

Kent County Central Office

4920 Plainfield Ave. NE, Suite 19, Grand Rapids, MI 49525 Office Phone (616) 913-9216 (M-F, 1-5 PM)

AA 24-hour Helpline (616) 913-9149

Website: www.grandrapidsaa.org

Upcoming Events

Friday Evening Speaker Meetings January 5, 12, 19, 26 7 p.m., North Alano Club

District 7 Business Meeting

Saturday, January 6 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Portland Group Mt. Hope Church, Portland

Area 34 Assembly Sunday, January 21 10:30 a.m. (see attached flyer)

KCCO Business Meeting Thursday, January 18 6 p.m., KCCO

> Spring Roundup April 27, 2024 North Alano Club

Michigan State Convention
June 7-9, 2024
(see attached flyer)



NEED TO FIND A MEETING?

Scan the QR Code at right, or go to the AA meetings listing at: www.grandrapidsaa.org/meetings



Alcoholics Anonymous

and

New Year's Resolutions

Millions of Americans drank too much over the holidays, and have made yet another New Year's resolution to get sober. Most resolutions will be forgotten by the weekend. However, if the resolution is coupled with an action step, of going to Alcoholics Anonymous, there are greatly improved odds of success.

What began 75 years ago with Bill W. and Dr. Bob helping each other stay sober has now reached an astonishing 1.3 million Americans who meet in 58,000 groups. Another 750,000 meet in 49,000 groups in 150 countries. I knew that Jim, a friend, is an AA member and asked if I could attend an AA meeting as a journalist. He showed me a list of 1,400 groups in Metro Washington to could choose from. The meeting we attended in a church had 40 people present. If that was typical, 56,000 are members here.

It's not always been so easy to attend AA. When Jim began going in 1975 he was a college student at a small school in West Virginia. The nearest AA group was 30 miles away. His sponsor, a man with impaired eyesight, would call Jim and say, "I need a ride to the meeting." Of course, that made the trip longer. Jim later realized, "He was trying to get me to a meeting. He had zillions of people nearby who could have taken him." The impact of AA on Jim? "It restructured my whole life, restored me mentally, physically, and spiritually. It took the compass of my life and pointed it in a different direction."

Continued on page 2 ...

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One of his original sponsors was the CEO of a major company. He inspired Jim to start his own business. Jim's group meets at 7:30 am daily for an hour. One day they might pick one of the 12 steps to discuss such as these:

- · Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- · Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- · Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- · Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.

Another meeting might begin with one member telling his story for 10 minutes, sparking reactions from others. On a different day, they will read a passage from "Alcoholics Anonymous," what members call "The Big Book," the basic text for AA that Bill wrote in 1939. Its purpose, written when there were 100 AA men and women "who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body," was to "show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered."

There are 42 personal stories in the book. As a physician who treated alcoholics put it in a preface, each of these people "have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving." Bill writes, "I began to waken very early in the morning shaking violently. A tumbler full of gin followed by half a dozen bottles of beer would be required if I were to eat any breakfast. Nevertheless, I still thought I could control the situation, and there were periods of sobriety which renewed my wife's hopes."

In December, 1934 Bill, a failed stockbroker, was in a Manhattan detox center, his fourth stay, when he was visited by Ebby, an old drinking buddy, who had found religion and stopped drinking. "Realize you are licked, admit it, and get willing to turn your life over to God," his friend urged. Bill was "aghast...shocked but interested." Though he was an agnostic, who had rejected religion and ministers, he realized he had "always believed in a Power greater than myself," and then thought that "Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning...I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost." Bill and his friend made a list of people he had hurt, and pledged to ask for their forgiveness. Ebby also convinced Bill that it was "imperative to work with others as he had worked with me." Months later Bill took a trip to Akron where he met a surgeon, a closet alcoholic. Bill confronted him, urging him to admit that only God could remove his urge to drink. Dr. Bob surrendered on June 10, 1935.

That was the founding date of AA, which is now ubiquitous. Go to AA on the web to find local groups. This could be the first day of your new life.

