



LIFELINE



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.

life-line | \ 'līf-, līn : 1. A rope or line used for life-saving, typically one thrown to rescue someone in difficulties in water. 2. A thing on which someone depends for a means of escape from a difficult situation. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

What Does "First Things First" Mean?

Triage is the method used in emergency medicine to decide priorities. For individual patients, it comes down to a stepwise assessment and addressing the most important problems before the less important. The basics are: Start the breathing, *then* stop the bleeding, *then* protect the wound, *then* treat for shock. There's an important sequence. It does little good for instance, to stop the bleeding if the patient isn't breathing. For alcoholics the meaning of "First Things First" is simply a way to keep sobriety front and center. Without abstinence, all of the other problems can't be "fixed." For alcoholics, the "first thing" is not drinking.

In the Big Book, it is explained this way: Above all other concerns, we must remember that we cannot drink. Not drinking is the first order of business for us, anywhere any time, under any circumstances. Some have asked us, "Does this mean you rank sobriety ahead of family, job, and the opinion of friends?" When we view alcoholism as the life-or-death matter it is, the answer is plain. If we do not save our health – our lives – then certainly we will have no family, no job, and no friends. If we value family, job, and friends, we must first save our own lives in order to cherish all three. Does this mean that sobriety alone is a cure-all? No. There will be other problems – most alcoholics have many. The important point is to keep one eye firmly fixed on this first thing – sobriety. Without that, the patient dies. With that, there is hope. <https://www.12step.com/articles/alcoholics-anonymous/what-does-first-things-first-mean>

I had scooted through the holiday season one long-ago January without a drink for the first time in memory since teenage years. Even though I had been sober five full months, my gratitude was overshadowed by fear . . . after enjoying a happy-happy parade on Hollywood Boulevard, I marched right into a bar on Cherokee Avenue and almost ordered a happy-happy gin & tonic. Thank God I didn't! It was definitely one of those strange mental blank spots mentioned on page forty-two of the Big Book. Terrified, I rushed back to my Santa Monica apartment, fell to my knees, and asked God to save me from a seemingly impending drunken spree.

What was I doing wrong? I had been going to at least two meetings daily, and working the Steps from the pull down shades at the clubhouse. God's answer came in the form of a new sponsor named Carl. He informed me that the directions for AA recovery were in the Big Book, and nowhere else; that meetings only were probably not sufficient for me to recover . . . that my mental obsession to drink would triumph over my willpower whether I was happy, depressed or in-between. But then Carl took me through the Twelve Step process and I soon began to recover.

It was later explained that down deep within the alcoholics mind there exists a quiet undetectable, I-need-a-drink self which may linger surreptitiously for years before it attacks. Indeed, page



forty-three informs us that we have no effective mental defense . . . that our defense must come from a higher power. But then, Bill W. informs us that we also have a marvelous often unknown protector; he calls it a "Great Reality deep within" (p. 55). Dr. Carl Jung called it a God Archetype. For whatever name, it is much more powerful than the mental obsession, and luckily for we alcoholics, this can be ours and it can last for a lifetime if we live the AA program of action. Many Januarys have passed since those days of yore, but the thought of drinking no longer appears in my emotional vocabulary. Thank you God!

THREE REASONS HONESTY IN RECOVERY IS IMPORTANT

Of all the moral characteristics, honesty is one of the most respected. It is also the spiritual principle behind step one. Many people in recovery live by the mantra “*We are as sick as our secrets.*” Individuals need to pay special attention to honesty in recovery because they have to be truthful to others, and above all they have to be honest with themselves. People who do not develop honesty as a personal quality are more prone to relapse. This is why honesty has to become an everyday habit until it converts to second nature. Why are some people in recovery dishonest? There are many answers to that question, but here are three key reasons why honesty in recovery is so important.

Dishonesty is a Common Relapse

Trigger - More often than not lying is a habit because they fear the consequences of their actions and want to protect themselves. Lying is an unproductive coping tactic. It is normal to struggle with owning up to dishonesty, but the key is to acknowledge when it occurs as soon as possible. If not, you could struggle with feelings of guilt and put your sobriety in jeopardy. Keeping a journal can help monitor behavior and look back for instances of dishonest behavior.

Dishonesty traps people in disease and can make them feel trapped in recovery - When people are unmotivated to face challenges they often try to hide from it by being in denial. It is difficult to make progress unless you can openly recognize problems and agree on the appropriate action to remedy them. The incapability to manage life without substance dependence will likely result in relapse, which is why it is so important to face things as they come. Think of honesty as a muscle that needs to be exercised daily to build strength.

Dishonesty destroys relationships

Honesty is key to rebuilding relationships. From family and friends to a sponsor and therapist, it can destroy progress and healing when those around you find out about untruthfulness. Before entering recovery, dishonesty prioritized our disease over relationships with loved ones. Now that recovery is our priority, we can rebuild the foundation of these relationships.

<https://www.recoveryconnection.com/three-reasons-honesty-in-recovery-is-important/>

The 12-steps are the cornerstone the AA program, first popularized by Alcoholics Anonymous decades ago. The steps and the 12-step process more generally have a spiritual component. However, the spiritual components of each step are not always apparent. In addition, the wording behind the steps often stresses practical concerns over spiritual ones. Bill W., one of the two founders of AA, stressed the spiritual side of the program and wished to make that element more explicit. The program ultimately aims to replace destructive tendencies and behaviors with a healthier and more sustainable way of life. Therefore, he envisioned a spiritual program that would be incorporated into all facets of day-to-day life.

The 12 Spiritual Principles of AA: Every one of the 12-steps is designed to replenish the soul and fill the emptiness we have filled with alcoholism and self-destruction. In the 12 Spiritual Principles of AA, Bill W. lays bare the fundamental spiritual basis behind every one of the steps.

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable

The Spiritual Principle of Step 1 is Honesty: The 12-step program requires that we practice basic honesty with others and ourselves. We accept our flawed spiritual states and are honest about our powerlessness.

