

## Self-Supporting Through Our Own Contributions

The Seventh Tradition was probably one of the first Traditions that I fully understood or at least I thought I did. The further I go into service the more I really fully experience our Seventh Tradition at work.

I can remember when first getting sober and the camaraderie that would exist at each group and the fun that some of the chair people would use when explaining the Seventh Tradition. "We have no dues or fees but we do have a basket to put them in". "If you got it, put it in; if you need it, take it out".

I was fortunate in that I became involved with an event committee early in sobriety and got to see firsthand how important the Seventh Tradition is when staging an event such as a Roundup, Conference or Convention. You actually need a cash flow to get and keep the event going.

Also, as I have gone forward in service: I have seen how the little group of people form a home group; the individuals that form a district and then build an Area; then finally culminate to form a central task solving network which we call our General Service Office. Each of these levels of service needs funds to exist.

That takes us back to our basket at our home group or at a meeting or at a roundup or some other event. The key words here are Self-Supporting.

Supporting your home group; paying your way as you attend meetings. Supporting your home group means supporting your home group. In other words, I support my home group whether or not I get there every meeting. We have rent to pay and coffee and other expenses (literature etc.), which is our group's responsibility, hence *my* responsibility. By the same token, as I travel to other groups or meetings I need to be ever mindful to pay my fair share if I grab a coffee or two (a sandwich or doughnut or all of the above).

I can contribute in other ways. There are Birthday Plan envelopes that allow me to contribute to our General Service Office or whatever level of service I wish to contribute to. After all, I'm the one making the contribution or writing the check.

What amount is deemed adequate for your contribution to this life saving program? The way it was explained to me and I agree: A fair contribution to your church or your place of worship is considered to be 1% of your earnings in a given year. As far as I'm concerned, that's the least I can do.

Usually most groups or meetings have pamphlets and meeting lists available for FREE. How did they get there? Moreover, who made them? These things cost money.

You don't need to be involved in general service to get the full picture of how our Seventh Tradition and Self Support work. Just going to an A.A. meeting and seeing our A.A. literature both free and for sale that is available should convince you that: a lot of work has to be done in order for this to happen.

Attending Service functions such as Service Days; Assemblies; Regional Forums allows you to experience our Seventh Tradition in action. Here again you can put on your thinking cap and realize these things cost money to do.

If you are ever blessed as I have been in seeing where Self Support contributions go at all levels of A.A. Service, all of your questions will be answered with respect to our Seventh Tradition.

My wish would be that everyone could see our General Service Office in New York. Knowing that is not possible the closest anyone can ever get to seeing how our General Service Office functions would be to attend a Regional Forum.

In July (2012) next year our Area will host the Eastern Canada Regional Forum in St. Catharines, Ontario – *don't miss this opportunity*. Our Area won't host another forum for 20 years.

The Seventh Tradition is no longer a mystery to me. I really have seen our contributions at work at all levels of service. Our yearly General Service Conference itself proved beyond any reasonable doubt to me how important our Seventh Tradition is and why we need to be Self Supporting through our own contributions.

We as members have the final say as to how we spend our money and what services we can provide. We do not accept outside contributions so the services we provide are our decision and our decision only.

When we contribute via the Seventh Tradition and pay our Group's expenses we become self-supporting. As our group grows and contributions increase we are able to contribute to the next level of service and eventually to all levels of service. After all, those levels of service (District, Area, and our General Service Office) all provide services to the groups.

The bottom line with all the work we do in Alcoholics Anonymous is our Fifth Tradition: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This takes money and sometimes a lot of it. Remember this when the next time the basket comes around.

Your Panel 60 Delegate,

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