★★★★

KENT COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE (KCCO): An Intergroup you say? What's that?

Intergroups are service entities that focus exclusively on local needs (e.g. publishing local A.A. meeting lists, answering inquiries about A.A., receiving, arranging, and following up with Twelfth Step calls, establishing local public information committees) and are not part of A.A.'s larger decision-making/service structure. You'll notice they don't appear in the upside-down triangle. But there is a connection between the two as shown in the picture.

The KCCO can generally be described as the clearing house of information and service between your group, our district, and the intergroup itself.

"Unity is the glue that holds the intergroup/central offices and general services together, but it is communication that jumpstarts mutual cooperation and harmony — vital both in reaching suffering alcoholics and in being attuned to the needs of those who are recovering in A.A." — Reprinted from Intergroup/Central Offices: A.A.'s Front Line — Box 459 – August/September 2007.

Though an intergroup falls within the broader definition of "general service" (service beyond the group level), it should not to be confused with "General Service", shorthand for A.A.'s larger decision-making/service structure. Within KCCO and many other places, Intergroups and General Service entities (Areas, Counties, Districts) coordinate with one another to divide up service responsibilities.

What's Your Story? We'd love to hear it! Let your story be heard. It just might be what another alcoholic needs to jump on the recovery bandwagon, or what encourages another to stay the recovery course, or to more fully engage in it We all have a story. Will you share yours?



Thank you, Kim, for sharing your story! (Read on . . .)

Service has allowed me to make my living amends, to grow spiritually, and to stay sober. A friend in AA knew I was having a difficult time staying sober and suggested I get involved in service. So I did, and, I haven't had a drop of alcohol since 2016.

As Corrections Chair for District 7, one of my responsibilities is to coordinate meetings via SignUP Genius with volunteers for the Kent County Jail, Women's Facility. Our responsibility with KCJ is to bring a meeting into the women's facility on Mondays at 8pm and on Saturdays at 11am, weekly. Volunteers are needed for both the men's and women's facilities. Interested AA members can contact our incoming Chair Elect, Andrew W., at district7correctionschair@gmail.com, effective 1-1-2024. The program coordinator for the men's and women's facility at the Kent County Jail is Sargent Nikila Edwards. Sgt. Edwards requires volunteers to have a background check. The volunteer must be 1 year from their last felony to be eligible. Once the background check is completed, Sgt. Edwards will let Andrew (for male volunteers) or myself (for female volunteers) know via email that the volunteers can take meetings into the jail.

Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers (Tradition 5). This is part of our 12th step work. District 7 serves 4 counties: Montcalm, Ionia, Kent, and Barry. It is the District 7 Correction Chair's responsibility to try and connect with the program coordinators in the jails associated with each county, as well as to coordinate volunteers for each jail. The chair stays connected with volunteers via email, snail mail, texting, or phone calling to keep them informed. Each jail has their own program and their own set of guidelines. It's important that we keep communication open with the program coordinator via email at each jail so we can continue to carry the message. It is important, too, that volunteers are on time for their scheduled meeting and are following the AA suggested guidelines for conducting a meeting.

The Corrections Chair also participates at events such as workshops and State Conventions, informing people how to serve in the corrections setting. The Chair has the opportunity to attend the International Corrections Conference held once a year. District Chair also volunteers at the yearly Kent County Central Office Spring Round Up, heading up the "jail sale", where AA Big Books are sold and then donated to the jails for their libraries. Some jails still allow AA volunteers to bring the books into jail meetings.

Alcoholics Anonymous makes much of its literature available electronically via tablets in English, French, and Spanish. Not all jails have tablets, however keeping everyone informed of what is available is vital to carry the message. The literature is free and is paid for with the groups' 7th tradition contributions to the General Service Office. Therefore, there is no cost to correctional facilities or persons of custody (inmates) to download the material to the tablets. Alcoholics Anonymous has been working with correctional facilities across the United States and Canada to bring virtual meetings to persons in custody. District 7 has not implemented this as of yet, but will be working towards this goal in the future.