<https://12steppers.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Spiritual-Principles-of-AA-PDF.pdf>



STEP ONE

“WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL - THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.”

Step One (page 58, *Big Book*) states: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

There are some popular misconceptions about this. First of all, we need to understand what unmanageability is not. It's not generalized or pre-existing incompetence, neuroticism, disorganization, or external chaos, distinct from the effects of drinking.

First, the *Big Book* does not define unmanageability as such. Second, it's patently not true of all alcoholics. Third, plenty of non-alcoholics experience these things. And fourth, the poster boys, Jim (page 35) and Fred (page 39), do not fit this description except in as far as their drinking is directly causing the problem. If the Steps require such an admission, many alcoholics would be barred from continuing.

Bill explained unmanageability in the chapter *Step One* in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:

Since Step One requires an admission that our lives have become *unmanageable*, how could people such as these take this Step? It was obviously necessary to raise the bottom the rest of us had hit to the point where it would hit them. By going back in our own drinking histories, we could show that years before we realized it we were out of control, that our drinking even then was no mere habit, **that it was indeed the beginning of a fatal progression.**

The person is powerless, therefore the person's life is unmanageable. We've lost control of drinking and subsequently our lives. Unmanageability is not a second, additive condition. This relationship is one of entailment. If (A) is true, (B) is true. (A) entails (B).

In US American English, an unspaced em dash conveys this relationship. In words, we could replace the dash with 'and so', 'and consequently', 'and thus', etc. Step One is not a cumulative test with two parts; it is a single test. If I am powerless over alcohol (doomed to drink, doomed to drink too much), I am not in charge of my life. The rat-and-lizard brain is in charge, and unless it's knocked out by an intervening God, I'm toast.

What
does
the dash
mean?



<https://first164.blogspot.com/2021/03/what-does-dash-mean.html>

The Traditions: A Framework for Recovery

The Traditions are designed to keep the group from destroying itself.

The Steps are designed to keep us from destroying ourselves.

For me, a valuable aspect of this tradition has been the fact that, “No AA can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled” from AA. As someone who was routinely punished by society for my misbehavior, and has been expelled from more than one drinking establishment, I was relieved to find out that the only requirement for membership in AA really is an honest desire to stop drinking!

The Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous were first published in 1946 in The Grapevine magazine and were developed slowly and painfully through much struggle, hard lessons and compromise. Some of these struggles are outlined in the book “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.” Also, they have been adopted by every 12-Step recovery program in the world. The purpose of the Traditions is to ensure the continued existence of meetings and meeting places, to keep the doors open for everyone seeking relief from alcoholism and to give us a framework to accomplish this task. According to a pamphlet published by Alcoholics Anonymous in 1955, titled “AA Tradition, How It Developed, By Bill W”:

“When an alcoholic applies the Twelve Steps of our recovery program to his personal life, his **disintegration** stops and his **unification** begins. The Power which now holds him together in one piece overcomes those forces which had rent him apart. Exactly the same principle applies to each A.A. group and to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. So long as the ties which bind us together prove far stronger than those forces which would divide us if they could, all will be well. We shall be secure as a movement; our essential unity will remain a certainty...”

Additionally, Bill wrote: “Unity is so vital to us A.A.’s that we cannot risk those attitudes and practices which have sometimes demoralized other forms of human society. Thus far we have succeeded because we have been different.”

The Steps and Traditions that continue to underlie the 12-Step recovery model to this day remain a significant achievement in establishing a framework to establish a safe haven for people recovering from alcoholism, addiction and dysfunction in their lives.

<https://www.tpoftampa.com/the-traditions-a-framework-for-recovery-part-1-by-john-b>

Tradition One:

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity.”

New Grapevine Mobile Apps are available!

For more info, follow <https://www.aagrapevine.org/apps>

Our primary purpose is to help the still suffering alcoholic. SMIA is committed to this principle and provides a 24x7 Telephone Service. We need phone volunteers! Go to our website, www.somdintergroup.org. Click on the Phone List link, complete the online form - this is a secure method to add your name to the 12-Step Call List. This protected information is only shared with the Phone Committee Chair. You will be amazed before you're half way through.

The Challenges of Being Self Supporting

<https://www.aacle.org/challenges-self-supporting/>

I found sobriety the old fashioned way—people thought I was a danger to myself and others—so they had me committed. Many people don't wait as long as I did, they reach out for help before falling to the depths I fell. Fortunately for them the hand of AA is there—always.

At my first meetings I was rather ashamed I didn't have anything to contribute to the basket as it went around—I was struggling to get a hold on life and money matters truly troubled me. I remember feeling rather proud when I got that job and then prouder when I was able to put a dollar in the basket two weeks in a row—that was real progress for me. My sponsor, and other home group members, placed two dollars in the basket each week... I wasn't that well yet, but I was trying to get there.

At our groups business meeting I found out where that money went—rent, coffee, cookies and literature just for our group. Then we doled out money to the district, the area, G.S.O. all the way in New York—if we had had an intergroup we would have given to them as well. Looking at that one dollar each meeting, it didn't seem to be very much to go all that way.

I was curious as to how it worked. Many alcoholics, I assumed, were like me—unable at first to place even one dollar in the basket, who would pay for these things if money wasn't available. I was told that AA provides services based on funds available—if money isn't there then some of the services are cut.

Imagine calling the AA hotline for help and having it go unanswered. The Twelve and Twelve or the pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different?" not being published—all the people they helped see the solution and to relate to us if it wasn't there – imagine how different AA might be.

At my home group we've recently had serious heated discussions about... Birthday Cake. No, really. We like to provide a birthday cake each week a home group member celebrates a birthday; then we sing (off key) loudly and congratulate the fellow AA on his accomplishment... That cake costs almost 50% of our basket intake for a week and that bothers some of our members as they think our money should be better spent (I'm one of them).

