The NORTHERN LIGHT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY

ISSUE No. 5, August 15,1983 Box , Moorhead, MN 56560

GRATITUDE = SERVICE

THERE ARE TWO BIG EVENTS COMMING UP THIS FALL THE FALL ASSEMBLY AND THE FALL WORKSHOP EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE IN SERVICE

The grateful members in Pike Sandy put it this way:

Yesterday looked at honestly and used wisely
Can lead to today's growth.
Tomorrow, not worried about
Can help me concentrate on today.
I cannot change yesterday,
I may not be here tomorrow.
But I have today, I can listen, I can
Learn, I can share a part of me with
Someone else and I can grow. God has
Given me all of this thru all of you in
A.A.

(Signed), Grateful in Pike Sandy

A word from District 7.

A tip of the hat to *"Sober Norm"* for dropping us a note to let us know that District 7 has a Round Robin the last Saturday of each month. In July the meeting was at Staples, ***In August it will be at Nissauwa; In September at Long Prairie.***

Norm also sent a list of 43 little pearls and gems of wisdom; some are great, some fair and some simply awful...You be the judge!

1. The bigger a man's head...the easier to fill his shoes.

2. Easy does it: "The hurrier I go, the behinder I get."

3. Diplomat: One who tells you to go to h--- in such a nice way, that you immediately start looking for transportation!

4. It is difficult to do wrong--and feel right!

5. The proportion of those who think is extremely small; yet...every individual flatters himself that he...is one of that number.

6. Middle age is that difficult period between Juvenile Deliquency...and Social Security...when we try to take care of ourselves.

7. (Sign in the lady's lounge in a Seattle Shipyard) TO WOMEN WORKERS: If your coveralls are too big, Beware of the Machines. If too tight, BEWARE OF THE MACHINISTS!

8. The real measure of a man's wealth is what he'd be worth if he lost his money.

9. Don't mistake a sluggish liver for Serenity.

...And finally this jewel from Mark Twain whom Sober Norm claims said,*"Don't mourn over fancied grievences. Bide your time and real sorrow will come.*

Thanks Norm!

OPEN ANNIVERSARY MEETING HOYT LAKES, MN.

Word from Hoyt Lakes is that they are having an open meeting on *August 27th, at 8:00 pm in the Hoyt Lakes Community Building.* Speakers will be **Vicki H.**,for Alanon and **Louie H.**,for A.A.. For those of you who don't know Vicki and Louie, they are from Moorhead. Louie is the chairman of the Northern Assembly. It is said that Vicki gives a great talk and Louie's gets better as he listens more to her as time goes on.

SIX SUBMIT RESUME'S FOR DELEGATE

The secretary of the Northern Assembly, Patty R., reports that six A.A. members have each submitted their resume' to stand for election to replace outgoing delegate, Tom L. The election will be held at the Fall Assembly to be held at Cragun's Resort located near Brainerd, Mn. The Assembly has been extended to a two day affair and will start on Saturday, October 8th and finish on Sunday, October 9th.

The candidates listed in alphabetical order are as follows;

1. Louie H , Moorhead
2. James T. H , Rush City
3. Scott J , Aurora
4. Bob P ., Superior
5. William (Bill) S , Crosby
6. Walter J. T , Sandstone

The resume' of each candidate will be mailed to the voting members of the Northern Assembly. Each resume' is submitted on a form prepared by the assembly and requests the candidate to supply brief biographical data comprised of such catagories as personal history, A.A. background, current A.A. activities, activities outside A.A. such as clubs, rehabs, etc.

It is strongly suggested to the new voting members that they become familiar with the voting procedure prior to the Fall Assembly. In addition to the selection of a delegate, area officers will also be elected. Be sure to contact your DCM's if you have questions about election procedures.

DISCLAIMER

The Northern Light
P.O. Box
Moorhead, Mn. 56560

The Northern Light is a newsletter for the Northern Assembly of Area 35 of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Northern Light is not an official publication of Alcoholics Anonymous and the articles and opinions appearing herein are strictly the personal opinions of those expressing them. Remarks, articles, stories, poems, editorial comments, letters to the editor or any other material printed herein is not published on authority of A.A. and such material is merely the personal opinion of those expressing the same.

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WHAT IS AN A.A. GROUP?

Our Directories state:

"Traditionally, two or more alcoholics meeting together for purposes of sobriety may consider themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, *they are self supporting and have no outside affiliation.*"

In addition, an A.A. group holds regularly scheduled meetings and has at least an informal structure with several "trusted servants" who serve in rotation, and who look after the meeting room, Twelfth Step Calls, Literature, Program and Refreshments.

