



DISTRICT SIX

SEPTEMBER 2019

- 1-Area 28 Alt Delegate and BGT
- 2-7th Tradition, Serenity, Bath Group Treasurer
- 3-Tradition Two: Rotation
- 4-The Richmond Group, Finance and Fun Stuff

A Alternate Delegate Suggests

What are you doing October 18, 19 and 20? In Portland, there's an opportunity awaiting you, our Area 28 assembly (encompassing Maine and some of New Brunswick). Do you ever wonder how the structure of AA is created and maintained? Why not better understand how and why AA in Maine, is the way it is? This 2019 Fall Assembly is a voting assembly where new officers are elected through a process called '3rd legacy procedure' and new business on the agenda will be voted on as well.

The history of the structuring of AA was for individual Areas to come together at an assembly and vote for one person to carry the Area conscience to New York for the annual conference. The assembly expanded to cover all elections and area business.

Maybe you're saying it doesn't matter". Each group with a GSR has a vote, and everyone has a voice. How else can your group conscience get to the General Service Conference floor? Possibly you're thinking 'I won't know anyone; how will I be useful?' Come, meet the people who are standing for area positions. Being judges of character as sober people and a conversation, one on one, can assist others views are on different subjects. Who we elect will determine the future of Area 28, and the fountain effect it has on Districts, Groups, individuals in Area 28 as a whole.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a bunch of drunks, much like one another, and we must not allow fear to dictate how we share our thoughts and ideas. Maybe you are thinking, I'm not afraid, those things are boring. I'd ask you to consider bringing something to the Assembly rather than casting it off, we need to make sure AA is here for kids, grandkids and great grandkids ad infinitum. Who knows, your vote may be a tie breaker changing our future.

The unique opportunity (to do something different, is to meet our North East Regional Trustee who will be present to facilitate the 3rd Legacy Procedure along with a past delegate from Eastern MA. There are sure to be some motions on the floor that interest you and your groups. You may find yourself enjoying a skit about Dorothy going to the International Convention, a "fun"shop (rather than workshop) on the digital basket and thoughtful ideas of how to raise awareness and 7th Traditions in your home groups. Why not check it out and get more involved with your own sobriety as we trudge the way into the future ?

Nikki O

"All my sponsor ever says is do the next right thing ; now what?"

Mike R . Chicago ILL



Bridging The Gap In District 6

Several years ago at a District 6 meeting I was approved as Bridging the Gap Chair for the District. I had been bringing weekly AA meetings into the Two Bridges Correctional facility in Wiscasset, and it seemed like this position would dovetail nicely with the BTG purpose of connecting alcoholics departing correctional and treatment facilities with AA on the outside. I quickly found that it is easier to get a cat to lick hot mustard than it is to get someone departing treatment into the halls of AA.

The first thing I learned from those wiser who had preceded me is that when an alcoholic leaves a facility of any kind, there tends to be a small window between that departure and possible relapse. We're alcoholics: we continue to think we can do this thing alone and we cannot. Many of those released head straight to their prior haunts. Our service manual stresses the importance of immediate contact with these men and women. Left to their own devices many fail to recover. As such, the BTG Chair recruits men and women within our District 6 to make immediate personal contact with these vulnerable souls and offer to take them to up to six AA meetings, introduce them to the rooms, and generally extend a hand of love and friendship.

We have several tools at our disposal to make this happen. We have a website www.btgmaine.org where those seeking a temporary contact can make a request. One may mail a program brochure to: Bridging the Gap, PO Box D, Brunswick, ME 04011. I speak routinely at Mid Coast Hospital, and Two Bridges Jail stressing that if one can make it into the rooms of AA, you have a shot to get your life back. I interface with other Maine BTG Chairs, it is not uncommon to receive an e-mail or phone call from a chair from Bangor, Rockland, or Portland saying that they have a man or woman headed to District 6 from Milestone, Crossroads, or the Cumberland Jail. I attend D6 and Area 28 BTG Committee meetings, distribute AA brochures, general BTG contact information, my BTG business card and stay connected with our professional recovery community.

