

# AA Newsletter

Central Service Committee of Area 82, Districts 1 & 2, Halifax Regional Municipality

To contact Alcoholics Anonymous, call (902) 461-1119 (24 hours per day, 7 days per week)

Website: [www3.ns.sympatico.ca/alcoholicsanonymous](http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/alcoholicsanonymous)

## Inside this issue:

Birthdays & Fellowship Calendar	2
Round Up Information	3
Service Calendar	4
Service Positions & Announcements	5
<i>Topic of the Month</i> Phone Service & 12th-Step Calls	6 7
<i>Concept of the Month:</i> Concept II	8 9
Regional Fellowship Events	19

## A Unique Program

"Alcoholics Anonymous will never have a professional class. We have gained some understanding of the ancient words 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' We have discovered that at the point of professionalism, money and spirituality do not mix." *A.A. 12&12, p. 166*

I believe that A.A. stands alone in the treatment of alcoholism because it is based solely on the principle of one alcoholic sharing with another alcoholic. This is what makes the program unique. When I decided that I wanted to stay sober, I called a woman who I knew was a sober member of A.A., and she carried the message of A.A. to me. She received no monetary compensation, but rather was paid by staying sober another day herself. Today I could ask for no payment other than another day free from alcohol, so in that respect, I am generously paid for my labor.

Copyright © 1990 by A.A. World Service Inc.,  
reprinted from Daily Reflections, p.252

## CONCEPT II:

*"The General Service conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs."*

(CONCEPT TWO—SHORT FORM—REPRINTED FROM 'THE A.A. SERVICE MANUAL',  
WITH PERMISSION OF A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC., 2007)

## CONCEPTS CHECKLIST: CONCEPT II

Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees' Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts or areas, individual A.A. members may find it useful along with our co-founder Bill W.'s writings, a service sponsor if you have one and reflection on your own service experience. Additional information about the Concepts can be found in The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service" and "The Twelve Concepts Illustrated" pamphlet. (The Concepts stated here are in the short form.)

- Do we have an understanding of the history of the General Service Conference (the "Conference")?
- What is a Conference Advisory Action? Does our home group's G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate report back to the group on the highlights of the Conference and Conference Advisory Actions?
- Is our group meeting its wider Seventh Tradition responsibilities?

Reprinted from  
[http://www.aa.org/en\\_services\\_for\\_members.cfm?PageID=98&SubPage=111](http://www.aa.org/en_services_for_members.cfm?PageID=98&SubPage=111)

## SPECIAL TOPIC : PHONE SERVICE & 12TH-STEP CALLS A MEMBER SHARES: "FOR A SMILE & A WAVE"

I believe that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is perfect—a perfect distillation of simple truth and our relationship to what is so. Our literature captures the wisdom of the ages yet spares us the dogma and other clutter which obscures so many other paths of discovery. As our forbearers made the way clear, we have only to take a step at a time.

Anybody, after attending a few A.A. meetings, can get a sense of the vernacular and how to string the key words together. Many 'keep coming back' because hanging around meetings, giving lip service to A.A. principles and establishing a social life 'in the rooms' is easy and tends to support the appearance that one is 'doing something about their drinking' (very useful in the short run.) In fact most people derive comfort from the camaraderie of common experience—they are inspired by

(Continued on page 7)

<b>Feb. 4</b> Monday	<b>Colby Village Big Book Study Group</b> Mary L. 1 yr Janelle T. 26 yrs Al Mac. 27 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 6</b> Wednesday	<b>Back to Basics Group</b> Dennis K. 7 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 16</b> Saturday	<b>Welcome Group</b> Nancy M. 3 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb 17</b> Sunday	<b>Downtown Halifax Group</b> Andre 20 yrs Victor 20 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb 18</b> Monday	<b>Living in the Solution Group</b> Maria R. 20 yrs	<b>7:30 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 24</b> Saturday	<b>St. Margaret's Bay Group</b> Trevor C. 1 yr Kathy G. 19 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 25</b> Monday	<b>Downtown Dartmouth Group</b> Lefty 37 yrs Dan M. 28 yrs Cathy A. 2 yrs John M. 2 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 25</b> Monday	<b>Grateful Group</b> Bill A. 5 yrs	<b>8:30 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 25</b> Monday	<b>Timberlea Group</b> Gordon H. 10 yrs Cindy E. 1 yr	<b>8:00 pm</b>

