

focus



The Newsletter of Alcoholics Anonymous Area 86

focus: Concept IV: Right of Participation—Equal Partnership

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Reading from the 12 & 12 on page 53, it says, "The primary fact that we fail to recognize is our total inability to form a true partnership with another human being." Can I today form a true partnership? Can I be an equal partner? Can I exercise my right to participate in equal partnerships under Concept IV? The text goes on to say, "Our egomania digs two disastrous pitfalls. Either we insist upon dominating the people we know, or we depend on them far too much....This self-centered behaviour blocked a partnership relation with any one of those about us. Of true brotherhood [sisterhood] we had small comprehension." Then at Step Seven it says, "...we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves toward others and toward God." So, the answer is, I can do it, if I practice enough humility. When twelfth-stepping a drunk, the sponsor or twelfth-stepper and the newcomer are in an equally participating partnership. Both must give in order to receive anything: through mutual identification and by practicing anonymity and humility, both are made equal partners in each other's recovery.

In my home group, the other members allow me to be an equal partner in the group's welfare. And I must always remember that I am only one member in my group, equal with the others, and I have one equal voice and vote at our business meeting. We all participate equally; I am equal to the GSR and the other members; no less, no more. At my home group, the GSR is the voice of the group conscience, not me. My group keeps me humble, but lets me participate equally with all.

At the level of the General Service Conference we especially need this right of equal partnership. I was told before my first Conference to remember that most of the Board and Staff members are drunks just like me, and that we each have the right to participate in the Conference Group Conscience - it is the informed group conscience of AA, in equal participating partnership with all the conference members. The Fourth Concept says that, at the corporate level, "...each member of every classification is a director, and so has a legal vote. No class is set in absolute authority over another. When the time comes for balloting, there are no 'superiors,' no 'inferiors,' and no 'advisors.'" We are equal partners.

Through equal participation at the Conference, Corporate Board, and Staff meetings, staff members and assistants are able to make known their personal questions, experiences and examples on the job - and even their fears - to the Trustees, Delegates and AA as a whole. Their participating "voice" is possibly more important than their actual vote. "They must be made to feel that they are on the team.... A dedicated desire to serve replaces the usual ego drives" (Concept XI). Since most of the actual responsibility for the conduct of GSO, AAWS and the

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"Items of current interest or under consideration within Area 86". Opinions expressed are those of the authors and may not necessarily reflect those of AA as a whole, the Editor or the members of the Area Committee.

focus: Concept XI

The first publication of the AA service manual was in 1962. Bill W. was trying to leave us a blueprint for our future. Concept XI reads, "While the Trustees hold final responsibility for AA's World Service administration, they

should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants". Therefore the composition of these underlying committees, and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensations of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

The reason the concepts and the history of their formation is important to us alcoholics is that we tend to rush in where wise men fear to tread. If we understand how we got to where we are, we will on the most part seriously consider changes and set these changes in place in such a way that reverting back is not a monumental task.

To start concept XI, the trustees have final responsibility of AA world service administration. This being said, the trustees can not and should not manage, but set policy that allows and encourages good work well done.

It has become clear that Alcoholics Anonymous requires special people in positions of responsibility. I think most of our executives and staff members come to us with a desire to serve. We must be careful to give them what they need as driven, intelligent individuals. Some of the requirements would be compensations comparable to the corporate world, the authority and resources to accomplish the work, and a say in establishing policies and direction.

In the early days of operating world services, the corporate world model was used for staff. The excellent administrator was lost, leaving unqualified subordinates to carry on. Alcoholics Anonymous lost the confidence of the membership during this time. The solution to this problem was to hire and compensate all staff equally. The staff positions are rotated every two years. This has worked well because all staff members are eventually trained in all areas. Thus if a position is vacated, other individuals understand the work. Also staff members can not gain any advantage by stepping on other staff members to climb the ladder. The staff member serving as staff coordinator has a vote on the Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Board.

To demonstrate the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous, I will mention that in 1962 men were considered the leaders and superior. Now there are an equal number of male and female staff members demonstrating we can make the changes we need to make to reflect the world as it is in our time.

In closing, I'll say what I said for thirty-six years working for a large corporation. The president's attitude will make its way down to the janitor, but that janitor's attitude can not make its way up to the president.