Without a doubt, meetings are the primary activity of each A.A. group and the most common way of carrying the message to newcomers and to other members who want to maintain recovery. When we make a distinction between A.A. groups and A.A. meetings, we are emphasizing a concept rather than the format of what actually happens when A.A.'s get together. We think of an A.A. group as something that continues to exist even when there is no meeting taking place, because a group does many other things besided hold meetings. On the other hand, ***special-purpose meetings*, which take care of the needs of interested individuals are usually informal gatherings with no particular structure.**

There are six points which describe what an A.A. group is:

1. All members of a group are alcoholics, and all alcoholics are eligible for membership.

2. As a group, they are fully self-supporting.

3. A Group's primary purpose is to help alcoholics recover through the Twelve Steps.

4. As a group, they have no outside affiliation.

5. As a group, they have no opinion on outside issues.

6. As a group, their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, and they maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio-TV and film.

TIMELESS ADVICE FROM A FAITHFUL SERVANT

Vern R., our past delegate from Grand Rapids, was rummaging through some old papers and writings from the time he was a delegate and came across this letter written to the fellowship five years ago. It contains some sage advice and pearls of wisdom which can be of value to us all. Editor.

The letter is printed verbatim as follows:

"Our fellowship is for alcoholics and alcoholics only."

"Dear GSR's, Assembly Officers and all A.A.'s,"

"This will probably be my last personal letter to you as your Delegate and I want to thank each of you for allowing me to be your trusted servant. I hope to be able to continue being active and to serve this beautiful fellowship."

"There are a few things I would like to bring up as I think they are very important."

"First of all, I would like to remind all of you, especially the GSR's to share all of the correspondence you receive with your groups. There may be someone who would like do be active but they just don't know how to get started. The theme of the last Conference in April was ***The A.A. Group, Where it Begins."*** From active A.A. Groups come active GSR's -from active GSR's come active DCM's and from active DCM's come active Delegates. From all of this activity we see growth and strength in our groups because we are learning from each other and this growth and strength insures the survival of A.A. for those yet to come. One of the pitfalls that we seem to get into is that we would like to be "all things to all people" and get the whole world straightened out. Sooner or later we come to realize that this is not possible. We are alcoholics trying to help alcoholics and our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. There are problems other than alcohol that have benefited by using the A.A. program which they have adapted to their particular problem, and as individuals we can help these programs get started, but we have many, many drunks that we are not helping and I think we need to take a long hard look at just where we are in our own program of Alcoholics Anonymous. We have agencies and treatment centers sending us non-alcoholics. Do we lead them to believe that they are members of A.A.? If we do, we are hurting them as well as ourselves and we are depriving them of help they might otherwise be getting form a group who has their same problem. I'm sure that none of us want to hurt anyone anymore. Our Fellowship is for alcholics and alcoholics only."

"One of the pitfalls that we seem to get into is that we would like to be "all things to all people"...

"I almost hate to mention the next subject because it seems that I'm always bringing it up. You may say -then don't bring it up. However, it is a very necessary part of our Fellowship and does need to be talked about. **MONEY!** Our preamble states that we are self-supporting through our own contributions. This means that as a group we support A.A. and A.A. only. All of the Districts in our area voted to contribute $1.00 per member per year to the District, $1.00 per member per year to the Assembly and the suggested contribution to G.S.O. is $3.65 per member per year which totals $5.65. If we add another $5.00 for a yearly subscription to the Grapevine, this brings the total of all these things to $10.65 per member per year. This a a small price to pay for continued sobriety and the rewards we reap from the love and fellowship we find in A.A. I think I am safe in saying that when we were practicing only a mother could love us and even that was "touch and go" at times. In A.A. we are equals and we are accepted and loved wherever we are in sobriety. Our first priority is for the good of the group and most certainly we need a meeting place which is adequate for the group. Because we are self-supporting we pay rent, as a group, for a place to meet. However, in my travels throughout the area I notice that some groups are allowing group funds to be handled by Alano Clubs and these group funds are not being used for A.A. purposes. We should pay rent to the Alano Society (if we have one) but as a group we should also be responsible for purchasing Conference Approved Literature form G.S.O., for taking care of contributions to the district, the area assembly and to G.S.O., and for other necessary expenses of the group. If we say we are A.A. then let's be A.A. all the way and not confuse ourselves and newcomers by being half and half. At this point I must say that there was a time when I thought - What difference does does it make and why do some make such a fuss about this ? but as I read and studied the A.A. Service Manual, the Guidelines, the Steps, the Traditions and the Concepts, etc. I ***came to believe*** that it was necessary to adhere strictly to the guidelines of this Fellowship or there won't be a Fellowship. Someone has said that "we will not be destroyed from without, but that our destruction will come from within if we do not learn from the experience of those who have gone before us." Let's keep our minds open and learn form the painful experiences of those early A.A.'s."