Other members of our group talk about how that cake made the difference in why they came back the next week—they talk about the celebration of sobriety and the happiness of the guy getting his chip and some cake and how it gave them hope when they were new.

So, this is where the group conscience comes in and open minded members of the group listen to one another's points of view. For our group, one of the services we provide is cake and the money put in the basket each week by our members goes to that cake (as well as GSO, District, Area, Intergroup...) and that cake is actually helping people get and stay sober. They argue that as long as we are continuing to contribute as we've always done, nothing should stand in the way of some good cake each week.

Each dollar, or two dollars on a good week, I put in the basket goes to help fellow AA's. It helps at all levels from birthday cake to new editions of our Big Book or workshops on the traditions. As a home group member I have a voice in deciding where that money goes—I can voice my opinion on cake, ask about our contributions to our intergroup or even if we have a prudent reserve.

Our Intergroup, just like GSO, is supported primarily by group donations. We provide services which include but are not limited to AA hotline, meeting lists, website (to help find meetings, listen to AA speakers share experience, strength and hope). When you're involved with service at any level in AA you quickly come to realize how tight money can be to accomplish your good deeds.

How Spiritual Joy Differs From Human Happiness

For years I considered the Big Book statement: "Happy, joyous and free" as a bit redundant, for after all, are not happiness and Joy the same (p 133)? However, years later I found that HAPPINESS and JOY are two completely two different things: HAPPINESS is a human experience. It disappears when we are sad or depressed. But JOY is a God experience that may take place even when we are sad or depressed.

I have experienced said unexplained joy while feeling deeply depressed in a tent while camping in Sault Ste. Marie, Canada. I had recently been separated from my ex-wife and was feeling enormous depression. We had camped in that same tent in the Grand Canyon during our honeymoon previously. In the middle of the night, I became unexplainably full of energy, and everything seemed to wax extremely vivid and bright. I was full of Joy. This lasted throughout the night.

I believe Bill Wilson was experiencing great Joy—not ordinary happiness—after he went through his vital spiritual experience on page 14 of the Big Book: Doctor Silkworth told him: "Something has happened to you I don't understand. But you had better hang on to it. Anything is better than the way you were." I believe Bill's resultant Joy prompted him to immediately go out and start helping alcoholics. So, I believe God's Joy can be ongoing.

Then there is Fitz Mayo who had such an ongoing vital spiritual experience that: "He couldn't drink even if he would." (p 57, Big Book) There must have been great joy in that! Again, Ebby Thacher (Bill's sponsor), who was not a spiritual person prayed to God: "as never before" and was struck sober for two years and seven months. Again, great joy must have been present. (EBBY The Man Who Sponsored Bill W., by Mel B. – p 58) Ebby died in 1966, two years sober.

I believe the blessing of spiritual Joy will come to me when God decides to send it—I cannot just wish for it. However, I believe my chances are all for the better if I try to maintain a fit spiritual condition by living the Twelve Steps.

<https://www.aacle.org/how-spiritual-joy-differs-from-human-happiness/>



What is GSO and how does it help me?

The General Service Office (GSO) is composed of 87 employees across 15 divisions. Responding to thousands of inquiries from groups and members annually, they support the General Service Board, AAWS and the AA Grapevine. The following is an overview of the vital work that is supported by Fellowship contributions.

Administration: This team sustains critical functions of the General Service Board, the AAWS Board, leadership of GSO, and accountability for the oversight and management of GSO operations. They are responsible to ensure the smooth operation of GSO and to provide support for GSB, AAWS, and the Fellowship.

Archives: The main mission of the Alcoholics Anonymous GSO Archives is to permanently document the organization's work, making its history accessible to A.A. members and researchers. The Archives receives, classifies, and indexes and preserves all relevant material, serving as a resource for learning and research, providing information services to support A.A. operations, and promoting understanding of the organization's origins, goals, and programs.

Communication Services: This department ensures the development and operation of digital platforms and initiatives. The team manages aa.org, our official website; the Meeting Guide app; social media channels, production of the GSO podcast; analytics for digital platforms; production and distribution of Box 4 -5-9; and coordination of mass communication distribution to the membership..

The department works closely with the Public Information team on a wide range of public-facing initiatives that serve the evolving needs of the Fellowship in line with the group conscience and board directives.

Finance: The Finance Department ensures stewardship of A.A.'s finances, accounting for all literature sales; managing accounts payable, and providing regular reporting to the GSB and AAWS Boards. They process more than 80,000 individual contributions from members and groups in alignment with our Seventh Tradition. They lead the annual budget and reforecast processes, working with budget managers across the office to ensure fiscal prudence.

Human Resources: The HR team oversees all aspects of the employee work life, including learning and development, performance management, employee relations, and well-being practices. The team ensures compliance with all relevant laws and guidelines and communicates company policies transparently. Additionally, HR provides resources to AA Grapevine as needed.

Language Services: The Language Services Department centralizes the translation of our literature and thousands of documents into several languages each year. It also coordinates essential interpretation services that allow for direct interaction and communication with other A.A. structures globally. These services ensure full participation and work to unify our worldwide Fellowship.

Legal, Licensing and Intellectual Property (LLIP): LLIP carries out legal functions vital to carrying and protecting the message of Alcoholics Anonymous and provides direct oversight of all legal matters including contract reviews. LLIP handles Intellectual Property & Copyrights inquiries from groups and members for permission to reprint portions of A.A. literature or include it in local A.A. websites. Their primary objective is to ensure that A.A. literature is protected in

terms of content and the integrity of the A.A. message.

Mail and Shipping: This team is responsible for processing incoming and outgoing mail. They manage the assembling, packing, and shipping of various packages including, but not limited to, Conference, Public Information, and DCM packages. They manage the selection and shipping of literature for Regional Forums and Health Fairs. An additional responsibility of this team is to provide support to AA Grapevine for all matters related to their mail and shipping needs.