We need to be careful who serves in the bottom positions of the triangle; millions of lives depend on it.

DCM, District 11, Keith H.

focus: The Home Group

Upset one day I approached another group member with my concern that although the group was now eight members and fledgling we were not voting or using group

conscience. In fact, one of the founders of the group was quite adamant that things should be done by him and his way. With only months of sobriety, a change of group seemed the only solution. Thank God another AA member pulled out the 12 and 12 and began to read, and explained that AA groups have had this problem from day one. He assured me that our "*Bleeding Deacon*" either would start a new group or get drunk. Sure enough group conscience took over and he balked and then gradually left our group.

It is right here at the home group that we learn to laugh, how to be a worker among workers, to take direction, to become responsible, and to do rather than just think or talk about it. We learn to be open-minded about the opinions of others and to think of the other guy. That there is strength in numbers. We are only required to do the best we can and to suit up and show up. We learn how AA lives and grows in our groups. We learn of commitment and brotherhood. That no one has all the answers, but through our group conscience we make better decisions. Being part of and witnessing a group growing is also an experience we should not miss. If I can't learn to get along with people in AA with whom I have a common bond, how will I ever get along with anyone?

GSR, District 7, Dorothy K.

(Continued from front page)

Grapevine falls on them, these workers may freely participate in debate. The presentations given by Class "A" Trustees that I have heard have been exceptional. They are tremendous examples of the dedication to service that few AAs can even imagine. They give freely of their time and experience. "It is our shining ideal that the 'spiritual corporation' of AA should never include any members who are regarded as 'second class'" (Concept IV). Surely, these must all have an equal voice and equal partnership in our Conference.

My ideas and opinions on some topics have many times been adjusted or changed because of Trustees reports, Staff comments, shared experiences, subcommittee reports, and by the comments from GSRs at Assemblies — all of us sharing in equal partnership and participation. My right of participation makes me feel like an equal participant in world-wide AA; like my presence matters, like my thoughts and ideas count for something, equally with all of yours. Bill W. and Dr. Bob learned about service to our fellow alcoholics from the Oxford Group. It was the key to their success in carrying the message to the earliest members. One of the principles of the Oxford Group was "team work". It is stated that "...the individual was to play his all-important part in a well-coordinated whole. Truth is presented more adequately through a group than through an individual. A united front made up of varied personalities presenting a single message carries conviction where one individual may not appeal." (*The Principles of the Oxford Group*, p.10). That sounds like an equal participating partnership to me.

Dr. Bob said in his last talk that the Twelve Steps simmer down in the end to love and service. In a 1965 talk,

Bill said that "all AA progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and responsibility. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to these magnificent standards. Ever deepening humility, accompanied by an ever greater willingness to accept and to act upon clear-cut obligations -- these are truly our touchstones for all growth in the life of the spirit. They hold up to us the very essence of right being and right doing. It is by them that we are enabled to find and to do God's will."

At an Area Assembly, we are all equal participants and equal partners with each other. We are equal in importance and in the right to participate. We each have our own experience and perspective to share; as a world servant, I just have a different level of experience and a different perspective; no more, no less, just different. Each member of our Area Assembly and Area Committee has the equal right to participate, to question, to comment and to share their ideas with the entire Assembly. We have the right to claim our minority opinion and to provide a minority report when that is necessary, and for the good of the whole Assembly. The only way to good communication and then to a truly informed group conscience is through the equal right to participate fully in discussion, debate and voting as equal partners in Western Ontario.

The old-timers have often said that the highest office anyone can obtain in Alcoholics Anonymous is "sober." That

makes me, and all of us here, and in the whole world of AA, "equal partners" with the "right of participation" in the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. "Just as there are no second-class AAs, neither should there be any second-class world service workers, either." I pray that we shall forever cherish and protect this equal partnership, as Dr. Bob and Bill W., cherished their equal partnership in the days when AA was first coming of age. "We can do this when we are sure that we belong, when the fact of our 'participation' assures us that we are truly the 'trusted servants' described in AA's Tradition Two" (Concept IV). Thank you for my right to participate equally with all of you. It is an honour to serve.

Delegate, Area 86, Tom V.