Kim P. Corrections Chair, D7, 2021-23

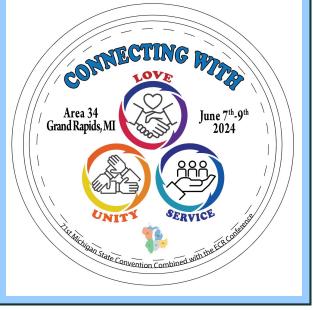
> Have you registered for the 71st Michigan State Convention?



What are you waiting for?

See the flyer, included in this newsletter, for detailed registration and accommodation information, as well as information to enter a District 7 drawing to receive a

Scholarship!



24 Hour Helpline: 616-913-9149

We can show you how taking some simple steps that can help loosen the grip that alcohol has on your life. The first step is to reach out and ask for help. This can be done by attending an A.A. meeting. If you are unsure or have questions, call the 24 hour helpline at 616.913.9149. Making that call will put you in touch with an A.A. member that can answer your questions and point you in the right direction.



Help us to continue to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Volunteer for our 24-hour AA Helpline.

A one-month commitment of 4 hours is needed every week.

Morning and afternoon shifts are available.

If you can help, please call Steve at 616-913-9216.

Relapse: When Fruit Gets Picked Before it's Ripe

Why is it that some people come to AA and never want a drink again in their lives, while others come and have multiple relapses prior to recovery. And then there are others that never get sober at all? When I hear the discussions about this topic it seems to me that the most important requirement is often overlooked. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. How many of us have a desire to stop drinking just because they got a DUI and were sentenced to attend so many AA meetings in place of jail time? I didn't, even after my 2nd DUI at the age of 22, and nobody suggested that I should stop drinking.

I didn't have a desire to stop until I woke up one morning at the age of 28, divorced, alone, desperate, and emotionally depleted. The first thought that came to me was: I had better do something about my drinking as I was circling the drain and the only thing I could think of was to call AA. I made my 1st meeting on Oct. 15, 1969, and have never wanted a drink since that day.

I was one of the fortunate ones that came to AA with a desire to stop drinking and not just a desire to get out of trouble. There are some people that are sent here to fulfill a legal requirement and they sometimes discover something that they never knew existed and they become one that is of the "educational variety", as mentioned in Appendices 2 in the Big Book, but that is a rarity.

Those that suffer relapse after relapse are tragic stories indeed and my heart goes out to them. When a friend of mine was asked why we have so many relapses' in AA he replied, "Sometimes the fruit gets picked before its ripe" implying that that person hadn't reached that point of desperation yet. Once an alcoholic has lost the ability to control his drinking, it never returns. He will continue to try to regain a level of control but the compulsion will be irresistible. He will continue to try the old game again and again with no success. He will continue to seek that short period of euphoria that he feels when he is half way through his second drink but his drinking never stops there. He will, most likely, continue to repeat this until something tragic happens and he loses more than he was willing to lose. Sometimes the most dreadful thing that happens to us turns out to be the best thing that ever happened to us, if it gets our attention and renders us teachable.

The disease of alcoholism progresses rapidly in some and slowly in others. Add drugs to the equation and it speeds up the process. I don't think I have ever seen an AA member in their teens or early twenties that didn't have a drug problem that compounded the progression and as a result, they often get sober earlier than the average alcoholic.

An alcoholic left to his own devices can't continue indefinitely without enablers. They will usually be someone who is willing to bail him out when he is in jail or call and report him off when he can't make it to work, etc. etc. This only postpones the inevitable and allows the alcoholic to deepen the degree of collateral damage. Eventually he ends up divorced, jailed, fired, or any of a dozen life changing catastrophic events that finally become the straw that broke the camel's back. He then, in desperation, comes to AA to try to salvage what's left of the world he has been living in. In life and being willing to address his problems with the help of the fellowship he may finally be on the road to recovery. The cat is finally out of the bag and his alcoholism can never be denied again.

