



Carry the Message July, 2010

The Huron Valley Area Intergroup Newsletter

Serving the Recovery Community since 1979

AA's Twelve Concepts for World Service

The Twelve Concepts for World Service are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure. They reveal the evolution by which it has arrived in its present form, and they detail the experience and reasoning on which our operation stands today.

Concept VII Long Form

The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness

Concept VII Checklist

- Do we act responsibly regarding "the power of the purse?"
- Do we realize the practical and spiritual power of the Conference will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the G.S.B.?

About AA July 2010

—a Newsletter for Professionals©AA World Services

"Our jails are bursting at the seams," says the Honorable Rogelio Flores, a Superior Court Judge in Santa Barbara County, California, and one of A.A.'s nonalcoholic Class A trustees. Millions of prisoners need help, he says, and there is no better way to help alcoholics in the court system than nudging them toward A.A. "If there's alcoholism involved, who do we call? We always call A.A.; we always rely on the hand of A.A. to help the still-suffering alcoholic."

Judge Flores has been on A.A.'s board of trustees since 2007, though he has been using A.A. in his work as a jurist far longer than that. "I've been involved in recovery efforts in all the 24 years that I've been on the bench," he says. "Our criminal justice system can do a lot more than just incarcerate people. We can

do a lot more in helping people get sober and maintain their sobriety."

According to Judge Flores, drug and alcohol courts are in a unique position to guide and support the thousands of alcoholics and addicts who come before them, and to put an end to the "revolving door" cycle where repeat offenders simply pass through the system time and time again.

"Drug courts started some 21 years ago in Dade County, Florida, where a number of law enforcement officials—the district attorney, some judges, defense attorneys and other prosecutors—were seeing this revolving door justice system running amok. People were coming in and out of the courts and they were not getting any better. So, they helped create a model that has been emulated for some time now, and that is to utilize the courts as a treat-



—Staff the Booth Friday, Aug 20, noon to 8, Saturday, August 21, 10—8, Sunday, August 22, 11—6

—pitch tents and set up — Friday Morning 9 a.m. and pack up and return items to office on Sunday

Published by the Huron Valley Area Intergroup, 31 South Huron Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 (I-94 exit 183 "Ypsilanti, Huron Street", 0.9 miles north)

Hours: Tues—Fri, 1 p.m.—6 p.m. Phone: (734) 482-0707 Website: www.hvai.org E-mail: office@hvai.org Help Line: (734) 482-5700 or helpline@hvai.org

HVAI Contributions

We'd like to thank last months contributors...without the support of groups like these we would not be able to do the important work we do for the recovering community.

Ann Arbor:

Stadium Big Book Group
Singleness of Purpose Group
Beginner's and No Smoking
Principles B4 Personalities
Serenity Group
More Sunshine Group
We Are Not Saints BB Study
Spiritual Solution Group
Washtenaw County District 04

Belleville:

Thursday 12 Step Group

Chelsea:

Hospital Group

Dexter:

Women of Substance Group

Milford:

Milford Group

Ypsilanti:

The Fellowship Group
Weekend By the Book Group
Saturday BB Group

Personal and Anonymous Contributions

ment tool, to utilize the courts as a means of compelling people to change their behavior.”

For the last nine years, Judge Flores has been working as a drug court judge and has seen literally thousands of people suffering from addiction come before him, looking for help. “The courts can be a change agent out there for good, making things better,” says Flores.

Looking back on his work in the field of alcoholism and substance abuse, by his own estimate Judge Flores has sent over 20,000 alcoholics on to A.A. “At first my interest was partly personal—shake any family tree, including mine, and I think you'll find an alcoholic or two. But the more involved I became with alcoholics and other substance abusers in my work, the more interested and concerned I became.”

An Attorney's Changing Attitudes

Understanding how A.A. works is key if court professionals are to use the program as a resource. For

some in the field, learning about A.A. and problem drinking has been a process.

The director of the National Center for DWI Courts, David Wallace, says that 25 years ago when he started as an assistant prosecuting attorney, “I thought that sending someone to A.A. was letting them off easy.”

The vast majority of cases he handled in a town outside Lansing, Michigan, were for driving while impaired. It was routine, he says, to allow a first-time offender to plea down to the less serious charge of impaired driving—with a sentence of probation. For repeat offenders, the court was more stringent.

Those in court on their third drunk driving charge usually received jail sentences. “What I didn't understand was that these individuals were alcohol dependent. What would happen, of course, is that the person who was sent to jail or to prison would soon be back before the court for another drunk driving charge. Jail hadn't changed their behavior.”

Meeting Updates

To update your April 2010 Directories, please print and pass on this information. Go to ww.hvai.org and click on the AA & Al-Anon Meeting Locator, then type the key word 'change' in the search box. You can print and distribute this abbreviated list as a service. There is nothing worse than getting up the nerve to go to a meeting only to find it does not exist.

Send Your Voluntary 7th Tradition Contributions To:

Huron Valley Area Intergroup
31 South Huron Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

District 4
Washtenaw County Treasurer
Box 971502
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Central Michigan Intra-Area 32
C.M.I.A. Area 32 Treasurer
10351 Timber Ridge Drive
Milan, MI 48160

AA World Service
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10164-0423

Your contribution to HVAI supports: The local AA Service Center, the Help Line, the Web and Printed Meeting Directories, a source for Conference-Approved Literature and Anniversary Tokens, AA Outreach to the area Professionals, Treatment Facilities, local Correctional Facilities and the General Public.