Area 86 Focus

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focus: Inclusiveness in AA: Our Third Tradition

I found it valuable to remind myself exactly how the Third

Tradition reads. We of course have two versions that are available to us. For the purpose of this presentation I am going to rely on the text of the long form which is, to my thinking, so much more decisive in its language. It reads: *"Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend on money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation."*¹ It may be advantageous to define what "all" is. It is defined as *"the whole amount or quantity."*² Bill says all who suffer from alcoholism regardless of any other condition or circumstance should be granted the privilege of membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. It should be noted however that he has made two codicils in this statement, the first being that you actually have to suffer from alcoholism and that as a group we can have no other affiliation; this includes all other addictions. Our members have been credited with starting a large portion of the other 12 step groups simply because they could not get the precise help they needed for their other problems within the confines of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our literature tells precisely how to get sober but does not even broach the subject of any other ailment except to say that many of us receive outside help.

In my mind the statement that we know as the Third Tradition seems so self-explanatory, no need for discourse, discussion or argument. Having said this, my experience is that the interpretation of this tradition seems to leave room for misinterpretation, and consequently the misinterpretation of it has caused more dissention within our movement than almost any other single subject. I will try to demonstrate this by recalling two personal experiences that I have had whilst being a member of AA

In the first instance I was invited to participate in an AA function sometime ago. Having arrived a day early, the gentleman who hosted me that weekend asked if I would like to go to an AA meeting that night; I of course agreed. It was a closed discussion meeting and as it turned out there were 21 people in attendance. Actually there were 20 alcoholics and a young man at his first AA meeting. As we proceeded to introduce ourselves this young man, he may have been 20 or 21, informed the group assembled that he was not an alcoholic but a person with another addiction, and his counselor had told him that AA would have to admit him. The chairperson that night, another young man, proceeded to ask the group for guidance. It was eventually decided that a vote be taken. The result was 17 for him to remain and four against. The new chap voted for himself! The chair, citing the Third Legacy procedure, informed us that we had a substantial majority and therefore the non-alcoholic could stay. At this juncture the four alcoholics who had voted against, left. I was one of them. The four people who left incidentally had more collective years of sobriety than the sixteen who stayed. I can assure you that not one of the departees wished that young man any harm; in fact, at a later time, the oldest of us who left sought that fellow out and directed him to the proper program and assisted him in getting there. Why did I leave? I left because, by definition, a closed meeting is for alcoholics only. Almost every meeting list defines the different criteria for attendance. At a closed meeting I am able to identify with other alcoholics. In reality a substantial majority was not enough in this instance; a unanimous affirmation would have been required. We would have then conducted an open discussion or an open meeting in which of course this young man would have been able to participate. In retrospect what actually happened was that four of OUR members left so that someone we could not help, in the strictest sense of the program, or identify with could stay. Were we angry at the young fellow? Of course not. We were concerned for him and the other sixteen people in that room. I must admit I was not too happy with the counselor. After investigation though I was not even angry with her. She had no idea as to the qualifications required to attend a closed meeting.

This situation presented my friends in that town with a wonderful opportunity to carry this message. After all the egos and tempers subsided it was decided that the Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee (CPC) would inform the facility as to our program. They also set up a Bridging the Gap program with the assistance of the Treatment Committee (in the U.S. it was identified as the H&I committee - Hospitals and Institutions) for graduates of the local facilities. Further, they cooperated with the other twelve step programs to allow them the opportunity to assist people with addictions other than alcohol. A lesson was learned by all, I am pleased to report.

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The second instance is happening as we meet. Although this situation has arisen in the general area where I live, I am sure it is being replicated at numerous locales. I have had the privilege and honor to drive men from the de-tox to local meetings. I have been doing this for well in excess of twenty years. In recent times though it has changed. Four or five weeks ago three men from my home group, myself included, went to the de-tox, now called the Men's Withdrawal Management Centre, to pick up ten men. Of the ten men we picked up, only two were self - admitted alcoholics, five admitted to having hardly ever drunk at all and the remaining men indicated that they were drinkers but in their lives it had never caused any problems. They were drug addicts and thought that they would be able to drink once they had kicked the drugs!

I asked if the Treatment Committee reporting Chair could inform the facility that we would be happy to pick up only the alcoholics or problem drinkers that they are treating at the present time. The reason for this of course is so that we may give these men who are alcoholic the benefit of our twelfth step on a more personal basis. It really is easy for alcoholics to get lost in a crowd.