Trying to talk an alcoholic out of drinking is not the goal of AA. Describing the true nature of his malady is the real message we should be relating to him/her so they understand why and where they are in the progression of the disease, and that they can decide for themselves if they are ready to throw in the towel. To validate this I recommend: Ref. BB. Bottom pg. 31-32 and pages 101-103 (you can also read the third and forth pages of step one in the 12X12 and get the same message).

We ought to be careful not to put our own slant on the message that we carry. It can do more harm than good and prolong the suffering of the recipient. I see it done all the time by well meaning members who got that message from other well meaning members, but they are misguided. The Big Book will bear me out on this.

By Rick R., https://www.aacle.org/relapse-fruit-gets-picked-ripe/

12 x 12 x 12

A.A.'s <u>Twelve Steps</u> are principles for personal recovery. The Twelve Traditions ensure the Unity of the Fellowship. Written by co-founder Bill W. in 1962, the <u>Twelve Concepts</u> for World Service provide a group of related principles to help ensure that various elements of A.A.'s service structure remain responsive and responsible to those they serve.

STEP ONE

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable."

TRADITION ONE

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

"Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship."

To read the Long Version of the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, & 12 Concepts, visit: www.aa.org.



THE BIRTHDAY CLOB

Celebrating SobrietyI

WHAT IS THE BIRTHDAY CLUB?

We will add your name, or that of someone you know, to our Birthday Club list, for a donation of the amount equal to your number of sober years. Names and sobriety dates will appear in our newsletter all year.

Mike W. - January 29, 2004 Tom W. - March 30, 1980 Ed B. - May 29, 2010 Ben S. - December 5, 1978 Sharron S. - April 12, 1984 Jim H. - July 5, 2005

Anne S. - August 30, 1981 Steve C. - August 14, 2018 Dave P. - November 18, 2007 Pamela W. - 20 years Wanda W. - 33 years

THE BIRTHDAY

GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING:

copriets



What is your local AA group up to?

Inquiring minds would like to know! We would be happy to promote your special events here, in this monthly publication. You can submit event information by emailing our Newsletter Editor at newsletter@grandrapidsaa.org.

We request that any digital flyers or prepared materials be sent using a JPEG format. We look forward to being in-the-know, and passing on your information to others in our area!

KCCO MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Kent County Central Office newsletter is to serve Kent County and the surrounding A.A. community in four ways:

- 1. To carry the A.A. message
- 2. To inform our readers.
- 3. To provide a forum for discussion of A.A. principles
- 4. To provide service work opportunities for A.A. members.

If you would like our KCCO newsletter sent to you through email, please send an email request to: newsletter@grandrapidsaa.org.

PLEASE NOTE:

Inclusion of articles and announcements in *Happy!* Joyous! Free! does not constitute A.A or KCCO endorsement. Rather, members of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous are encouraged to share their experience, strength and hope through this humble publication. Opinions expressed are those of the writer unless otherwise noted. The Kent County Central Office makes these announcements solely as a service to the reader, not as an endorsement.

KCCC Business Meeting December 21, 2023 Minutes

Present: David P. (Vice Chairperson); Shelly W. (KCCC Treasurer); Mike W. (Trustee #2); Chris B. (Trustee #3); Steve C., (Office Manager); Damian L. (YP Liaison).

Not in Attendance: Susie J., (Chairperson); Emily B. (Secretary); Jeff O. (Webmaster); Jim S. (District 7/KCCC Liaison); Jim H. (Area 34 Delegate); Ed B. (Area 34 Alternate Delegate).

The meeting opened with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer at <u>6:02 PM</u>. A sufficient number of members were present to constitute a quorum.

Reports:

- Minutes, Financial, Telephone and Website reports were submitted and approved.
- District 7 Report was submitted. Next District 7 meeting is on January 6th at Mt. Hope Church, Portland, MI.
- Young People's Report was submitted; Bid Committee to re-form, new officers to be elected and despite a few challenges the convention was a success!
- December Newsletter is posted on website.

