter: Brad F., Corrections
Chair Area 80 Presenter: Rick W., DCM Area 91

Presentation: Class B Trustee Presenter: Canada Trustee at Large

Coffee Break

What's on your mind? (Sharing Session/Ask It Basket)

Presentation and Discussion:

Carrying the AA Message in the Information Age

Moderator: Larry M., Alternate Delegate Area 78 Presenter: Jan M., Secretary
Area 78 Presenter: Arnie G., Secretary Area 79 Presenter: Noni M., DCM Area 80

Noon – 1:00 pm **1:00 – 5:00 pm**

1:00 – 2:00 pm

2:00 – 2:45 pm

2:45 – 3:00 pm 3:00 – 3:30 pm 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Presenter: Lesley W., Webservant Area 91

Saturday February 28, 2015

4:30 – 5:00 pm

6:00 – 7:45 pm 7:45 – 9:00 pm

9:00 – ???

What's on Your Mind

(Sharing Session/Ask It Basket)

Banquet

Sobriety Count Down

Saturday Evening Session

Chair: Daryl D., Past Delegate Area 78 Open AA Meeting

Speaker: Tom K., Past Trustee

Ice Cream Social – 7th Tradition Observed

Sunday March 1, 2015

7:00 – 9:00 am

8:00 – 9:00 am 9:00 – 12 Noon

9:00 – 10:00 am

10:00 – 10:30 am 10:30 – 10:45 am 10:45 – 11:15 am

11:15 – 11:45 am 11:45 – Noon

Continental Breakfast 7th Tradition Observed

WRAASA Business Meeting

Chair: Barb K., Trustee-at-Large/Canada Secretary: Jan M., Secretary Area 78

Sunday Morning Session

Chair: Barb K., Trustee-at-Large/Canada

Presentation and Discussion:

Celebrating our Journey of Unity

Moderator: Larry M., Alternate Delegate Area 78 Presenter: Ray M., Past Trustee
Presenter: Scott H., Past Delegate Area 79 Presenter: Pamela V-M., Past Delegate
Area 80 Presenter: Irma VDBM., Past Delegate Area 91

Workshop Reports Coffee Break

Presentation: **Treasuring the Gift Of Service**

Presenter: Vic P., Past Trustee
Presenter: Tom K., Past Trustee
Presenter: Ray M., Past Trustee

Presenter: Ian R., Alternate Delegate Area 80

First Time Attendees
What's on Your Mind/Ask It Basket

Closing Remarks by
Barb K., Trustee-at-Large/Canada