We are almost expert at that. The local Treatment Committee has not taken any action as of yet. Their reason being that the Third tradition was the only requirement for these men to attend AA. In that, they are correct, except these men, the eight who were not alcoholic, didn't have the requirement nor did they want it. The deeper issue of course is that we are not trying to attract people to AA who don't want or qualify to come. Have I stopped taking the men from the de-tox? No. I hope though, the opportunity in my hometown will be taken as an example in other towns by our services committee, to educate the facilities that send these people to AA. Although inclusive to all who want it, it is not available to those who do not want it or indeed need it, except of course as a visitor.

The following I should emphasize are my own feelings and thoughts and I am sure will be open to different interpretations. For me that which sets AA apart is the process of identification, where one alcoholic talking to another can win his/her confidence in a few hours where a myriad of well - meaning people were never able to do so, regardless of how hard and long they tried. The only thing of value I ever received was information from these good people and I took it under pressure as I was almost always in trouble when they were giving it to me.

Bill W. wrote a pamphlet called, "*Problems Other Than Alcohol*". This pamphlet was in fact a *Grapevine* article Bill had written. The sentiments within it were to be reaffirmed by the General Service Conference not once, but three times. In this world today, drug addiction evokes so much sympathy and a desire by AA's to assist or help those so afflicted. Especially as so many of our members have "*suffered these particular addictions*"³ in concurrence with their alcoholism. Can we do this? Bill gave us specific instructions as to this very question.

"Can a person who is a nonalcoholic pill or drug addict become an AA member?" *No*.

"Can such a person be brought, as a visitor to an open AA meeting for help and inspiration?" *Yes*. He then tackles the issue of membership in his next question. "If so, should these nonalcoholic pill or drug users be led to believe that they have become AA members?" *No*.

Finally Bill defines the person who is dually addicted, "Can a pill or drug taker, who has a genuine alcoholic history become an AA member?" *Yes*.⁴

My sincere feeling is that we have lots to do. Both the census departments of Canada and the U.S.A. indicate very strongly that alcoholism is today at an all time high. The American Medical Association believes that it is of epidemic proportions. We really have no need to be embroiled in this argument about who does and who doesn't qualify with all the untreated alcoholics within our own communities. There are many opportunities to work with wet drunks at our own doorstep.

Our often quoted Serenity prayer intimates to us to ask God for Serenity and Wisdom. We also have to ask for Courage. Courage to protect our fellowship and society as a whole. Courage to look a man or woman in the eye who is in great pain, but not from our disease, and tell them we can't help them. Courage to go seek out the people who suffer from our disease and help them as only we can. As the prayer intones "Courage to change the things I can", and then put forth the effort and work required to change them.

In conclusion, will AA be adversely affected by this encroachment of our traditions? I really don't think so, but I, like the men described in the Third Tradition chapter of the *Twelve and Twelve*, do have some trepidation, a fear that we may have changed the membership because of our inertia. In the last few years I have seen a tremendous rise in the commitment of our service committees to educate not only the people who send prospects to us but also the people who come from these places. I am convinced this is the easier of the tasks before us. I think re-educating the people who are already here will prove much more daunting.

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It will by its very nature create controversy and dissent. The fact remains that it will have to be done.

In the *Twelve and Twelve* after the argument erupted about the man who had an addiction “*worst stigmatized than alcoholism*”⁵, he of course had a genuine alcoholic history. We were grateful to this man for joining us. “*Never did he trouble anyone with his other difficulty*”⁶ as the narrative explains. He went on to help scores of people which in the intervening years multiplied into thousands. I hope this would be used as the practice of those who come to us with other difficulties. We accept them and in return they become responsible AA members. Realizing that the Third Tradition which states in the short form “*that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking*”, we then need to join. And to join brings all the responsibility and rights enjoyed by long-standing members of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have always considered my membership as a privilege, not a right, to be cherished and appreciated.

Alternate Delegate, Area 86, Martin A.