<b>Feb. 28</b> Thursday	<b>Hubbards Group</b> Judy W. 5 yrs Ken M. 25 yrs Barb M. 25 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 28</b> Thursday	<b>Four Seasons Group</b> Tom G. 15 yrs Ed C. 1 yr.	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 29</b> Friday	<b>The Bedford Group</b> Brenda 1 yr Joe G. 1 yrs	<b>8:30 pm</b>
<b>Feb. 29</b> Sunday	<b>Mutual Group</b> Chuck A. 5 yrs Neil S. 19 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Mar. 3</b> Monday	<b>Colby Village B B Study Group</b> Bill B. 1 yr Dave H. 6 yrs Chris M. 6 yrs Tim D. 7 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>

**Serenity Corner**  
**4th Group Anniversary**  
**Saturday, March 15, 7:30 pm**  
 Corner of Hawthorne and Pleasant St., Dartmouth.  
 Speaker Chuck P. Everyone welcome!

<b>Mar 10</b> Monday	<b>Living in the Solution Group</b> Georgina F. 4 yrs	<b>7:30 pm</b>
<b>Mar. 19</b> Wednesday	<b>Back to Basics Group</b> Lynne R. 20 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>
<b>Apr. 2</b> Wednesday	<b>Back to Basics Group</b> Barry L. 15 yrs	<b>8:00 pm</b>

**In February we are celebrating a total of 326 years of sobriety.**

**The average recovery age is 12.5 years.**

### Seeking Guidance

“Man is supposed to think, and act. He wasn’t made in God’s image to be an automaton.

“My own formula along this line runs as follows: First, think through every situation pro and con, praying meanwhile that I be not influenced by ego considerations. Affirm that I would like to do God’s will.

“Then, having turned the problem over in this fashion and

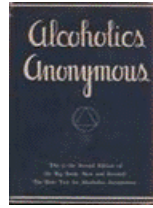
getting no conclusive or compelling answer, I wait for further guidance, which may come into the mind directly or through other people or through circumstances.

“If I feel I can’t wait, and still get no definite indication, I repeat the first measure several times, try to pick out the best course, and then proceed to act. I know if I am wrong, the heavens won’t fall. A lesson will be learned in any case.”

Letter, 1950 — From “As Bill sees it”, p.55

**“Dare to be Free” – 30 Years**

February 22, 23 &amp; 24, 2008



Holiday Inn – Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Registration: \$20.00 (A.A. and Al-Anon), \$10.00 (Alateen) Banquet:\$28.00

Welcome Speaker: Rob O, Halifax  
 Banquet Speaker: Butch M., Ontario  
 Spiritual Speaker: Cookie S., Minnesota

<b>Info:</b>	Tim M., Chair	(902) 827-5235	<b>Schedule for Friday:</b>	2pm	Registration opens
	Darryl B., Co-Chair	(902) 830-1444		4pm	Doors open
	Doreen, Registration	(902) 883-4314		6pm	Meetings open
				8pm	Welcome Meeting

**Please note that the cut-off time for banquet tickets is Saturday, 1pm**

When booking a room at the Holiday in, remember to mention that you will be attending the Round-up  
 (Block Code MW4)

*Please!**Help!***Round-up Registration Committee****Help for Registration Desk**

Contact: Doreen C. 883-4314  
 Gary K. 455-1320

**Round-up Hospitality Committee****Greeters & Coffee Servers**

Contact: Trudy D. 488-7743  
 Gary K. 455-1320

**Round-up Program Committee****Groups to Put on Marathon Meetings****Individuals to Chair Panels, Speaker & Topic Meetings**

Contact: Brenda B. 434-3367  
 Bill P. 237-5138

**Round-up Entertainment****Musicians (Acoustic Only)**

We will have a Kitchen party on Friday and Saturday night. Please register for the round-up and bring your instrument.

Contact: Tom R. 832-5028  
 Marcel L. 883-8368

## METRO DRUG DEPENDENCY CENTER

Simpson Hall, NS Hospital, Dartmouth. All meetings at 8 pm.

Detox	Sun	C.O.R.E.	Thu
Halifax Sunday Morning	Feb 3	Bedford Group	Feb 7
Back to Basics Group	Feb 10	Second Chance Group	Feb 14
West-End Step Group	Feb 17	Sunday Serenity Group	Feb 21
Fresh Start Group	Feb 24	Acceptance Group	Feb 28
Keep It Simple Group	Mar 2	Tallahassee Group	Mar 6
Highland Park Group	Mar 9	Timberlea Group	Mar 13
Welcome Group	Mar 16	Downtown Hfx Group	Mar 20
<b>Sixth floor of the Simpson Bldg.</b> Attendance is limited to clients of this unit & members of the A.A. group putting on the meeting. The meeting format is "Speaker/Discussion" with time for questions at the end.		<b>Third floor of the Simpson Bldg.</b> Open Speaker/Discussion meeting of A.A., and it is named "Pass It On Group". The meeting is open to clients of the C.O.R.E. program, as well as other A.A. members.	