Meeting Events & Travel Department (METs): The METs division handles planning and logistical coordination for GSO-supported events, including the General Service Conference, three annual General Service Board Weekends the quarterly Regional Forums, and seven AAWS Board meetings at GSO per year. They provide technical assistance for virtual meetings among trustees and director, as well as all travel logistics for all trustees, directors, and staff during these events.

Member Services: The Member Services unit oversees and resolves member and customer issues in order fulfillment, contributions, and records processes. They manage warehousing, shipping, and literature delivery to ensure smooth and timely operations. This team also handles invoices, price quotes and provides information on literature ordering. Additionally, they process complimentary literature, update group information, manage new group applications and serve as a direct link to Area Registrars.

Office Services: Office services manages building services, phones, maintenance, supplies; they transport office equipment and supplies within the NYC area for all conferences, quarterly meetings, and conventions.

Operations: The Warehousing unit is responsible for managing inventory

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GSO (con't) levels and projecting future requirements. They review warehouse monthly activity reports and reconcile any variances. The Inventory unit negotiates pricing with freight companies, secures new vendors, audits freight invoices, and processes vendor invoices. Additionally, this unit updates the production log and reviews warehousing invoices, investigating any discrepancies.

Publishing: The Publishing team's goal is to maintain and distribute AA Literature to carry the message to the next person who is struggling with alcoholism. Despite the ongoing industry-wide print supply-chain

disruptions, we are committed to the ongoing exploration and implementation of new processes and formats to meet the publishing goals set by the General Service Board, AAWS, and the General Service Conference.

Staff Services: Staff Services provides support to the A.A. Fellowship, guided by the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for World Service. The department delivers administrative services and resources to the General Service Board, the General Service Conference, and AAWS. Staff Services is responsible for regional correspondence

and coordination of multiple GSO newsletters, including Sharing from Behind the Walls, LIM, and About A.A. They attend assemblies, conventions, and workshops throughout the US, Canada, and worldwide.

Technology Services: The Technology Services Department keeps all necessary equipment operating and up to date and are responsible for implementing software, process, and project management solutions across the office for all departments. They ensure the integrity and security of our databases and networks.

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/GSOservices_1123.pdf

(This material has been edited for spatial considerations.)

Dear A.A. Friends:

As a Fellowship, we celebrate November as Gratitude Month.

This is a time when we A.A.s reflect on the many gifts and blessings sobriety has given us.

The program of Alcoholics Anonymous encompasses many facets: our home groups, sponsorship, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Fellowship among each other, service on many levels, and many more. As the General Manager of the General Service Office (GSO), I'm grateful to see firsthand the many services GSO provides that support the spiritual purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous – carrying the message of sobriety to the alcoholic who still suffers. These services assist the many facets of the A.A. program. With the spirit of Gratitude Month in mind, I write today to share with you the difficult news related to the current financial health of Alcoholics Anonymous and the potential continued challenges ahead as we strive to fulfill our spiritual purpose. I hope this letter will be met with understanding, and that the honesty and sincerity in my heart are apparent throughout.

The last four years have been very challenging for A.A. in many respects. This began with the worldwide shutdown in early 2020 due to the pandemic, which immediately forced nearly all A.A. groups to close their physical doors and either stop meeting altogether or find other means of gathering. This was followed by a slow return of groups meeting in person, an economy filled with uncertainty, and a workplace that changed in many ways. During this time, GSO and our Boards, like other organizations and businesses, were forced to change dramatically. We quickly transitioned to working 100% virtual to continue serving the Fellowship. The office, along with the A.A. World Services (AAWS) and General Service Boards (GSB), have worked hard to manage our finances through these last four years with the hope that

GSO NEEDS OUR HELP.

many of the challenges we faced would subside and return to pre-pandemic conditions.

It is apparent now that the financial challenges we face cannot continue to be met with the deferral of essential projects and office development that are necessary to carry out Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference and support the vital services GSO provides. Our tradition of self-support has always been vital to the health and future of the Fellowship and been our main source of income. However, there has always been a need for additional support from the sale of our literature. When the pandemic hit, the initial impact on our revenue was significant, with a steep decrease in contributions. Income from sales of A.A. literature was also significantly reduced as sales came to an almost complete halt. The Fellowship responded with tremendous generosity, resulting in contributions reaching record levels. That continued in 2021, and contributions in 2022 nearly matched the 2021 level. This year to date, we are on pace to reach similar levels to the last three years. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and heartwarming.

Unfortunately, literature profits have not rebounded back to pre-pandemic levels. In addition to the slow return of sales, inflation has resulted in substantial increases in the cost to produce and distribute literature. Conscious of the challenges facing groups and members, the AAWS board held literature prices steady for as long as possible until earlier this year, when it became apparent the costs to produce and distribute were not going to return to previous levels. Despite increased contributions after the pandemic, the loss in literature revenue has left our total revenue short by approximately \$1,000,000 compared with pre-pandemic times. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on virtually all our expenses. Of note are increased costs related to meetings, events, and travel, which are a key necessity to support the Regional Forums, board meetings, and the General Service Conference. However, we

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(GSO continued) have managed to reduce total operating expenses to an average of \$15,768,000 compared with pre-pandemic levels of \$16,258,000. Reducing total expenses below pre-pandemic levels truly illustrates the diligence the office and the boards applied to the budget and operations to offset losses. Because of the significant decline in literature sales and revenue and the large cash outlay needed to continue printing and distributing our literature, we have also experienced a very tight cash position. Our reforecast budget for this year estimates a loss of \$997,000, after depreciation and the GSB support of *La Viña*.

We've worked diligently to address these financial challenges. A systematic and dedicated approach to budgeting has been developed over recent years and allows for the most informed group conscience possible. Throughout, budget managers and the AAWS Board work together to find the most effective ways to prioritize and execute services, maximizing the use of each A.A. dollar. In addition to the annual budget process, a reforecast is done midyear to adapt to the direction brought forth by the April General Service Conference and other factors impacting original estimates. As difficult as this letter is to write, I'm hopeful and optimistic for A.A.'s future. Together we can overcome the challenges we're facing.