This position has been both gratifying and at times disappointing. Many of those who claim to want a temporary contact fail to accept a helping hand. But this is part of the job. We do have success and it is gratifying to the extreme when someone makes it. I will be rotating out of this position at the end of 2019. Perhaps you can continue this work for District 6 and placate your sponsor as well. In gratitude & service, Chris W.



The 7th Tradition

By being self-supporting and declining outside contributions, Alcoholics Anonymous Groups protect the fellowship structure and basic spiritual foundations. Tradition 7 of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) says, "Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

One of the principals of the AA is that each member is responsible for his or her own recovery. The first part of Tradition 7 makes it clear that responsibility extends to the members of each group as it passes the basket for contributions to pay the rent and maintain its literature library.

If the group collects more than is necessary to meet its expenses, the group can contribute to its AA's General Service Office, District 6, Area 28 and Intergroup/Central Service Office who also follow this tradition by accepting no outside contributions. Although such contributions have fallen off in recent years, they are important in helping to carry the message worldwide.

The second part of this tradition addresses the issue of the fellowship not becoming involved with outside issues or conflicts that could arise by accepting "outside contributions." If such contributions were accepted the group and its members might feel obligated to make some kind of concessions to the individual or organization making the donation. Declining these contributions keeps the fellowship independent from outside influences. It also cuts out the need to constantly chase donor funding and government grants.

An AA member notes the many benefits of this tradition for the alcoholic, the group, and for AA as a whole. Many come to AA at rock bottom, without a job or place to stay. No payment is required at AA, but as the alcoholic gets sober and begins to make progress in other areas of his life, he is able to place a contribution in the basket at the meeting. It makes him responsible for the first time (for many) to take care of himself and give back to the group.

Those in AA who have been in the program for years might think they have contributed enough and leave the burden of being financially responsible to newcomers. The AA co-founders understood this and Tradition 7 protects the program from getting outside help. The program shows how an alcoholic who was socially irresponsible came to be responsible.

The dignity of the member is also built by allowing him to take care of the group's needs. An AA member notes, "For a long time some of us were 'that pitiful drunk.' Some people felt we were only looking for a handout in life. Maybe some of us were, but no more. Now with our pennies, we help maintain our own sobriety. We need only rely on ourselves and each other for the most precious gifts: dignity and sobriety."

Anonymous.

Serenity

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

~ Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr

AA meetings around the world often begin in the same way – with the assembled group reciting the Serenity Prayer together. Early on in sobriety newly-sober alcoholics are taught to recite this prayer whenever they feel overwhelmed or tempted. But what do these words – serenity, acceptance, courage, and wisdom really mean?

Let's take a closer look at each.

Serenity refers to Inner Peace Alcoholism is characterized by chaos, loss of control, and emotional turmoil. Serenity, on the other hand, is a positive state of mind where you are untroubled by life's ups and downs. It means remaining calm and true to yourself, regardless of what else is going on. Some would even say that serenity is the goal of recovery. Acceptance refers to taking what is offered. Another characteristic of Alcoholism is denial – refusing to believe what is plainly evident. Denial is an extension of our own stubborn egos – a futile attempt to reject what is to chase after what we desire. In recovery, an example of this would be trying to control our consumption of alcohol when the very definition of alcoholism is that we have no such power. Acceptance, on the other hand, means making the best of what we have. It means realizing the reality of what life has given us – genes predisposed to alcoholism, a difficult childhood, everyday stress, etc. – and still working with what we have been given to live the best life we possibly can. Courage Refers to mastering our fear. There is an old acronym in recovery that signifies what "fear" is – false evidence appearing real, meaning that another characteristic of alcoholism is being controlled by distorted or untrue perceptions about ourselves, our own value as human beings, our disease of alcoholism, and our ability to get better.