For more information, contact:  
 Pat R. at 857-1006 or patwr@eastlink.ca

## CENTRAL PHONE OFFICE Week-End Group Phone Service

Group	Sat	Sun
Highland Park Group	Feb 2	Feb 3
Sunrise Group	Feb 9	Feb 10
Downtown Dartmouth Group	Feb 16	Feb 17
Welcome Group	Feb 23	Feb 24
Gaston Road Group	Mar 1	-
Trailer Park Group	-	Mar 2
Albro Lake Group	Mar 8	Mar 9
Colby Harbour Group	Mar 15	Mar 16
Groups pick up the key at the Central Phone Office <b>Monday to Friday, 9 am - 5 pm</b>		

## SERVICE MEETINGS

<b>Feb 3</b> Sunday	<b>2008 Mid-Winter Round-Up Committee</b> Holiday Inn, 101 Wyse Rd., Dartmouth	<b>1:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb 5</b> Tuesday	<b>Central Service Committee</b> United Memorial Church, Young St., Halifax	<b>7:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb 10</b> Sunday	<b>District 1 Workshop</b> <b>Topic: The Twelve Concepts</b> George-Dixon-Centre, Gottingen St., Halifax Facilitator: Bob Mac.	<b>1:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb 17</b> Sunday	<b>2008 Mid-Winter Round-Up Committee</b> Holiday Inn, 101 Wyse Rd., Dartmouth <b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>1:00 pm</b>
<b>Feb 17</b> Sunday	<b>District 2 GSR Meeting</b> Club 24, 3 Dundas St., Dartmouth	<b>6:30 pm</b>
<b>Feb 24</b> Sunday	<b>District 1 GSR Meeting</b> George-Dixon-Centre, Gottingen St., Halifax	<b>1:00 pm</b>

### Phone Office Volunteers Still Needed

The Central Service Phone Office always welcomes volunteers who would like to answer the daytime and overnight phones. If you can dedicate some time to this vital service, please call the Phone Office and arrange for an individual orientation session.

**Central Service Phone Office: 461-1119**

**Central Service Committee****Secretary Position Open**

The Central Service Committee is looking for a Secretary. The secretary attends the meetings, keeps minutes and distributes them to the committee members. If you are interested, please attend the next Central Service Meeting and/or call

**Jennifer B., CS Chair: 489—1776.**

**Corrections Committee****Chair Wanted**

Would you like to help bringing A.A. meetings into correctional facilities? If this could be for you, check with your group's GSR rep and/or

**Come to the next District Meeting.**

**Newsletter****Editor/Publisher urgently required!**

For the April edition the Newsletter will need a new editor. Please contact the current editor asap if you are interested. Training and support available during February and March. Also, consider attending the next Central Service Meeting

**Sang-gye, Editor: 405—6535**

**Central Service Committee****Entertainment Committee Sought ...**

... to continue the good old tradition of sober dances and events. Come and attend the next Central Service Meeting and/or contact:

**Jennifer B., CS Chair: 489—1776.**

**CPC Committee****Co-Chair Wanted**

The Committee for the Cooperation with the Professional Community is looking for a new Co-Chair. To find out more about the work of the CPC Committee, contact your group's GSR and/or

**Come to the next District Meeting.**

**Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility Meetings****Female Volunteers Needed**

Female volunteers are still needed to put on meetings for the women at the Correctional Facility in Dartmouth (i.e., Burnside). To apply, please contact

**Gail S., Chair (Corrections): 431.0587 or  
email [staceys@eastlink.ca](mailto:staceys@eastlink.ca).**

**Public Information Committee****Volunteers Sought**

To help with presentations & projects.

Currently, the Committee needs especially younger members who would like to present their experience, strength, and hope in A.A. to peers. Contact:

**Mary W., Chair: 477—9176**

**Hospital Visitation Committee****Visiting A.A. Members in Hospitals**

A.A. members facing hospitalization in HRM—no matter where they come from—can get support from local A.A. members. The volunteers are available to break the spell of loneliness and isolation, that often aggravates an already unpleasant experience. To arrange these visits the patient, fellow A.A.s, his/her friends, and family may call the Chairperson of the Hospital Visitation Committee before or during the individual's stay in HRM's health institutions. The Chairperson confirms the request with the patient and dispatches members to visit and report back.