We need your help to continue to adjust to and plan for the reality of current economic conditions and changes in our Fellowship. As members we often say that when A.A. needs money, the Fellowship will respond. This is one of those times. Your generosity has sustained us through very difficult times in the past. If your group is able, in the spirit of Gratitude Month,

please consider a special contribution to the General Service Board. You can contribute online at www.aa.org or by mail. Checks made payable to the General Service Board should be mailed to:

General Service Office
P.O. Box 2407
James A. Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407

Moving forward, more frequent and incremental contributions would be much appreciated as the office incurs many of its expenses during certain parts of the year. In particular, many of our more significant expenses are incurred from January to May, due to planning, preparation, and operation of the General Service Conference each April. Below is a summary of the operations of GSO and the services that it provides. I hope this information gives you a greater understanding of the vital work and services your contributions help to support. Thank you so much for everything each of you do for Alcoholics Anonymous.

With gratitude for all the sacrifices you make for A.A.,
Bob W.
General Manager, GSO

"Self-support begins with me, because I am part of us – the group. We pay our rent and utility bills, buy coffee, snacks and A.A. literature. We support our central office, our area committee, and our General Service Office. If it were not for those entities, many new people would never discover the miracles of A.A."

https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/F-3_selfsupport_0422.pdf

First Tradition Checklist

***My sobriety depends on unity with you.
What am I doing to help build that unity?***

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?</p> <p>2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into arguments?</p> <p>3. Am I gentle with alcoholics who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?</p> <p>4. Do I make competitive AA remarks,</p> | <p>such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?</p> <p>5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?</p> <p>6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole or just the parts I understand and approve of?</p> <p>7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?</p> | <p>8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?</p> <p>9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?</p> <p>10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?</p> |
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<https://www.aagrapevine.org/BL>

JANUARY 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
 <p>1</p>		<p>2 Donna B., 7 yrs, Hollywood</p> <p>Dawn, 7 yrs, Grapevine</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 Pete S., 42 yrs, Charlotte Hall</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 Kaki B., 30 yrs and J.R. D., 5 yrs, Laurel Grove</p> <p>Tyler G., 1 yr and Justine W., 18 yrs, Happy Hour</p> <p>John W., 36 yrs, Kingston Creek</p>
<p>7 Tim I., 6 yrs, Never Too Late</p> <p>Sara S., 10 yrs and Ella D., 8 yrs, Bedouin</p> <p>Lenny, 27 yrs, Sober By The Bay</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 Dan P. 1 yr and Jeremy, 4 yrs, Grateful Alive</p> <p>Keith, 2 yrs, Waldorf</p>	<p>11 Joseph B., 1 yr., Daily Reprieve</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 Dennis B., 48 yrs, Kingston Creek</p>
<p>14 Francis R., 32 yrs, KISS</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 Paul S., 5 yrs, Cove Point</p>	<p>20 Claudia D., 13 yrs, Early Risers (ZOOM)</p>
<p>21 Marcus, 1 yr, Warner</p>	<p>22 Josie, 36 yrs, Awakenings</p>	<p>23 Al S., 35 yrs, Hollywood</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 Larry W., 1 yr, Poplar Hill</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 Eileen M., 24 yrs, Kingston Creek</p>
<p>28 David D., 15 yrs, KISS</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>			

FEBRUARY 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
					Kim S., 28 yrs, Beginners At Noon	RC, 5 yrs, Helping Others Jamie Q., 6 yrs, Laurel Grove
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gordon M., 42 yrs, KISS						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Matt P., 3 yrs, Harmony		Beth M., 21 yrs, Step Sisters			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Tommy S., 38 yrs, KISS	Michelle T., 10 yrs, More Will be Revealed Dave M., 10 yrs, Harmony		Laura P., 11 yrs, Step Sisters			
25	26	27	28	29		
				Dickie R., 39 yrs, Poplar Hill		



We have an immediate opening available for an Archives Chair! This position maintains all archived records for SMIA. If interested, please join us at the SMIA meeting on 1/13/24 (see p. 17 for details) or reach out to any of the SMIA team.

"There is both a need and an obligation to save the history of our Fellowship within our Area. To be preserved for present and future generations. It is highly important that the factual material be placed in our files in such a way that there can be no substantial distortion." Bill W. 1957

Treatment Center Committee

"The District 36 Treatment Center Committee" is looking for female fellowship members,

who are willing and have a year or more of sobriety to bring in-house A.A. meetings into the Jude House

Wednesday Evenings 7:00pm.

Please contact this committee at our email:

treatmentcommittee36@gmail.com

This is a very rewarding experience!

Come join up and try it out!

The Committee Contact:

treatmentcommittee36@gmail.com



Grapevine Meeting!

4th Tuesday of each month 6:30 pm

Did you know that The Area 29 Grapevine Committee is a traveling literature store? We have a large variety of AA Grapevine books for sale. Please reach back out if your group, District, or intergroup is hosting an event or workshop and would like us to come and sell literature.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85217774704>
pwd=TVhEdFpKdmxSRINvNnJHU1pYWDVaQT09

Meeting ID: 852 1777 4704 Passcode: 019347

Brandi D., Area 29 Grapevine Committee Chair

For more info: grapevine@marylandaa.org

Group and District GVR's encouraged to attend, all are welcome!

Are you looking for a fun service position?

Please join us and find out more! All are welcome to attend!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84124993206?pwd=OVBWNjJJeHg4eFFibkhNcDRyOXhUZz09>



Does your Home Group have a GSR?

(General Service Representative)

Does it have an alternate GSR?

Have your GSR & Alternate GSR contact

Debbie P. (301)-825-2740

Your group's voice needs to be heard.

You could be the link between your Home Group and the General Service Organization

2 year service commitment. Make a commitment to your group and your sobriety.

Anyone is eligible.

When?

6:30PM on the 3rd Monday of every month

Where?