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"Service is the "life blood" of Alcoholics Anonymous..."

"Another subject dear to my heart is service meetings. Service is the "life blood" of Alcoholics Anonymous and thank God we have some very dedicated hard working people who are active in service work. If it weren't for them we wouldn't be here. Those of you who share my feeling for service know who you are and I want you to know how very grateful I am to you. All GSR's and DCM's and officers are expected to attend the service meetings. One such meeting coming up is the Fall Assembly which will be held in Brainerd on October 9. There will be an open meeting for the "early birds" on the evening of October 8."

(Editor's Note: Incidentally, our Fall Assembly for 1983 falls on the same date; October 8th and 9th at Cragun's Resort located just a few miles out of Brainerd.)

"Some of you did not attend the DCM meeting in Moorhead on August 13. It was a good meeting with Bob P. from G.S.O. sitting in on the meeting. We missed those of you who did not attend as we need each of you at these meetings to share your experiences with us. We need everyone's participation and involvement so we will have a strong and well informed assembly area."

"On November 11, 12, and 13 the Annual Service Workshop will be held at the Rainbow Inn in Grand Rapids. This service workshop is especially for GSR's and DCM's and all A.A.'s who are interested in serving the Fellowship. Make your plans early to attend - we need to know how many will attend to finalize the plans."

(Editor's Note: The 1983 Fall Workshop will be held on identical dates; November 11, 12, 13, 1983 at the Rainbow Inn, Grand Rapids, Mn.)

"One final thing and then I'll close. We have had a special request from the Grapevine staff to ask each group to elect a Grapevine Representative for their group. The last Conference voted to encourage each group to do this. I want to ask each group to elect a Grapevine Representative ***(GVR)*** and send his or her name to Grapevine, P.O. Box 1980, Grand Central Stationl, New York, New York, 100017. Please do this as soon as possible. The Grapevine will send you all the necessary information to help you become an effective Grapevine Representative for your group. I know the Grapevine staff will appreciate this a great deal."

"We have had many new groups in the last year and a half and I want to extend a most hearty welcome to each of you. We need all of you. If any of the groups are having problems or if you have questions about some of the things in my letter please let me hear from you. I will be glad to sit down and talk things over - we can learn from each other."

"I also want to thank each of you for your support and encouragement during my term as Delegate. There were times when the road was "rocky" and I was discouraged. I wondered if it was all worthwhile, but whenever I needed you you were there to share and make the road seem more smooth. I cannot fully express in words what this has meant to me. I know that your gratitude for this Fellowship has helped you give a little "extra" when it seemed that you were already doing your share."

"Again, I thank you for the privilege of serving you and I love you all for giving me this chance. God bless you."

Much A.A. love to all,
(signed) Vern R.
Delegate
NORTHERN MINNESOTA A.A. AREA ASSEMBLY

SERVICE EVENTS SCHEDULED

There are a couple of important service events scheduled for fall. If you can't make it to anything else, be sure to try your very best to attend these two.

FALL ASSEMBLY: OCTOBER 8th and 9th at CRAGUN'S RESORT, BRAINERD, MN. All A.A. members are welcome to attend and in fact, are encouraged to come to the meeting. Elections are going to held to elect a new delegate and to elect new officers of the assembly. Other business will be conducted. It is important that the fellowship understand that all AA's are welcome. The voting procedure provides that voting will be done by GSR'S, DCM'S, and the Area Officers (except the editor of the Northern Light). No one has been denied an opportunity to express his or her views and all can participate in the meeting except as to the limitation on voting. If you have questions, please ask your representative.

Cragun's resort has been selected for the meeting because of the fortunate problem of out-growing the Holiday Inn. One of the things to be discussed at the Fall Assembly will be the meeting place for the next Area assembly.

ANNUAL FALL WORKSHOP AT GRAND RAPIDS, NOVEMBER 11, 12, 13, at the RAINBOW INN. This meeting is a must if you are new or have any interest in service work. There is also great fellowship at this meeting. Vern R. has arranged a great program. Susan D. form the General Service Office will be on hand and will give a talk.

(For more information about these two important meetings, you can call or write Bob R., or Patty R. by reaching us at the office, Box - Fargo, ND. 58107 or calling Area Code

CARRYING THE MESSAGE THROUGH LITERATURE

(Editor's Note: Bob P., our Area Assembly Treasure did an analysis of our literature and prepared the following summary. It was copied and circulated earlier this Spring but many of you may have missed this excellent contribution.)

Here's Bob's report:

"In doing as review of our 22 A.A. Pamphlets on Recovery, I discovered some things which both suprised and dismayed me."