Please, spread the word especially if you travel to other districts. We want members from all the Atlantic Provinces to know about us so we can visit when it is needed.

For more information or to serve on the "Hospital Visitation Committee," contact the

**Central Service Phone Office 461-1119.**

Leave your name and number for:

**Garth MacA., Chair, Hospital Visitation Committee.**

**Meeting List for Districts 1 & 2**

Recent updates of Group information included in the latest Meeting List dated **December 2, 2007**

Available at the Central Service Meeting (see page 4), online or by calling the Literature Representative,  
**Victor L.: 435-6613**

## Central Service Phone Office

To ensure that the hand of A.A. is always there when someone reaches out for help, the groups in Halifax and Dartmouth established the Central Service Phone Office. Funded by the Central Service Committee and coordinated by the Phone Office Chair, volunteer A.A. members are available 24/7 under a single phone number. The Central Service Committee rents office space at 3, Dundas Street. The facility belongs to Club 24, a community based Not For Profit Organization, which is in no way affiliated with A.A.

Each weekday, individual volunteers staff three 3-hour shifts (9-12, 12-3, 3-6). In the evenings the line is transferred to the cell phone. Each week one member assumes the responsibility for the overnights - always carrying the cell phone with him/her. On week-ends, groups cover the phones on a rotating basis (see Service Calendar, p.4).

The volunteers are supported by the Phone Office Chair. He or she will introduce the rookie to the job. All questions and concerns can be addressed in individual orientation sessions. The Chair also keeps the schedule and the information binder up-to-date and can provide guidance when questions arise during a shift. Members interested in joining the Phone Office crew can call the

**Phone Office at 461 – 1119.**

*Sang-gye B., Halifax*

## Central Service Workshop: Phone Service & 12th-Step Calls

All members are invited to participate in the Workshop on the topic of Phone Service & 12th-Step Calls, hosted by the Central Service Committee on

**Sunday March 9, 2008  
from 1 – 3pm at Club 24.**

The Phone Office Chair presents the how to's and why's, the technical and the spiritual side of this vital service.

## The Phone in the Big Book

The primary purpose of the A.A. fellowship is to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. From the very beginnings the telephone has been playing an important role in carrying the message from one alcoholic to the other and in keeping our members sober. Here are some excerpts from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous recounting the circumstances of some now historic phone calls:

**Ebby T. 12<sup>th</sup>-steps Bill W.  
(Bill's Story, p.8:3 ff.)**

"Near the end of that bleak November, I sat drinking in my kitchen. With a certain satisfaction I reflected there was enough gin concealed about the house to carry me through

that night and the next day. My wife was at work. I wondered whether I dared hide a full bottle of gin near the head of our bed. I would need it before daylight.

**My musing was interrupted by the telephone.** The cheery voice of an old school friend asked if he might come over. *He was sober.* It was years since I could remember his coming to New York in that condition. I was amazed. Rumor had it that he had been committed for alcoholic insanity. I wondered how he had escaped. Of course he would have dinner, and then I could drink openly with him. Unmindful of his welfare, I thought only of recapturing the spirit of other days. There was that time we had chartered an airplane to complete a jag! His coming was an oasis in this dreary desert of futility. The very thing - an oasis! Drinkers are like that.

The door opened and he stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different. What had happened?"

**Bill W. stays sober and 12<sup>th</sup>-steps Dr. Bob  
(A Vision for You, p.154:2ff.)**

"One dismal afternoon he paced a hotel lobby wondering how his bill was to be paid. At one end of the room stood a glass covered directory of local churches. Down the lobby a door opened into an attractive bar. He could see the gay crowd inside. In there he would find companionship and release. Unless he took some drinks, he might not have the courage to scrape an acquaintance and would have a lonely week-end.

Of course he couldn't drink, but why not sit hopefully at a table, a bottle of ginger ale before him? After all, had he not been sober six months now? Perhaps he could handle, say, three drinks - no more! Fear gripped him. He was on thin ice. Again it was the old, insidious insanity - that first drink. With a shiver, he turned away and walked down the lobby to the church directory. Music and gay chatter still floated to him from the bar.