Bibliography:

¹*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p.563, ²*Webster's Dictionary* (International Ed.), p.54, ³*Problems Other Than Alcohol*, p.3, ⁴*Problems Other Than Alcohol* (excerpts), p.2, ⁵*Twelve and Twelve*, p.146, ⁶*Twelve and Twelve*, pp.146-147.

***focus:* What is a Past Delegate?**

Well, my friends, the mailman thinks I died! Becoming a Past Delegate is quite the shock to the system. My weekends are, in most part, my own. I can actually have real flowers in my

flower beds. My neighbours do remember me.

It seems not that long ago that friends in my home group, the Forest Lakeside Group, asked if I would be secretary for the GSR Committee, District 14 Sarnia-Lambton. It would be only one night per month, I was told. “Of course,” I said “why not?” I then was asked to attend an assembly as the GSR. My first Assembly was in Waterloo at the Waterloo Inn, a place called Ruby’s. Quite the dingy looking place, lots of people, lots of noise, lots of smoke. I worked the registration desk AND I LOVED IT!! I was hooked. And so my service journey began. I eventually had the honour and great privilege to serve Area 86 as your Panel 54 Delegate in 2004 and 2005. It was truly an experience I will never forget.

I can’t go back and be a GSR, a DCM or even a Delegate again. Have I really arrived at the end of my service journey? I THINK NOT! I believe I am embarking on yet another phase of my service journey.

The *AA Service Manual* states about Past Delegates: “*Gives the Area the benefit of their experience with worldwide AA, but leaves area committees and new delegates free to run their own show.*”

I need to stand back and watch the development of issues take place at Area Committee meetings and Assemblies, to ensure that guidelines, procedures and Traditions are being followed and, if need be, share any previous experience on matters being discussed. I need to keep in mind Tradition Two “*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*”

Over the years, I have witnessed actions and heard various opinions – some very positive and some unfavourable, which brings to mind the words of Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic chair of the Board of Trustees in his opening talk in 1954 when asked, “Why do we need a Conference?” If we substitute that phrase with “Why do we need an Assembly?” the words still ring true. “**We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade AA.**” He continues on to say “**We need it to ensure that changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all AA, and not of any few.**”

At present our Area has gone through and is continuing to go through several changes, including two recent resignations. I have every confidence that the GSRs will ensure any changes taking place will be done so fairly, keeping the integrity of the area in place. I also have every confidence that our area will sustain these changes and be stronger for it.

My life has been enhanced immensely by being involved in our third legacy of service. I highly recommend it to anyone wondering what this general service is all about. Give it a try. The bottom line for me is that I owe my life to Alcoholics Anonymous. Alcoholics Anonymous lives in my heart today. It’s OK that the mailman thinks I died. I know I am alive and well within the fellowship of AA.

Past Delegate, Panel 54, Area 86 Western Ontario, Jan L.

focus: What's in a Name?

That is the question that is being asked a lot these days in Area 86. In a document that was recently circulated in the Area, it held a title masthead that included the words "Area 86". Some asked the question – did this come from the Area Executive Committee as a communication, or from some other source? It has sparked a serious discussion among some as to "who can use those words" – *Area XX* in a communication header.

As with many things procedural in AA, there is no rulebook, but long-standing traditions and a series of practices that preside over how we do things in our fellowship.

When those words are at the top of a page, it sends a certain message to the reader, many of them implied, but a specific message nonetheless. That message is: this is from the *Area XX* Executive Committee, or a member of that Committee. This can be taken by the reader as a document with some import and is from a credible source. When those words are used in the masthead, it then says this document speaks for each group of AA in this Area.

To the best of my knowledge, supported by many phone calls and emails to persons experienced and knowledgeable in such things, typically the Secretary of that Area is the only one endorsed to use the words *Area XX* in a masthead on a printed or electronic document that is an official communication inside and out of AA.

That is an important distinction. In official communications, the Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair or Treasurer should not use the title of Area 86 in a masthead. This is reserved for the Secretary. The words Area 86 can be used in the body and signature of a communication.

The trickle-down effect from this is, should your District or Group adopt such a policy, it will limit the possibility of confusion and possible misdirection of someone who reads a document as to the source and reliability of the information contained in it.

Interim Chair, Area 86, Bill A.

focus: Opinions

Got an opinion? I'd like to hear it.....email to
mww594482@hotmail.com

RECOVERY, UNITY and SERVICE DAY

I had the privilege of attending an excellent service day in Barrie on September 22nd.