Upcoming Events

1st. Sunday of every EVEN month: Central MI CMIA ...Conference Service Structure Meeting: <http://www.cmia32.org>

3rd Saturday: AA Group Service Center: 4pm Huron Valley Area Intergroup Meeting, 101 S. Huron St. Ypsi. www.hvai.org

3rd Monday: District 4: (3rd Mon. ea. month) Conference Service Structure Meeting, Calvary Methodist Church, 1415 Miller, Ann Arbor, 48103

3rd Thursday: District 8: Conference Service Structure Meeting: Brighton <http://www.aalivcomi.org>

last Sunday: West-Side MCYPAA Bid Committee Planning: Dawn Farm basement, 6633 Stony Creek, Ypsilanti Info: John W. 248-840-1388, James G. 734- 323-9913, Amanda 734-645-3648, Talara E. 734-678-0187 or <http://www.ws-mcypaa.org/>

Last Monday: Eastern Area EACYPAA Bid Committee Planning: Denny's backroom, Ann Arbor Road and I-275, Plymouth, MI info: John W. 248-840-1388, Nick G. 586-291-4871, James G. 734-323-9913 or <http://www.ws-mcypaa.org/>

August 13-15, 2010: *OYPAA*, 29th Annual Ohio Conference of Young People in AA in Akron Ohio

August 20-22 , 2010: *Ypsilanti Heritage Festival Information Booth*, Fri Noon til 8p, Saturday 10am til 8pm, Sunday 11am til 6pm. <http://www.ypsilantiheritagefestival.com>. **Call Linda at the HVAI office to volunteer your time!!!**

In fact, says Wallace, “states across the country have thousands and thousands of repeat offenders, persons who did not learn their lesson in jail or prison, unable to do so because of their dependency on alcohol.”

There is a Solution

When it comes to alcoholism, A.A. has a solution that has worked for over two million people worldwide. Fundamental to the solution is working with others at all levels of society to address the problem of alcoholism and local A.A.s across the United States and Canada, and indeed, around the world, have dedicated themselves to making the message of recovery available to anyone who wants it. Cooperation with professionals in all areas that touch upon alcoholism is key to this effort and local A.A.s are available to cooperate with court professionals in a variety of ways.

For years, local A.A. members

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

have volunteered as resources for courts by contacting legal professionals to let them know about A.A. meetings in their areas and by supplying information about Alcoholics Anonymous, the A.A. program of recovery, the difference between open meetings (which are open to the general public) and closed meetings (which are limited to those who have a problem with alcohol), and to build cooperative relationships throughout A.A.'s service structure.

Alex N., an A.A. member volunteer, works with other A.A. members in the Indianapolis area to explain A.A. to probation officers.

Three times a year, Alex, who has

been sober in A.A. for 10 years, and other A.A. volunteers give presentations about A.A. and its history to area probation officers. The presentations last about 45 minutes and cover the main points of the program, such as the principles of anonymity, nonprofessionalism, singleness of purpose and non-affiliation. The volunteers bring pamphlets on A.A. to the pres-

We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help.

entations that are given to the officers, who pass them on to probationers.

AA Guidelines: Central or Intergroup Offices (continued from last month)

—From publication MG02 © the AA General Service Office, NY, NY

—Continued from last month

The question also comes up whether to buy property or a building. A.A. traditionally does not own property, “lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.” Experience also indicates that it is not fair or wise to commit future A.A. members to financial obligations for which they have not initially assumed responsibility, so renting a facility has proved best. It may also appear attractive to consolidate the central office with the facilities and operations of a club. But the risks and pitfalls involved in this are almost too numerous to mention here. One reason for discouraging this is the possibility that the problems of operating the club and the service office will become intertwined, to the detriment of each activity. An even more important point is the need for keeping a clear separation between club operations and A.A. group activities; any strong identification with a club may impair a central office’s ability to serve the groups. A central location for the office is usually desirable, if finances permit. It’s also well to take in possible future needs at the same time the original quarters are being con-

sidered; sometimes it’s possible to rent facilities in buildings where adjoining rooms may become available later. Sufficient room should be provided for copying, mailings, committee meetings, and consultation with newcomers. Since a central office is intended to provide services for all A.A. groups in a community, experience indicates that it is best for the office not to give or rent space to any one group for meetings. The decision, however, is really up to each office, acting autonomously.

GETTING UNDER WAY

Once some of these preliminary matters have been satisfactorily disposed of, the road is clear for the formal organizational work. Here’s a suggested plan that has worked well.

Each group in the community is asked to send both a representative and an alternate representative to a special meeting to form a central office committee (also called a steering committee in some places). In large communities, it is sometimes necessary to divide the group into zones, with a zone representative serving several groups. Once formed, the committee takes over the responsibility for the project and outlines its aims and purposes for approval by the participant groups. Such an outline might cover these points:

- 1) Listing of all groups in the community that want to participate.
- 2) A reminder that financial support is voluntary and not a condition of membership (in keeping with A.A. tradition).
- 3) A clear explanation that responsi-

bility for the maintenance of the service office rests with the groups. Therefore, each group should name a central office representative and an alternate to serve a specified term as the connecting link between the group and its central office

4) A summary of the functions of the central office and an explanation of how it will be staffed and operated.

5) A discussion of how the service office will handle such vital matters as inquiries from newcomers, relations with the press, and similar duties.

6) Assurance that the service center will be operated in keeping with A.A.’s Twelve Traditions.

GROUP REPRESENTATION AT CENTRAL OFFICE

Service centers usually have no authority on their own account; they derive it from the participating groups. Local group representatives reflect the groups’ conscience in the service center operations.

In most communities, a central office committee or steering committee is set up to handle the administrative activities of the service office. The steering committee holds regularly scheduled meetings and deals with general policy and plans. Periodically, the steering committee reports to group representatives on central office problems and accomplishments. It is extremely important to keep a two-way flow of information going between the central office and groups. *...to be continued*