But what about his responsibilities - his family and the men who would die because they would not know how to get well, ah - yes, those other alcoholics? There must be many such in this town. He would phone a clergyman. His sanity returned and he thanked God. Selecting a church at random from the directory, **he stepped into a booth and lifted the receiver.**

His call to the clergyman led him presently to a certain resident of the town, who, though formerly able and respected, was then nearing the nadir of alcoholic despair. It was the usual situation: home in jeopardy, wife ill, children distracted, bills in arrears and standing damaged. He had a desperate desire to stop, but saw no way out, for he had earnestly tried many avenues of escape. Painfully aware of being somehow abnormal, the man did not fully realize what it meant to be alcoholic. "

**Bill W. and Dr. Bob carry the message  
(A Vision For You, p.156:2ff)**

"At midnight he came home exhausted, but very happy. He has not had a drink since. As we shall see, he now means

*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from page 6)

a great deal to his community, and the major liabilities of thirty years of hard drinking have been repaired in four.

But life was not easy for the two friends. Plenty of difficulties presented themselves. Both saw that they must keep spiritually active. **One day they called up the head nurse of a local hospital.** They explained their need and inquired if she had a first class alcoholic prospect.

She replied, "Yes, we've got a corker. ...."

### 12th-Step Instructions

#### Working with others, p.97:1ff

Never avoid these responsibilities, but be sure you are doing the right thing if you assume them. Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough. You have to act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be. It may mean the loss of many nights' sleep, great interference with your pleasures, interruptions to your business. It may mean sharing your money and your home, counseling frantic wives and relatives, innumerable trips to police courts, sanitariums, hospitals, jails and asylums. **Your telephone may jangle at any time of the day or night.** Your wife may sometimes say she is neglected. A drunk may smash the furniture in your home, or burn a mattress. You may have to fight with him if he is violent. Sometimes you will have to call a doctor and administer sedatives under his direction. Another time you may have to send for the police or an ambulance. Occasionally you will have to meet such conditions.

*quotes A.A. Big Book, 4th edition, A.A. World Services, Inc., 2001*

(Continued from page 1)

*A Member Shares: For a Smile and a Wave*

the stories; they are impressed by the fortitude of those who go on: And that's wonderful! It feels good. There is hope.

Indeed, we must become familiar with the trappings of the recovery program. We have to learn new language and meet new people. However, everyone reading this knows that alcoholics commonly go off the rails. Some die in the wreck, some come back to the rooms and gather strength for the next disaster. The dying (and the dead before them) have this in common: they believe they are entitled to recovery. They expect—unique among the special—a spontaneous recovery. They are mystified, saddened, or angry when, after just reading "How it Works" and refusing to act, it just doesn't work. Those A.A.s—coming in and coming back— who finally take action seem to be amazed before they are halfway through the suggested program of recovery: New freedom, new happiness— go figure.

All of the above, I give you (and me) because we have been given a way out of alcoholism. Dr. Bob, in his last message to the fellowship simplified and clarified:

"Our 12 Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service. We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind."

Yes, let us bear those two things in mind and remember

that for us they must exist together, simultaneously. For us, love is not an abstraction. For us, service is only service if it is unconditional and offered freely and gladly. Have you heard that, "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to recover from alcoholism?" Please reflect on the wording. It doesn't say, "Our two purposes are to stay sober and-if we happen to cross their paths-to help other alcoholics to recover from alcoholism."

So, we stay sober if we intentionally make ourselves available to serve. If we feel that an occasional good word was enough or that we could be of any help at all if we have not done the Steps, we are sadly and gravely deluded and ultimately destructive. Like it or not, we will destroy others and ourselves by pretending to be someone and a part of something that we clearly are not. That said, this is no demand for perfection. This is a demand for intention and action. We embrace the program (the Steps) and we act. We DO the Steps.

