



DISTRICT SIX

AUGUST 2019

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Dedication In Service

My name is Kevin B and I am an alcoholic and also the Corrections/Bridging the Gap (BTG) chair for District 6. I have been sober since 2003, but this is my first service position above the group level. While Corrections focuses on penal institutions, in this case Two Bridges jail, BTG is really about anybody getting out of a rehab, jail, or any other setting where they’ve been exposed to recovery in a controlled setting and are transitioning to doing it on the “outside”.

I still remember my first visit into an institution. In early sobriety, I was attending a Sunday morning meeting at Pen Bay Hospital in Rockport when a nurse came in and asked if anyone was willing to do a meeting in the PARC unit next door, a dual diagnosis facility. I attended with an old timer who just said, “Talk about the first three steps and don’t leave them too much time to share.” It worked. I came to really enjoy going into the PARC unit while in the Rockland area and also going into the drug rehab unit in Cambridge MA when I moved down there in 2005. Not sure why but I think there’s something about being right on the front lines, seeing both the need for AA and the damage that alcoholism does that really helps me.

My first experience with jails and prisons came through a sponsee who was sentenced to federal prison. I stayed in touch with him throughout his 3 year sentence and one of the highlights of my sobriety was driving down to Lewisburg PA to pick him up upon release. Once I settled in Brunswick another of my sponsees, Frank S, and I decided we wanted to go into Two Bridges so we started going in every 4th Friday about 10 years ago. We kept going right up until the pandemic and I’ve met several AA friends and sponsees through my visits there. My jail visits are always right up there with the best things I do for my sobriety.

Now Frank and I are the D6 co-chairs for both Corrections and BTG. I am just getting up to speed but so far my work has been focused on getting Zoom meetings going in Two Bridges jail and at the ARC IOP groups in Brunswick. This has been mostly successful thus far and now I’m hoping to expand the number of members who are cleared to bring meetings into the jail and who are willing to talk to IOP. We had a pretty

good rotation going before covid but it seems like we might be able to use some new blood. As of today we have had 6 or so meetings on Fridays and the guys seem to really appreciate it although attendee numbers are down from the mid-teens when it was in person to around 5-8 via Zoom. In terms of other BTG-specific work, I also maintain a phone list for folks to call when they are getting out, but from what I’ve heard so far it doesn’t get used all that much. I would like to find out why. Maybe we need to do a better job or maybe in the Internet age it is just easier to find meetings. In any case, so far I have found District service to be useful work, and not too taxing. I am glad to be able to help and I certainly look forward to doing more of this service work in person when things ease up. If you have interest in learning more you can email me at bridgingthegap@aamainedistrict6.org.

Kevin B Corrections & BTG Chair



Requested By Editor

Area 28 Summer Service Series

JULY 23 - AUGUST 27

Thursdays @ 7pm, Fellowship starts at 630pm

Meeting ID: 885 3233 7641

Password: 053633

Join us for more fun-shops

Topics include:

- Sober Business is Fun Business
- Hot Topics in your Home Group
- Why Not You?
- Generally Speaking
- What are you doing in A.A.?

FMI email: area28delegate@gmail.com

That is what someone told me the first time I moved after I got sober. We had both landed in Western Mass., she from North Carolina and I from Brooklyn.

My sponsor in New York had made it very clear that if I did not keep going to AA I was quite possibly going to die.

“Get a Sponsor,” she said. “Get a Home Group. Do service. Get



Sponsees. Act as if you were a newcomer — because you are a newcomer.” Even though I was coming up on four years and we had recently finished the 12th step. She then told me several stories about people she had known who had moved out of our area and had failed to get connected to their new AA. They had died. She had about 20 years at the time, so she had many stories to tell.


She was trying to scare me and she succeeded. The North Carolina woman agreed to sponsor me and her suggestions were familiar. I joined her home group and became the intergroup rep. A couple of people asked me to sponsor them. “Do 30 in 30” she suggested. “Don’t talk for 30 days. Just listen. Get to the meeting 15 minutes early and stay 15 minutes later. Clean the coffee pot. Put away chairs.”

She had been in the area for several years and she still missed her home turf, but even after two decades in AA she was doing all the things she told me to do — and I’ve never seen anyone more generous than her and her husband with their time, rides, calls, fellowship and step work. Still, I thought, I miss my Brooklyn hipsters! Then I realized I was hearing many women with double digits, families and jobs living sober lives. I saw that I could learn something. I stayed sober and found a strong sober community.

That community supported me while I dealt with childhood trauma. I was finally able to leave my husband. Our divorce was amicable and I showed up for our daughter because of my sober community. Six years after my divorce, when it came time to move to Maine to be with my wife, I knew what to do. In fact, when I checked in with my former Brooklyn sponsor, she said, “Do exactly what I told you before.” I had been floundering a bit and I knew she was right.