Because of these invalid perceptions, we react in unhealthy, self-destructive ways. We drink and use to cover up our own feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness, and shame. Courage, on the other hand, means reacting and moving forward positively, even when we feel negative – doing the right thing, even when we are unsure. Courage doesn't mean that we have no fear; it means that we refuse to be ruled by it. Courage during recovery can take many forms:

Honesty – even when the truth is uncomfortable. Fortitude – even when doing the right thing is hard. perseverance – even in the face of obstacles. Faith – even when we feel like giving up. Willingness to change – even when we are unsure Wisdom Refers to Learning from Your Mistakes.

Alcoholism can be likened to a form of insanity. Some people define insanity as doing the same thing again and again, yet expecting different results. For example, you may tell yourself for the umpteenth time that this time it's going to be different – you're only going to have a few beers instead of getting drunk... or you're only going to get drunk on the weekends...or you really mean it this time – you're just going to muster your willpower and quit. All the things you've said before. Wisdom, on the other hand, means recognizing when something doesn't work and being willing to try something else. It means putting our ego and stubbornness aside in order to reach our goals. Wisdom in recovery can be as simple as understanding that our old behaviors and attitudes tend to get us in trouble, so instead of doing what we think is right, we take the advice of our sponsors.

What are some advantages of the Serenity Prayer?

By being mindful of the meaning behind the words of the Serenity Prayer, we gain a number of benefits: We practice differentiating between those things we can and cannot control. We learn to make the best of what we have and where we are in life. We become empowered, because we focus our time and energy on making real, positive changes. We get out of our own way and stop sabotaging our own efforts. We stop repeating the same mistakes. We stay humble, because we realize our human limitations. Most of all, it becomes possible for us to rediscover happiness through acceptance. We can find the good in what is and in what we can do, instead of focusing on the frustration of what we can't do.

Anonymous

Bath Group Treasurer

I was fortunate to be sponsored into service by Ted S when I joined the Bath Group in 1988. We then met at 8 pm downstairs at the UCC Church on Congress Avenue. Half the meeting was smoking and half non-smoking - in the same room!

Back then there were usually 60 or 70 people who attended weekly. For anniversary night, we had a homemade cake, along with trays of ham, roast beef, cheese, white bread and condiments to make sandwiches. Ted felt it was important to feed new members in particular.

My first official job was opener & coffee maker, a position I held for 3 years. The UCC Church changed hands 4 years ago & we wound up in a cramped room with about 15 people in attendance, and we actually considered closing the meeting. Then the new church asked us to find another location, so Kelly G talked with the folks at Bath Methodist Church. They said they would be honored to have our meetings there. We changed the meeting time to 7 pm, and over the first year membership grew. We added a pot luck dinner 2 years ago on the 3rd Friday of every month at 5:30 pm, and meeting attendance has grown to between 50 to 70 members since. And, the church has been very supportive of AA's mission and the Bath Group.

I have been treasurer for the past 2 years, and our 7th Tradition has grown to \$250 or more a month. We agreed to give the church half of that for rent. And, we keep a prudent reserve of \$300 for the Group & \$300 for Mike S, our GSR for travel expenses - should he need them.

We disperse funds quarterly to District 6, CSO, Maine Area 28 & GSO. And, we buy Big Books to give out to every newcomer who picks up a white chip. We also buy supplies for our pot luck, along with cards, chips & medallions.

We have speaking commitments from other groups come in about 3 times a month, and we also go out on commitments as often. There are several original members and a strong & growing membership. We have several service positions that will be opening up, with interested members standing for positions at our October business meeting. So, if you are interested in joining the Bath Group, we invite you to join us at our next business meeting on Friday, October 4th at 8:30 pm following the 7 pm meeting at Bath Methodist Church, 340 Oak Grove Avenue, Bath.

In Love & Service,
Sarah G
Bath Group Treasurer



TRADITION TWO: The Principle of Rotation

(Short Form) "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving god as he may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

The purpose of this article is to enhance unity by encouraging discussion of one element of Tradition Two: The Principle of Rotation.

Do we practice rotating leadership, stepping out of office regardless if we believe others are not available, not willing and not qualified or do we remain frozen in office?