As part of my service I volunteer on the A.A. phone line. I focus here because I am privy to the needs of the phone office. Through phone work you will experience the transformative nature of this program. You will experience connections with others that inform you in ways that words will not. You will have brief moments where you know in a way that you didn't know before, that some higher power connects us and is at the same time part of us and beyond us. When you do phone work and then re-read your literature and attend your meetings you will see and hear things that, before, you did not see or hear. You will meet yourself... you will have uncanny experiences of talking to yourself when you talk to someone who calls the A.A. line. Because you will talk to people who are blind drunk, blubbery drunk, pathetic drunk, stupid drunk, angry drunk. You will talk to their tearful, desperate, hopeful, loving, confused friends, family, employers, doctors, priests, and parole officers. You will also talk to people who are happily living their lives, are new in town or here to run a conference. They may be vacationing with their family. Those call because they know they can reach out anywhere and (if you are there) the hand of A.A. will be there. You will talk to people who lost their meeting schedule six weeks ago when they last went to a meeting and want to know what time that meeting was that they enjoyed so much—you know, the one in that building in Petpeswick ... You will talk to people who want someone from A.A. to visit their school, their hospital, their police station, their nursing home, their shopping mall. And sometimes you will sit in that office for three hours and the phone won't ring. But you will know that for those three hours, if anyone from anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of A.A.-your hand-will be there, because you will have made yourself responsible for that.

Frank, who does a shift on the phone for three hours every Monday (yes, the first shift every Monday and he has to get up really early to get here because he lives no where near) says, "I do this to help. People helped me, lots of them. My objective is to help." How much more clearly could it be?

## THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE ILLUSTRATED CONCEPT II

*When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference — excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter — the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.*

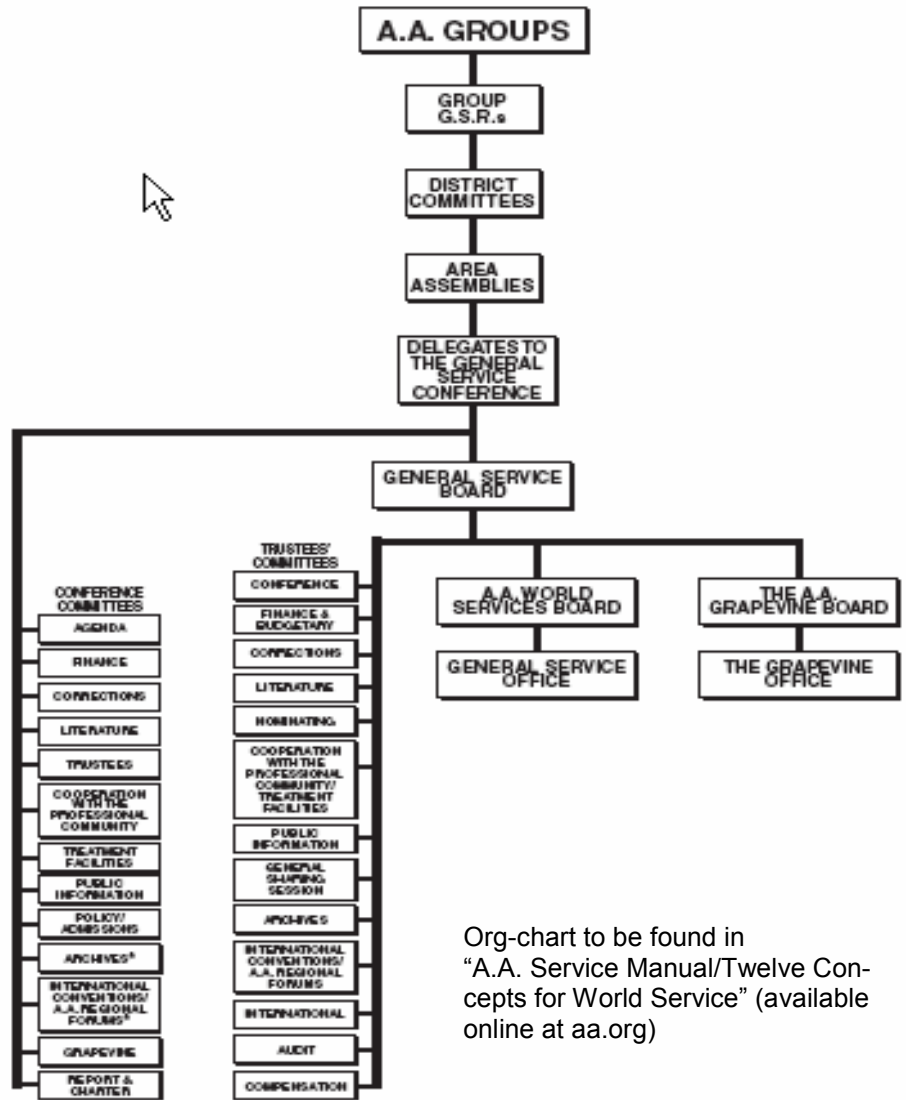
(CONCEPT TWO— LONG FORM—REPRINTED FROM 'THE A.A. SERVICE MANUAL', WITH PERMISSION OF A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC., 2007)

Concept I establishes the “final responsibility and ultimate authority” of the A.A. groups; but, in actual practice, how are they to manage A.A.’s service affairs? By delegation, Concept II declares.