District 7 and District 8 combined efforts and included an invitation to Area 83 Eastern Ontario. I'm told this is the first time that two Districts and two Areas have ever put on a service day together.

And what a day it was!

Tom V. and Dot D., Delegates from Area 86 and 83 respectively, gave us very interesting and detailed reports. It was a pleasant change to hear what was going on in Eastern Ontario. The Area 83 web site is about to go live and the address is www.area83aa.org.

Current Chairman of the Board at AAWS, Class A Trustee Leonard Blumenthal LLD, was also in attendance and passed along two beautiful messages. In the morning he gave us an update on some of the issues currently happening around the world. Then after supper Leonard told us more about his life and how he became involved in AA. He received a standing ovation and brought tears to many eyes. We are truly blessed to have such a great man as Leonard in our AA fellowship.

Carol G. and Dean T., Sub-Committee Chairs in our Area for C.P.C. and P.I., both gave very informative talks in the morning

session.

After lunch we were treated to an AA speaker from Washago, "**Big**" John A. John has an extensive AA service background in Public Information and certainly "tells it like it is". Truly my kind of speaker.

Next, Percy G., our current Corrections Chair, presented with Jim S., Past Corrections for Area 83. They did not disappoint us with their excellent session from "Inside the Walls".

Area 83 then followed with a Treatment and Grapevine presentation.

The final AA speaker to close this truly fantastic day was Butch M. from Barrie. Butch also received a standing ovation in delivering a wonderful AA message.

This Unity Day was indeed a tremendous effort on the part of both Districts 7 and 8. The Committee who worked together to host this first inaugural service event deserves a lot of credit.

If you were not in attendance, I can assure you that you missed a great day.

Newsletter Chair, Area 86, Mike W.

The Back Page

Thought to Consider . . .

Losers make promises;
winners make commitments.

focus: Acceptance

How can I come to terms with the unpalatable facts of my life? I am an alcoholic, so I always wanted things to go my way. They didn't. That is not how "life on life's terms" works. Difficulties arrive and I have to deal with them or drink again. It's that simple. But not easy.

So what am I to do? In the story "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the doctor explains that when he is upset, he will not be able to maintain his serenity until he can accept that "that person, place, thing or situation...[is] exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment."¹

Wait a minute. You want me to let everybody else trample on me? Surely not. What about the times when so-and-so is doing such-and-such to me? It just isn't fair. If you only knew what I had to put up with, and the like. Oh dear, the ever-ready disease has its foot in the door, all ready to pick up on my resentment, inflame it and drive me to drink again. I know that if I don't stop it, it may succeed, a sobering thought if there ever was one.

So I must stop the disease in its tracks. I must make a complete switch and move from a state where I am concerned only about myself, to the exact opposite, a state of acceptance, in which my desires can no longer be paramount. How can I do that?

Prayer springs to mind and in my despair I do pray. My Higher Power, presenting as Hope, flickers onto the horizon and reminds me that I do have the requisite tools to move into the necessary state of grace. My spiritual tool-kit is packed with such goodies as Prayer and the Twelve Steps. Once I let go and let God, the work of change can begin. I find comfort and order in starting at Step One and re-learning the meaning of the words "powerless" and "unmanageable." The focus is beginning to shift already.

Now what? Think back. How did I learn not to take a drink one day at a time? From my Higher Power. Aha, there's Step Two already. But it's no good having a Higher Power if I don't use Him.

That's where the decision in Step Three comes in. Already I am feeling more comfortable. They told me miraculous things would happen, but not when. There always seem to be character defects getting in the way, like impatience. My Higher Power takes things at His own pace and there is absolutely nothing I can do to change that.

Except accept it. And remember to give thanks.

¹*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd ed., p.449.

Past Alt. DCM, District 14, Beryl A.

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Greetings from the
Editor of your Area

86 Newsletter. Some of you were asked to compose articles for this edition and here they are for everyone to read. The articles are all well written with excellent research and I appreciate the effort and time taken to compose. In order to keep the articles authentic, only slight grammar and spelling changes were made. I need feedback and comments, whether good and bad so please send by email only to: mww594482@hotmail.com

Newsletter Chair, Mike W.