Presbyterian Church

115 W. 2nd St.

Frederick, MD

Or on zoom

(Meeting ID: 81101121309 Passcode: District)



STORY SOLICITATION

"Do You Think You're Different?" Pamphlet Update

Deadline for submissions: April 30, 2024

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5a77c27d179d4856b32eed86b01e3426>

The trustees Literature Committee is seeking stories from AA members with diverse backgrounds. This is in response to the 2022 Conference Advisory Action that the trustees' Literature Committee revise the pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different?" to update the stories to represent greater diversity.

The Trustees' Literature Committee requested that consideration be given to stories from multicultural populations, stories from A.A. members whose experience reflects multiple factors, and from diverse populations not addressed in other current A.A. literature.

Please encourage members in your area to write their personal stories for possible inclusion in the revised pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different." Stories should reflect "in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now."

The suggested format for typed manuscripts is 500-800 words, double spaced, in 12-point font. Handwritten manuscripts should be approximately 5 to 6 pages.

Please include your complete name, address, and email/phone information on the first page of your manuscript. A copy of your manuscript should be retained for your files.

The anonymity of all authors will be observed whether their story is selected for publication or not.

Instructions for submitting your manuscript:

Deadline: Please submit on or before **April 30, 2024**

Submit your story by following this link:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5a77c27d179d4856b32eed86b01e3426>



Additional ways of sending your story:

Email: pamphletstories@aa.org

Subject Line: "Do You Think You're Different?"

Rev/09/8/2023

The Lifeline is an unofficial newsletter published by Southern Maryland Intergroup Association, Inc. Any opinions expressed are those of the writers. They are not endorsed by SMIA, any group or AA as a whole. Group secretaries and individuals are encouraged to send group news, anniversaries and events. Material may be edited for space and content. Please send all *Lifeline* correspondence to: somdlifeline@gmail.com

Opening: Buddy F. opened meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

Board Members Present: Buddy F. Chair, Rob A. Parliamentarian, Katherine L. Vice Chair.

Groups & Committees Represented

Buddy F.-Rocky Roads, Bill L.-Sunderland, Mary F.-Leonardtown Group, George W.-Inspiration, Jamie R.-North Beach, Zee S.-Sunday Morning Sobriety, Loraine J.-Bedouin, Rob A.-Poplar Hill, Paul S.-Cove Point, Roy B.-Solomons, Pat S. SMIA Workshop Chair, Mandy M-ODAAT, Bruce O.-Waldorf, Mellisa W.-SMIA Phone Chair, Katherine L.- SMIA Vice Chair and Andy X. from Keeping it Green.

SMIA Chair Report

Buddy stated that he attended an online Area 29 intergroup Liaison meeting on Dec. 4th, Kurt W. our outgoing Area 29 Delegate attended and shared his experience throughout his term. Kurt also mentioned that a survey was conducted with 6,000 A.A. participants and the survey had a lot of information about the A.A. community from average age, gender, attendance in person, attendance on zoom, home groups, sponsor and various other statistics related to A.A. in general' the survey can be found on aa.org/membership-survey2022. Also in attendance was Bridgette F. She is the Area 29 outgoing Chairperson she also shared her experience from her term as well. She shared how she was not comfortable speaker in front of people due to shyness and how she was able to challenge herself into doing service work. Getting a Service Sponsor and asking past members who also participated in service work. Bridgette will be changing from the Area 29 Chairperson to the Area 29 Treasurer. The Group thanked both Kurt and Bridgette for their service to the Area.

Vice Chair Report: No Report

Secretary Report:

Buddy F. reported on Kristi P.'s behalf. Buddy F. read from the SMIA November meeting. A motion was made to accept the minutes as read the minutes were seconded and accepted.

Treasurers report:

Bill L. reported on Rebecca B.'s behalf the report stated for the month of November our total expenses were \$768.19 and our total Revenue for the month was \$4145.65, giving us a total asset of \$14,888.07. A motion was made to accept the treasure report as read the motion was seconded and accepted`

Committee Reports:

Bookstall: Bill L. reported. There were 655 visits to the On-Line Bookstall since the November meeting. There were 12 orders since the last meeting; 5 are processing and 7 were completed. Completed orders totaled \$403.20 Processing orders totaled \$130.95. Chip and Medallions orders from the Token Shop totaled \$308.10. Literature orders from World Services totaled \$192.70

SMIA Meeting Minutes 12/9/23

Web: Bill L. reported
Total Visitors (initial visit)

2858– up 28%

5 Most Frequently visited pages

Home Page – 3035

Where and When Calendar- 391

Anniversary Calendar -179

Announcements - 146

On-Line Meetings - 143

Referring Sites

Direct

Others

Search Engines – Google, DuckDuckGo, Yahoo

Site Updates and Changes No significant changes this month. Meeting Change Information The on-line option for the Emotional Sobriety Meeting was terminated. The Sunderland Meeting changed their meeting time to 7:00 PM.

Meeting Status

Currently there are 133 meetings in our service area; 122 meetings are in-person, 6 meetings are hybrid, 6 meetings are on-line only, and 5 meetings are reported as suspended. Of those 5, 1 has an on-line presence.

Document Posts and Updates

Mobile App 2023 4.12 released – 12/1/23 Lifeline posted – 12/1/23

Finance Page updated – 11/28/23 Minutes posted – 11/21/23

Where and When PDF updated on 11/16/23

Gratitude Dinner: Buddy F. gave a report for the gratitude dinner stating that the fund raiser collected \$927.00 from the event, also a total of \$890 was collected from the 50/50 raffle with the proceeds from that going directly to the Immaculate Conception Church for the use of their facility.

Corrections and Treatment: Calvert- Loraine J. stated that things were going well. Meetings were going into the Correction facility as we as the Treatment Centers. **Charles-** Zee S. stated that the Correction facilities as well as the Jude House and RCA were being tended.**ST Mary's-** Buddy F, stated that the Corrections as well as the Treatment facilities were going well. ALL 3 of these Committees can always use volunteers. This is a wonderful way to do service work and not take up a lot of your time. Please consider helping.