Bill and Dr. Bob, entrusted by the early groups to get the program going and to spread the message, found nonalcoholic friends to help them. They formed a trusteeship and delegated to it the responsibility for finances, the Big Book and other literature, public information, the service office and the A.A. Grapevine. However, as the trustees constantly looked to the co-founders for advice and guidance and the groups also continued to hold them accountable, it was evident that the leadership should be transferred to the A.A. groups as a whole. But if the groups were to carry on their primary purpose, they would have to delegate their leadership role to a General Service Conference. They do this by electing a General Service Representative for each group. These G.S.R.s meet regularly in area assemblies and every two years elect a delegate from among their number. Every April, the delegates from the 91 areas in the U.S. and Canada meet for six days with the trustees of the General Service Board, the staffs of the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine and certain other service workers. Thus, this General Service Conference of A.A. is “the actual voice and effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.”

From pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated” Copyright A.A. Grapevine, Inc.—reprinted from [www.A.A..org](http://www.A.A..org)

### The General Service Conference Structure (U.S. and Canada)



Org-chart to be found in “A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service” (available online at [aa.org](http://aa.org))

### WHO RUNS A.A.?

“A.A. has no officers or executives who wield power or authority over the Fellowship. There is no “government” in A.A. It is obvious, however, that even in an informal organization, certain jobs have to be done. In the local group, for example, someone has to arrange for a suitable meeting place; meetings have to be scheduled and programmed; provision has to be made for serving the coffee and snacks that contribute so much to the informal comradeship of A.A. gatherings; many groups also consider it wise to assign to someone the responsibility of keeping in touch with the national and international development of A.A.

*(Continued on page 9)*

(Continued from page 8)

When a local group is first formed, self-appointed workers may take over responsibility for these tasks, acting informally as servants of the group. As soon as possible, however, these responsibilities are, by election, rotated to others in the group for limited periods of service. A typical A.A. group may have a chairperson, a secretary, a program committee, a food committee, a treasurer, and a general service representative who acts for the group at regional or area meetings. Newcomers who have a reasonable period of sobriety behind them are urged to take part in handling group responsibilities.

At the national and international levels, there are also specific jobs to be done. Literature has to be written, printed, and distributed to groups and individuals who ask for it. Inquiries from both new and established groups have to be answered. Individual requests for information about A.A. and its program of recovery from alcoholism have to be filled. Assistance and information have to be provided for doctors, members of the clergy, business people, and directors of institutions. Sound public relations must be established and maintained in dealing with press, radio, television, motion pictures, and other communications media.

To provide for the sound growth of A.A., early members of the Society, together with nonalcoholic friends, established a custodial board — now known as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The board serves as the custodian of A.A. Traditions and overall service, and it assumes responsibility for the service standards of A.A.'s General Service Office at New York.

The link between the board and the A.A. groups of the U.S. and Canada is the A.A. General Service Conference. The Conference, comprising about 93 delegates from A.A. areas, the 21 trustees on the board, General Service Office staff members, and others, meets for several days each year. The Conference is exclusively a consultative service agency. It has no authority to regulate or govern the Fellowship.

Thus the answer to “Who runs A.A.?” is that the Society is a uniquely democratic movement, with no central government and only a minimum of formal organization.”

*Reprinted from pamphlet “44 QUESTIONS”  
with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc., 1952*

## THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEETING

“ In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

*— General Warranties of the Conference  
Concept XII, Twelve Concepts for World Service*

## CAN THE CONFERENCE ACT FOR A.A. AS A WHOLE?

Here is what co-founder Bill W. has to say about that in Concept III of *Twelve Concepts for World Service*:

“Excepting for its Charter provisions to the contrary, the Conference should always be able to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own responsibility, and which questions it will refer to the A.A. groups (or more usually, to their Committee Members or G.S.R.s) for opinion or for definite guidance.

“Therefore it ought to be clearly understood and agreed that our Conference Delegates are primarily the world servants of A.A. as a whole, that only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective areas. Consequently they should, on final decisions, be entitled to cast their votes in the General Service Conference according to the best dictates of their own judgment and conscience at that time.