I have 17 years now and I moved in late June in the middle of a pandemic. I have a home group, Sunrise Serenity in Brunswick, and a sponsor. I have always gravitated toward early-morning meetings. These are on Zoom and my life is still deeply disorganized. I struggle with my ego, as if it does not count if I do not do it perfectly. But I get to meetings most days, and most days I have my camera on. I try to share when I have something to say and not just to hear my own voice. I pray and meditate most days, and read conference-approved literature. I live in the steps and I honor the traditions. Most importantly, I don’t drink, one day at a time.

My earlier sponsor was wrong about one thing: It is hard, but you really can move AA. Actually, it is imperative for me. All I need is to be right with my recovery. The rest falls into place.

Sasha N 

Requested By Audrey , Newsletter Reporter

The A.A. SERVICE MANUAL

Recovery, Unity, Service — these are the Three Legacies given to the whole membership of A.A. by its founders and their fellow oldtimers. When this heritage was announced, at the St. Louis Convention in 1955, celebrating A.A.’s 20th birthday, Doctor Bob was already gone. But Bill W. spoke for him and the other pioneers, as well as for himself, in turning over to all of us the responsibility for A.A.’s continuation and growth.

“The A.A. Service Manual,” current version of the handbook first known as “The Third Legacy Manual,” may seem to be simply a guide to organization and procedure, and its approach is indeed practical. At the same time, it is based firmly upon spiritual principles, as Bill explains in his introduction to the manual, reprinted here to recall the development of our Third Legacy

A.A.’s Legacy of Service by Bill W.

Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die. *Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.* Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

Vital to A.A.’s Growth

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: “Is this service really needed?” If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A.

The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole; namely, the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., The Grapevine, Inc., and our Board of Trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities.

(Reprinted from the AA Service Manual, with permission from AAWS, INC)

Editor



The Emmet Foxx Corner
With Michael J

Grace

What is grace and why is it an important concept for a program of recovery? Grace might be defined as: "a form of unmerited mercy granted by a higher power." Emmet Fox underscores this definition when he shares the story of a foolish professor who claimed that he could always tell if a person was a potential criminal by the shape of his ear. In response to the professor's claims, a reporter interviewed William Booth, the head of the Salvation Army, and asked if he believed in such a thing as a 'criminal ear'. General Booth laughed loudly and replied, "Why, of course there is a 'criminal ear'—and *we've all got one*. If it were not for the grace of God, every one of us would be doing time or deserving to." With this proverb on humility, Dr. Fox reminds us that when we witness another person's tragedy we should always be aware that it could well have been our own if some higher power had not been helping to guide our fate in a better direction.

This notion is reiterated in the Big Book:

"The alcoholic may say to himself in the most casual way, "It won't burn me this time, so here's how!" Or perhaps he doesn't think at all. How often have some of us begun to drink in this nonchalant way, and after the third or fourth, pounded on the bar and said to ourselves, "For God's sake, how did I ever get started again?" ... When this sort of thinking is fully established in an individual with alcoholic tendencies, he has probably placed himself beyond human aid." ... "(For recovering alcoholics) the central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves."

Or as one alcoholic put it: "Just as importantly, I believe that I recovered through the *grace* of a Higher Power, despite the fact that I was very angry and wanted nothing to do with God when I arrived at Alcoholics Anonymous. In fact, I did not need to find God. I only needed an open mind, and the spirit found me." (pages 24, 25 and 397 Reprinted from The Big Book with the permission of AA, World services, Inc.)

But, if grace is unmerited, how can it be fair that some lucky ones should receive this gift from God and others must languish in its absence? St. Francis of Assisi offered an answer to this question when he spoke of the pathway of grace. He tells us that grace flows freely from God through us and out to others. We are nothing more than a channel for God's peace and it is our life's work to ensure that the channel remains clear and open – free from the debris of our lives. When the channel is clear and open, we are redeemed.




As Bill W puts it:

"The fact was we really hadn't cleaned house so that the grace

of God could enter us and expel the obsession. In no deep or meaningful sense had we ever taken stock of ourselves, made amends to those we had harmed, or freely given to any other human being without any demand for reward. We had not even prayed rightly. We had always said, "Grant me my wishes" instead of "Thy will be done." The love of God and man we understood not at all. Therefore we remained self-deceived, and so incapable of receiving enough grace to restore us to sanity." (Reprinted from The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 22 with the permission of AA, World services, Inc.)

When Grace flows through us we can see our problems for what they really are. Dwight L. Moody, the evangelist, said, "My greatest problem is Dwight L. Moody." Robert Burns put it differently when he wrote: "O would some power the gift he give us, to see ourselves as others see us." We have to claim the light of God to see ourselves as we really are. And no matter what we see, the power of God can change it. The way we do this is to appeal to God for wisdom, intelligence, and more understanding in our hearts. We humble ourselves by admitting that we do not know. Every act of true humility initiates the flow of grace whereby the soul grows as the will, or ego, diminishes. The AA program asks us to remember that we are today sober only by the grace of God and that any success we may be having is far more His success than ours.