THE AA GROUP PAMPHLET, P. 34

"Traditionally, Rotation keeps AA members from becoming frozen in office. It also ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in AA, are passed around for all to share...to step out of an AA office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it is especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth—a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity...rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no AA "status" at stake, we needn't compete for titles or praise—we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed".

AA GRAPEVINE, SEPTEMBER 1992

"But then I began to see rotation in action, and I learned the difference between ruling and serving. Rotation is one of the ways we use to make sure we serve and don't rule...AA's tradition of rotation (even if it permits some inexperience and even ignorance) was a bit shocking. Could such a structure stay intact? Wouldn't it finally fall apart? The answer, I discovered, was this: AA is unified and strong, because we are not organized...we've insisted that all those serving AA derive their authority from a loving god expressing himself within the informed group conscience."

Do we practice transitory and rotating leadership allowing dependence on the god of our understanding to lead, via group conscience, or do we govern through fixed and official leadership?

BILL WILSON, AA GRAPEVINE, OCTOBER 1947

"AA may be able to function upon the power of its own fundamental principles rather than upon the prestige or inspiration of a highly personalized leadership. Thus, the whole can become of transcending importance over any part; continued unity and success can then mostly depend upon god as we understand him working vitally in thousands of hearts rather than a few. Deep down, I think we in AA have begun to sense this magnificent possibility. The widening conviction that active leadership ought to be transitory and rotating; that each AA group with respect to its own affairs need be accountable only to its own conscience; that our committees and boards are really servants, not officials; that we, as a movement, ought to remain poor, so avoiding the risks of disrupting wealth...such concepts certainly leave little room for a prestige-clothed leadership."

Do we experience through rotating leadership at all service levels, a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere or do we experience an authoritarian and fixed leadership interfering with our true ultimate authority?

BILL WILSON, AA GRAPEVINE, JANUARY 1948

"We humbly hope and believe that our growing AA tradition will prove to be the will of god for us... and we need not depend overmuch on inspired leaders. Because our active leadership of service can be truly rotating, we enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere...therefore we of AA are certain that there is but one ultimate authority, "a loving god as he may express himself in our group conscience."

Do we believe as individual members that our service committees govern and cannot get along without us and our directions, advice or orders and do we connive for re-election, unwilling to step aside quietly allowing god, through our group conscience to lead?

AA, TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS P.134/5

"...the Group now has a so-called rotating committee, very sharply limited in its authority. In no sense whatever can its members govern or direct the group. They are servants. Theirs is the sometimes-thankless privilege of doing the group's chores...the committee gives no spiritual advice, judges no one's conduct, issues no orders...and so they make the belated discovery that they are really servants, not senators. These are universal experiences. Thus, throughout AA does the group conscience decree the terms upon which its leaders shall serve...the bleeding deacon is one who is just as surely convinced that the group cannot get along without him, who constantly connives for reelection to office..."

Do we selflessly serve as leaders, guided by group conscience, or do we exert authority to seek power, property or prestige through governance?

AA GRAPEVINE, SEPTEMBER 1992

"In setting up services and make sure they worked well, it was tempting to forget the principle of rotation...how much more difficult it was to hold on to the principle of rotation and make sure humility (rather than power building) was at the center of our efforts. We learned that even though it was more difficult to rotate and have to constantly move through a period of learning, this was good for the individuals involved and for AA...no one person or small group of people, needed to stay in particular serving positions...many people got a chance to serve rather than just a few.

Do we serve through rotating leadership and never command or exert authority, acting only to understand, explore and carry out the conscience of the group?

BILL WILSON, AA GRAPEVINE, 1947

"Nowhere in AA is there to be seen any constituted human authority that can compel an AA group to do anything...each leader soon discovers that while he can always guide by example or persuasion, he can never boss...the majority of AA groups do not even choose leaders. They prefer rotating committees to handle their simple affairs. These committees are invariably regarded as servants. They have only the authorization to serve, never to command. Each committee carries out what it believes to be the wishes of its group. That is all...heavy handed assertion of my personal authority always created confusion and resistance".