“Similarly, the Trustees of the General Service Board (operating of course within the provisions of their own Charter and Bylaws) should be able at all times to decide when they will act fully on their own responsibility and when they will ask the Conference for its guidance, its approval of a recommendation, or for its actual decision and direction

“Within the scope of their defined or implied responsibilities, all Headquarters service corporations, committees, staff or executives should also be possessed of the right to decide when they will act wholly on their own and when they will refer their problems to the next higher authority.”

*Reprinted from ‘The A.A. Service Manual’  
with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc., 2007*

### True Ambition—and False

“True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition the profound desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God”

Twelve & Twelve pp 124-125 — From “As Bill sees it”, p46

More information on these and other Regional Fellowship Events on: <http://www.area82aa.org>

## District 9

### 25th Annual Mid-Winter Round-Up

Mar 7—9, 2008

Sidney Academy High School, 49 Terrace St  
Sydney, Nova Scotia

Info:  
please check for up-dates at:  
[www.area82aa.org](http://www.area82aa.org) (events)

### Big Book/12 Step Study Weekend

Apr 25—27, 2008

Best Western Glengarry  
Truro, Nova Scotia

Registration: \$60  
Speakers: Peter M.—Union City, NJ  
Rich B.—Ocean City, ML

Registration:  
Dave MacN. (Chair): (902) 893—2749  
Email: [dmnchair@hotmail.com](mailto:dmnchair@hotmail.com)

Early Bird Flyer: More information to follow at a later date

## 50th Annual

### Newfoundland and Labrador Round-Up

and 24th Service Weekend

Theme:

*Growing Together in Fellowship*

Gander, NL

May 16th - 18th, 2008

Round-Up AA and Al-Anon meetings held at  
Fraser Road United Church.  
Service Weekend events held at Sinbad's Hotel.

For more information, contact:

P.O. Box 511  
Gander, NL A1V 1W5

Chairperson: Loretta D. 709-256-4295  
Co-Chairperson: Una H. 709-256-8670  
[healey.duaz@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:healey.duaz@nf.sympatico.ca)  
Al-Anon Contact: Christine D. 709-256-2254

(Continued from page 7)

Jim had to give up his Friday phone shift because of professional commitments. After a few months he found he really missed the service but Friday was just not possible. We got him a shift on Wednesday and he loves it. And he generously does our photocopying (thanks Jim!)

Jason carries the cell phone. "For a recovering alcoholic to work on the phone line is like working on the front line of the disease. It's been a gratifying experience: I have the opportunity to help others and at the same time I am reminded of the sickness alcoholism is causing in people's lives."

Sue Marr recalls the day a couple of years ago when she called the phone line because she wanted to die and calling was the only other thing that occurred to her. When Tony answered she started to cry and told him she was nothing but a loser. Tony listened. He told her that she wasn't a loser and he said it like he believed it. He arranged for a couple of women to call Sue and talk to her about A.A.. Today, one of those women is her sponsor. Six months after reaching out for help Sue met Tony in person. "You saved my life." Tony didn't say much, but got Sue a shift on the phone line. Now, every Thursday, every week, Sue answers the call.

Me, I've been doing this for some time. For the most part we never know what happens after the call ends. And anyway, we're not doing it to generate fairy tales or anecdotes. Still, once in awhile you get a message about the impact

A.A. can have. About three months ago, at 7:15 in the evening, I took a call from a young lady who hadn't had a drink in eight days "Not feeling very good," said Nicole. I told her about a meeting at Club 24 at 8:00pm - 45 minutes away. If she could get there I would meet her. Lo and behold, at 8:10, I recognised who could only be Nicole walk in to the meeting. I sat with her. After hanging up the phone, Nicole had arranged babysitting, called Metro Transit, walked to the bus stop and caught the first of two buses to get her to the meeting. It was a huge meeting, maybe seven anniversaries and the room was abuzz, crowded, and hot. I worried that this might not be ideal for a first meeting. After the meeting, a Pat and Lynn from the Downtown Dartmouth Group took care of Nicole as they would any newcomer: welcome, literature, phone numbers. I was impressed that Nicole had come to the meeting and pleased that the group members took care of her so well. And then she was gone. I turned it over. Onwards we go.

Last Monday I was standing at the back of the meeting at Downtown Dartmouth. And everyone clapped as chips were given out. One person walking back to her seat suddenly caught my eye and threw me a big smile and a little wave. It was Nicole. I can't describe the feeling but I will say that I would work the phones for another hundred years if what I got was one big smile and a little wave from one girl with a three-month chip.

Suesan MacD., Dartmouth