District 6 Finances

Beginning Balance		\$2,357.72
Deposits:		
7/6/20 Todd S., Contribution		\$ 41.00
7/6/20 Temp. Live Meeting		\$ 87.00
7/6/20 Sunrise Serenity		\$ 140.00
7/6/20 Todd S., Contribution		\$ 50.00
7/6/20 We Group		<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total		\$ 418.00
Expenses:		
7/9/20 GSO		<u>\$ 390.55</u>
Total		\$ 390.20
7/9/20 Ending Balance		\$ 2,385.17
		
Bank Balance		\$ 2,385.17
CK #1125, CSO surplus		\$ 390.55
CK #1126, Area 28 surplus		\$ 390.55
Prudent Reserve Functions		\$ 750.00
Prudent Reserve Operating Exp.		<u>\$ 350.00</u>
Surplus (Above Prudent Reserve)		\$ 504.07
*Grapevine approved expense (receipt has not been submitted)		\$ 150.00

DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

District 6 held its Monthly Business meeting electronically on the 10th with 13 people in attendance. There were three non-voting folks and seven Meetings represented.

The Meeting Minutes for June, and the Treasurer's Report, were accepted without issue and the Committee moved on to GSR reports.

Both the Not Too Tightly Wrapped Group and the Merry Meeting Group reported that they've been holding Meetings in person, outdoors when weather has allowed it. Other GSR's reported Group discussions addressing possible re-openings. The web-chair has been updating the Meeting List as new information is provided.

Following GSR reports, Committee Chairs shared their reports. Archives, Newsletter as well as Love and Service had nothing to share or were absent.

Bridging the Gap and Corrections Committee reported that Meetings have been happening every Friday electronically for the jail and that they would appreciate some increased support to provide more speakers. The next few weeks meetings are canceled due to a staffing shortage, anyone interested in being involved going forward should reach out to the Corrections Chair as listed on our website.

PI/CPC Chair reported challenges moving forward due to the pandemic.

Our Grapevine chair shared they've been pursuing getting subscriptions for the Midcoast Hospital ER, Brunswick ARC, the Brunswick Library, the Freeport Community Center and the Tedford Shelter in Brunswick. In addition to these efforts he reported that he will be moving outside of the state but is willing to continue working in the position until his term has been served or the position can be filled.

Our Website Chair reported 35 visits and 130 page views for the previous Month; also, our SSL certificate had been successfully implemented.

There was no old business noted and new business reflected discussion about how the district is available to support Meetings in their discussion or moves around re-opening.

Discussion also reflects that this decision needs to be made at the Group Level, beyond support the District is not giving any specific guidance as to how, or when, to restart in person meetings.

The next business meeting will be held on July 10th at 6:00pm, online unless otherwise specified.

At-A-
Glance



Aly, District 6
Newsletter Reporter



SELF SUPPORT

Whose Job Is It?

"The paradox of A.A. is that financial independence and the support of our Fellowship by alcoholics and alcoholics alone not only enhances A.A.'s importance to each of us, but stimulates our engagement in our own recovery... A.A. is 'our thing,' from our group's treasury to the balance sheets at the General Service Office." Money has never been a requirement for A.A. membership, and to keep it that way all of A.A.'s trusted servants have an ongoing obligation to inform groups and individuals about the value of self-support and the need for voluntary contributions throughout the Fellowship. Many groups in reaching an informed group conscience look to their general service representatives (G.S.R.s) for specific information about A.A. finances, or to their intergroup representatives or group treasurer. Many find that participation in local, area and regional A.A. service events provides a good source of information about A.A.'s financial needs. And at the General Service Office, A.A.'s financial affairs are an open book, with financial summaries published quarterly and a full accounting printed each year in the *Final Conference Report*.

The Bottom Line

"Now that we are sober in A.A., the word 'support' has to do with sharing, people, self-respect, gratitude, and what we are privileged to give — not take — in material terms." While the Fellowship has always faced problems of money, property and prestige in one form or another, through the wisdom of the Seventh Tradition we have never been diverted from our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers — wherever he or she may be. This is the fundamental work of Alcoholics Anonymous, and to ensure that the hand of A.A. will always remain outstretched, money and spirituality must continue to mix. And for that, we are all responsible.

Tradition 7

"Now that we are sober in A.A., the word 'support' has to do with sharing, people, self-respect, gratitude, and what we are privileged to give — not take — in material terms." While the Fellowship has always faced problems of money, property and prestige in one form or another, through the wisdom of the Seventh Tradition we have never been diverted from our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers — wherever he or she may be. This is the fundamental work of Alcoholics Anonymous, and to ensure that the hand of A.A. will always remain outstretched, money and spirituality must continue to mix. And for that, we are all responsible. (Reprinted from the pamphlet "Self-Support Where Money & Spirituality Mix" page 8 with permission from AAWS INC)



George, Editor