Lifeline: Keith H. stated that things are going well, always looking for articles from fellowship members on their Service and how it's helped their program. He asked the body about what is printed and if there were things that needed changing or removing.

(continued on page 14)

(continued)

All deadlines for the Lifeline are the 27th of each month. He asked if you had any flyers for printing to try to keep them as simple as possible.

Picnic: Buddy F stated that he will be looking to start a picnic committee and start looking for a location. If anyone has a location in mind, please let Buddy know. Buddy F. also stated that he would contact the past Picnic Chairperson to get some sort of ideas on putting it together.

PI/CPC: Calvert-Lorraine J stated that she has been making sure the various Literature racks throughout the county were being replenished. Charles- No report. St Mary's- Mary F. stated the all the Literature racks were being kept up and that she was looking for interested people who might want to give a talk on A.A.

Workshop: The chairperson would like to host a workshop (History of A.A.) on February 17th at the Immaculate Conception Hall. She had just put one on and there was very little participation or help coming from our A.A. community. Our Districts and Intergroup put up you are funding to try to help carry the message. The more people that help seems to attract more people coming to these events. Please try to help. You can go to somdaa.org and look for Services Opportunities on the website.

Archive: This position is vacant currently, if you are interested, please go to our website. Somdaa.org and look for Service Opportunities

Telephone: Melissa W. gave her Report, there were a total of seventeen calls 3 for ST Mary's 3- Calvert and 8 for Charles.

Serenity Breakfast: Mary F stated that she was looking into locations for the event. She stated she had been in contact with

volunteers to help put the event on. IF anyone knows a location that might be available, please feel free to reach out to Mary F.

Where and When: Pat P. No report, however, it does look like we are going to be printing New Where and When's soon. Please check to make sure that all the information is correct on the Where and When's.

Old Business: We are currently looking for a new Archivist. Back in the summer there were changes made to the by-law that we voted and approved and were supposed to be digitally signed by the officers of SMIA that has yet to be done and hoping that with the help of our webmaster we can have this done by the next business meeting. The topic of excess funding being sent to Area 29 and WSO was brought up and a review was made and due to low donations at this time and the fact that we are going to be printing out new Where and When's we felt it not wise to do this at this previous time. The chairperson has been working with the other board members to establish what is considered excess funding.

New Business: None

For the Good of the Order: Area 29 Assembly Dec 16 8:00 am Trinity United Methodist Church 703 w. Patrick St. Fredrick MD District 36 Christmas Alcothon 9:00 pm Dec 24 through 9:00pm Dec25@ Hollywood Volunteer Rescue squad Hollywood MD. District 36 New Years Alcothon 6:00 pm Dec 31 through Jan 1 6:00pm @ Hollywood Volunteer Rescue Squad Hollywood MD. District 1 New Years Eve Party 7.00 pm till Midnight Crossroads Church 150 Ball Rd St Leonard MD

Respectfully, Buddy F. , SMIC Chairperson

Southern Maryland's 13th Annual Roundup

with AI-Anon participation

24 Hours a Day

DoubleTree by Hilton
Annapolis, Maryland

March 15-17, 2024



For conference and lodging information, please visit

www.SouthernMarylandRoundup.org

or email: Info@SoMdRoundup.com



Pam H. Amherst, OH
Robert M. Stuart, FL
Lisa L. Boyton Beach, FL
Harold L. St. Louis, MO

SPEAKERS

Carole C. Columbus, OH
Kelly C. Columbus, OH
John E. Nashville, TN
AI Anon: **Teresa S.** Clinton, MD

"FAITH HAS TO WORK TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY IN AND THROUGH US, OR WE PERISH." -BB, PG. 16

January 2024

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc Treasury Report

**Monthly Contributions:
\$2,361.46**

www.somdintergroup.org/contribute
SMIA, PO Box 767, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

**Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc
Statement of Financial Position
November 25, 2023 - December 24, 2023**

Assets

Primary Business Checking	9,587.37
Primary Business Savings	3,000.84
Prudent Reserve	3,300.00
PayPal	805.07
Bookstall Cash on hand	100.00

Total Assets 16,793.28

Expenses

Bookstall	(1,053.47)
Liability Insurance	
Lifeline Printing	(102.27)
Misc	(16.00)
Phone Answering Service	(25.10)
PO Box Rental	
Rent	(150.00)
Webmaster	
Website Maintenance	60.95
Where and When	

Total Expenses (\$1,285.89)

**Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc
Yearly Statement of Activity
May 1, 2023 - Apr 30, 2024**

Revenue

Contributions	5,736.57
Bookstall	2,321.61
Gratitude Dinner	1,197.00
Serenity Breakfast	2,066.00

Total Revenue 11,321.18

Expenses

Bookstall	(3,902.85)
Liability Insurance	(273.00)
Lifeline Printing	(839.57)
Misc	(661.10)
Phone Answering Service	(200.15)
PO Box Rental	(114.00)
Rent	(1,200.00)
Webmaster	(930.00)
Website Maintenance	(283.96)
Where and When	

Total Expenses (\$8,404.63)

Annual Net Assets 2,916.55

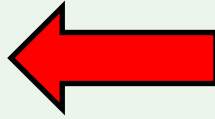
WHERE DO WE SEND OUR CONTRIBUTIONS?

1) All contributions can be made online:
www.somdintergroup.org/donate.php

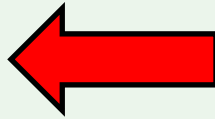
2) Or they can be mailed to the appropriate office location:

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT GSO AND MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE ADDRESSES HAVE CHANGED*****

**General Service Office
Post Office Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407**



**Maryland General Service Inc.
P.O. Box 207
Benson, MD. 21018**



**Southern Maryland Intergroup (SMIA)
P.O. Box 767
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622**

**District 1 Trust Fund (Calvert)
P.O. Box 234
Barstow, MD 20610**

**District 35 (Charles)
P.O. Box 1981
La Plata, MD 20646**

**District 36 (St. Mary's)
P.O. Box 1334
California, MD 20619**



Samples of Group Contributions to A.A. Service Entities*

Distribution Plan of _____
(YOUR GROUP NAME)

Your Group Service # _____

(Be sure to write group name and service # on all contributions.)