Do we remained fixed in various service positions believing we achieved or maintain our personal sobriety through service and if so, how is this practice aligned with tradition five?

THE AA GROUP PAMPHLET, P.23

"Each AA Group determines the minimum length of sobriety for members to be eligible for any position or office...these jobs may have titles. But titles in AA do not bring authority or honor; they describe services and responsibilities. And it has generally been found that giving members jobs solely to help them stay sober does not work".

Anonymous



Editors note — does your home group rotate service positions as recommended by AA?

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference."





A poem on Steps 10, 11, and 12

Continue to grow
Through steps ten, eleven, twelve
Opportunity.

See myself clearly.
Embrace my imperfections.
Heal the harm I cause.

Return to my source
Breathing love and compassion
For self and others.

Now knowing the way,
Abundance overflowing.
Share it and it grows.

Emptiness now full.
No longer ashamed, alone
Joyfully growing.

Across

- 2. Before we're half-way through we'll be
- 6. one leg of the triangle
- 7. what we aren't
- 8. we will know serenity and this
- 10. they aren't these kind of promises
- 12. one of our founders
- 13. what we claim
- 15. it weighs a ton in the beginning

Down

- 1. a word often misunderstood
- 3. how we move along the road of happy destiny
- 4. the only thing we have to do perfectly
- 5. the kind of power we need
- 9. color of our first chip
- 11. our spiritual foundation
- 14. Dr. Bob's last name



History of the Richmond "So What" Group

On Wednesday, August 27th, 1986 George C. and Marve S. sat downstairs at St.Ambrose Church in Richmond, Maine hoping to start an AA meeting. For weeks

it was just the two of them and a pot of coffee, hoping a newcomer would walk through the doors. It happened. They came! Some stayed, some moved (like George C.), some died, some came and went.

The attendance of the meeting fluctuated but the meeting never failed to open and be a welcoming place for newcomers and old-timers. After 3 different locations, various members, and lots of coffee the Richmond "So What" Group is still going strong, 33 years later any given Sunday night at 7pm you can find a large number of AA members gathered for a meeting.

The tight-knit group and loving fellowship of this meeting have attracted many people to come, and to stay. A well-known and loved member Hayden has helped the group celebrate its commencement with a large picnic at his home in Woolwich. The picnic celebrates the group anniversary (8/27/1986) and August member anniversaries. At the 2019 Group Anniversary Picnic 3 members celebrated their anniversaries (40 years, 39 years, and 5 years) a many other members and non-members came to celebrate a new way of life.

A huge thank you to Marve S. for a detailed history of the Richmond "So What" Group"

"Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired! I coulda got that from those AA's for free." —James, New Zealanda



"Counsellor, I believe you misunderstood me. I said "rigorous" honesty, not reckless honesty."—Dennis B., St. Paul, Minn.

District 6 Financies

As of 08/09/19	Approved	Actual
Chair	\$600.00	\$12.94
NERASSA (Chair)	\$0.00	\$585.24
DCM-1	\$400.00	\$0.00
DCM-2	\$350.00	\$0.00
DCM-3	\$350.00	\$0.00
Treasurer	\$40.00	\$0.00
Secretary	\$0.00	\$0.00
Archives	\$25.00	\$0.00
Bridging the Gap	\$50.00	\$0.00
Corrections	\$50.00	\$0.00
CSO/Intergroup		
Liason	\$30.00	\$0.00
Functions Committee	\$750.00	\$718.27
Grapevine	\$30.00	\$0.00
Hotline	\$25.00	\$0.00
Love and Service	\$25.00	\$0.00
Meeting Lists	\$50.00	\$0.00
PI/CPC	\$25.00	\$0.00
Web Site	<u>\$376.00</u>	<u>\$325.64</u>
Totals	\$3,176.00	\$1,642.09

Any questions? email traasurer@aamainedistrict6.org