Roundup Business:

- Main Speaker (Quincy W.) travel arrangements are being finalized.
- Venue is chosen (North Club) and confirmed. The theme for 2024 is the AA Camel.
- Billy K will be the caterer, we need to finalize the menu. **TABLED.**
- Dinner tickets will be \$30, Save-the-date flyers are completed.
- Registration and greeting will be managed by ARM and RWR again this year.
- Speakers; <u>Main</u>-set; <u>Kick-off</u>-Jeff O. is asking Scott S.; <u>AlAnon</u>-Set; <u>Young People</u>-Set
- Waiting for confirmation about Norm B. doing "AA History" workshop.
- Invitation letters to Area 34 and District 7 need to be written.
- T Shirt sales: Shelly W. will oversee sales and finances, design and printing to be managed by Emily B. Design and printing discussion was <u>TABLED</u>.
- Discussion started about Roundup schedule, TABLED.

Old Business:

- Friday Night Speaker Meeting: There was also a suggestion that KCCO print Speaker Meeting flyers for distribution at District 7 meetings. Not addressed due to omission on agenda – <u>TABLED.</u>
- Office computer: Two new laptop computers were purchased; one exclusively for the Office Manager to conduct business, and one for an event/volunteer computer.
- Office Keys: Decision was made to have chairperson and office manager have all keys and the
 other board members have the option to have a key to the building and the office. Steve is
 distributing and cataloging the keys.

- Office updates: A decision was previously made to have Randy M. make a sign to direct people to the new KCCO office. <u>TABLED.</u>
- Google Search: A <u>MOTION</u> was made and seconded to remove this item from agenda. A vote
 was taken, and the motion was <u>PASSED</u> unanimously.
- KCCO Fall Gratitude Dinner: Financial report was (verbally) presented, we made a small profit a
 of approximately \$200.
- 12 Step call list: There is a need for more women's numbers, please bring back to your groups.
- Committee emails: Board members are requested to log into and start using the emails
 assigned to them for conducting business. This is in the interest of complying with the bylaws
 section of the transferring of records.
- Office Manager will start providing account balance to financial report (presented to Board) and provide group donation information to newsletter editor for publication.

New Business:

- Office Improvements- Steve to purchase a new vacuum from his office discretionary fund.
- The Office Manager has requested that his schedule be reduced to three days per week, the
 remaining two to be filled by our other employee (Peggy). A <u>MOTION</u> was made and seconded
 to grant this request. During the discussion a <u>MOTION</u> was made and seconded to <u>TABLE</u> any
 further discussion until more Board members could weigh in. <u>TABLED</u>.
- A request was made from the Area 34 Treatment Committee to post their "Bridge the Gap" information on our website. This would include their meeting flyer, program procedures/guidelines, and other information in PDF format to assist them in rolling out this new program. After some discussion, a <u>MOTION</u> was made and seconded to grant their request. A vote was taken, and the motion was <u>PASSED.</u>

Please announce at your individual meetings that volunteers are always needed to answer the 24-hour hotline. Have them call Steve at KCCO, 616-913-9216. Thanks!

Next meeting 6:00 pm, Thursday, January 18, 2024, at the KCCO office, 4920 Plainfield Ave NE, Suite 19, Grand Rapids 49525, phone 616-913-9216.

Option to attend via Zoom, hosted by District 7. Meeting ID - 881 7063 2218 Password - 235257

Send your GSR or someone to represent your group and have a voice in how your Central Office is run!!!

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Mike W. (substitute secretary)

DISTRICT 7 IS HOSTING AREA 34 ASSEMBLY

Sunday, JANUARY 21, 2024

disrict roll call @ 10:30am

MI State/ERC Committee meeting @ 9:00am DCM/Delegate Meeting @ 9:30am

Potluck Lunch @ Noonish-please bring a dish to share



Rockford Sportman's Club 11115 Northland Drive NE Rockford, MI 49341



cant make it in person? join us virutally! Zoom Link: 521-659-0401





VISIT OUR WEBSITE AREA34AA.ORG

All **GSR'S** and **DCM'S** are highly encoraged to attend ALL A.A. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME - **STAY PLUGGED IN!**

Michigan Mock Conference

Connecting with Love, Unity and Service

Saturday, March 23, 2024 9:00AM - 4:00PM

First United Methodist Church 400 South Main St., Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

What is a Mock Conference?