____ % to district
____ % to area committee
____ % to G.S.O.
____ % to intergroup or central office
____ % other A.A. service entities
____ % other A.A. service entities

OR



10% to district
10% to area committee
30% to G.S.O.
50% to intergroup or central office

OR

If you have no intergroup/central office.



40% to district
30% to area
30% to G.S.O.

ATTENTION GROUP TREASURERS:

****Remember to include the 6-digit GSO Group Number on all correspondence to Maryland General Service.***

Service Opportunities!

Volunteers needed for the SMIA picnic and for upcoming workshops!

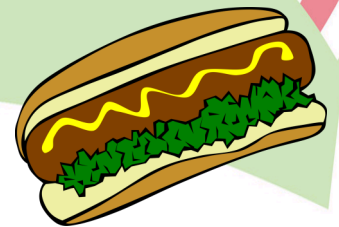
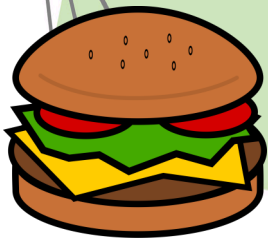
We also need a location for the picnic.

Please join us at the next SMIA meeting 1/13/23 @ 10am

Immaculate Conception Church

28297 Old Village Road

Mechanicsville, MD 20659



THE DEADLINE FOR ALL LIFELINE SUBMISSIONS IS THE 27th OF EACH MONTH.

RECOVERY COACH BARNEY FIFE

LETS GO OVER
OUR RELAPSE
PREVENTION PLAN...

ARE YOU KEEPING
SECRETS?
NIP THAT IN THE BUD.

ARE YOU ISOLATING?
NIP IT IN THE BUD.

ARE YOU SKIPPING
MEETINGS?
NIP IT!
NIP IT IN THE BUD.



SMIA SERVICE TEAM:

Chair: Buddy F.

Vice Chair: Katherine L.

Secretary: Kristi P.

Treasurer: Rebecca B.

Parliamentarian: Rob A.

Where & When: Pat P.

Lifeline: Keith H.

Telephone: Melissa W.

Digital/Written Media: Bill L.

Archives: VACANT

DISTRICT 35 - CHARLES CO.

**Please come out and join us
at our next District Meeting -
the first Thursday of the
month @ 7pm**

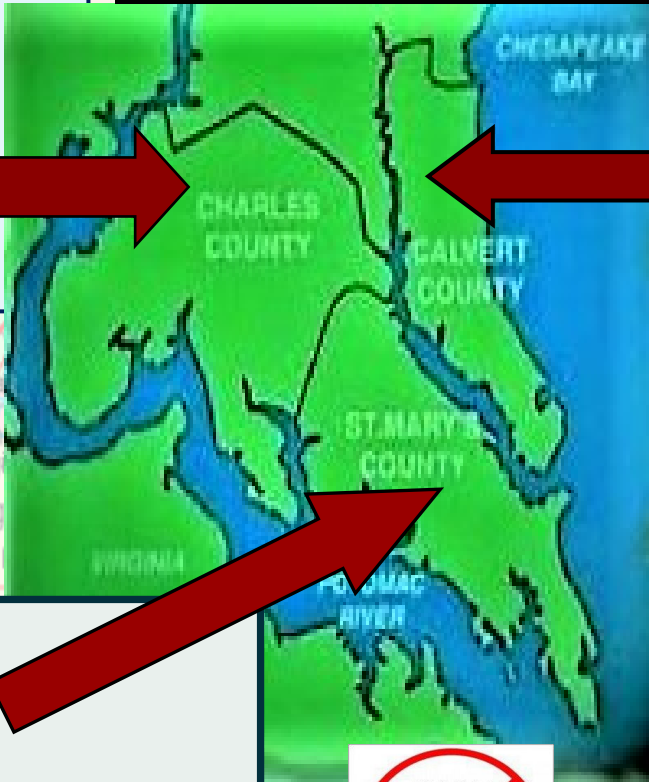
**Peace Lutheran Church
11610 Rubina Place
Waldorf MD 20602**

**Mailing address:
PO Box 1981, La Plata,
MD 20646**

**SERVICE KEEPS US
SOBER**

NEW BOOKSTALL HOURS:

First and Third Thursday of the
month 6:00pm - 6:45pm
Second Saturday of the month 9am - 10am



**DISTRICT 1
CALVERT COUNTY**

**SERVICE
OPPORTUNITIES**

- **Accessibility Chair**
- **Grapevine Rep**

District Meeting:

**7 PM, 3rd Monday
St. Paul's Episc.
Church**

**Prince Frederick, MD
District 1 Trust Fund**

PO Box 234

Barstow, MD 20610

www.calvertaa.org

DISTRICT 36

ST. MARY'S COUNTY

PO Box 1334, California, MD 20619

www.district36mdaa.com



DISTRICT NOTES



**Please send any up-
dates for the Where &
When to:**

**[smia.whereandwhen@
somdaa.org](mailto:smia.whereandwhen@somdaa.org)**

**Current meeting guides
are available at the
monthly SMIA meeting
on a limited basis.**

The next SMIA Meeting will be held on

Saturday, February 10 at 10:00 AM

Join us in person @

**Immaculate Conception Church,
28297 Old Village Road, Mechanicsville, MD
20659**

Or via Zoom @

**[https://zoom.us/j/99982597908?
pwd=QzVLCUZrVHdacFlrYUNZN21tdkluQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99982597908?pwd=QzVLCUZrVHdacFlrYUNZN21tdkluQT09)**