"Mock" means a practice or rehearsal for a later event. The Michigan Mock Conference simulates the General Service Conference held annually in New York. Attendees are just like the Delegates at the GSC.

Upon registration, you will be assigned to one of the Conference Committees and provided with two agenda items for your assigned committee to consider, along with relevant background materials.

Come, listen, and learn. Give your input to your Delegates.

All attendees are strongly encouraged to pre-register online at www.michiganmockconference.com or use the QR code below.

After you register, you will receive Conference background material prior to the event via the email provided at registration. If registering in-person the day of the event, you will not have the background material in advance.

This year, there will be a virtual option for either full day committee assignment or as an afternoon session observer only. Virtual participation is limited so register ASAP. Registration on the day of the event is not available for virtual participation.

Deadline for pre-registration and virtual participation is Friday, March 15th.

Planning on coming Friday?

Friday night at 8:00PM, join us for an AA Meeting at the Mt. Pleasant Alano Club, 1201 N. Francher St. Mt. Pleasant, Ml.

If staying overnight, there are discounted rooms (\$115/nt) at the Hampton Inn by Hilton, 5205 E. Pickard Rd. Mt. Pleasant, Ml. Cut off date for reservations is 2/23/24.

Call the front desk at (989) 772-5500 or go to http://group.hamptoninn.com/goqfmt and use Group Code: Mock Conference 2024

Questions? Email 2024mockconference@gmail.com or call (734) 834-5386

71st Michigan State Convention

combined with the

ECR Conference

June 7th-9th, 2024

Calvin University 3201 Burton S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49546





Keynote Speakers:

Friday: Rich H., Hebron, IL

Saturday: Madonna V., Auburn Hills, MI

Saturday Al-Anon - TBA

Sunday: Barefoot Scott S., Hersey, MI



CARRYING THE A.A. MESSAGE OF RECOVERY

What makes an A.A. convention click for its participants? It's probably not style or form that matters so much as the spirit and feeling behind it. As one member puts it, the best A.A. convention is "just a darned good A.A. meeting blown up big." Just watch enthusiastic members at any A.A. convention and you'll get what he means. The atmosphere alone is worth the trip. Here you'll find fellowship, laughter, warmth, and understanding — "heaped up, pressed down, and running over."

Mg-04 A.A. Guidelines, Conferences, Conventions, and Roundups

Please visit wmaa34.org for more information as it becomes available.

Co-Chair Contacts: Linda B 269.329.3159 • linbow421@gmail.com | Brian S. 616.366.5827 • digi@wmis.net



Register/Dorms/Meals On-Line https://tinyurl.com/vptsx77j or use the QR code

Hotel Operations Supervisor at 616-526-0107 or

at jln3@calvin.edu and he will assist you as soon as possible.



71st MICHIGAN AA STATE CONVENTION



June 7, 8, 9, 2024 Calvin University Grand Rapids, MI



Ten \$200 Scholarships!

In need of a helping hand getting to the state convention? District 7 will be offering 10 scholarships for those in need of financial assistance. The scholarships will be randomly drawn from names submitted now until February 1, 2024. To enter the drawing complete the simple form below and return it to your local General Service Representative (GSR), or feel free to enter by attending a District 7 business meeting, held on the first Saturday of each month. For monthly meeting dates and locations, visit www.grandrapidsaa.org. The drawing will take place at the April meeting.

Included in each scholarship:

- → \$30 convention registration fee;
- → \$80 meal voucher for meals offered at the convention;
- → \$80 for dormitory accommodations (\$40 per night; must be double occupancy);
- → \$10 gas card



Please visit www.wmaa34.org for more state convention information as it becomes available.

71 st Michigan AA State Convention -	Scholarship Drawing Entry Forn
Name:	
Email:	
Phone #	
Local Group Name:	