"Ever since I came into A.A. I have been under the impression that our program of recovery, and the instructions on how to work that program, were to be found in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.This impression was fortified by hearing countless A.A. members share their stories and relate how vital studying our Basic Text was to their initial recovery and continued sobriety. My own experience has convinced me that I was not misled."

"Therefore I was quite suprised to find that in the more than 550 pages of our 22 pamphlets on recovery, the book *Alcholics Anonymous* was mentioned only 14 times. I was even more suprised to find that 13 of these 22 pamphlets made no mention of it at all. And I was absolutely amazed to discover that None of these pamphlets mentioned the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* as the source of our program and where the clear cut directions on how to work that program were to be found."

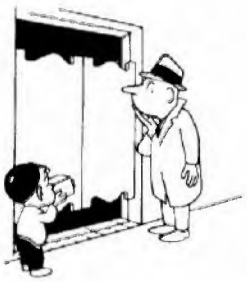
"Another thing I discovered was that 14 of those pamphlets were aimed at specific groups of people. Does this mean that alcoholism, or recovery from it, is different for a man than a woman? Is selfishness and self-centerdness in a teenager fundamentally different than selfishness and self-centeredness in a senior citizen? Is honesty with ourselves different for a person who is locked up than it is for someone who is not? Is abstinance from alcohol for a soldier the same as for a civilian? Does the alcoholic who is also addicted to drugs have to use different spiritual principles to recover than the alcoholic who isn't also addicted to drugs? Do we really need six different sets of questions to determine our possible alcoholism? Or could we devise one set that applies to all alcoholics?"

"These questions and many others like them bring me to the conclusion that the time has come to take a long and hard look at our attempts to carry the A.A. Message through literature. Is more necessarily better? Does some of our literature tend to divide rather than unite us?"

"The *Big Book* describes our Program as a design for living. Do any of us go through life without having to deal with people who are different than we are? Rather than emphasize our differences shouldn't our literature stress those things all alcoholics have in common? Does our common welfare really come first or are there exceptions to our First Tradition?"

"Our book of experience tells us that we grow by our willingness to face and rectify our errors and turn them into assets. Let us not be afraid to apply this spiritual truth to our attmepts, through our literature, **to carry the message of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS to the alcoholic who still suffers."**

Thanks Bob!



VICTOR E.

...So you're pick'n a Delegate, huh?

One of the items of business to be considered at the Fall Assembly to be held October 8th and 9th at Cragun's Resort,is the election of a Delegate to replace Tom L. whose term now expires. The voting will be done by GSR's, DCM's, and Area Officers. For some, it will be their first service meeting and many others will really have no basis upon which to make an informed selection. If you are new (or old and need reminding) turn to page 56 of the **AA SERVICE MANUAL** for discussion of factors to consider in making an informed selection of your next Delegate. *For your convience page 56 and 57 is reprinted below.*

WHAT MAKES A GOOD DELEGATE?

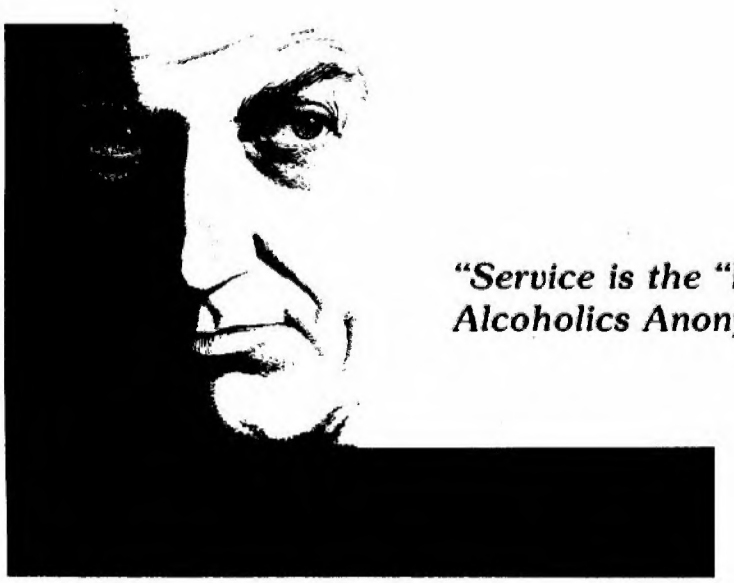
"If you are available - or considering your availability -as a canidate for delegate, ask yourself these questions:

1. How well did you do as a G.S.R.? As a committee member? Did you enjoy the responsibilities? Were you active?

2. Have you discussed the possibility with your family? Will time be available dor the amount of work required?

3. Are you familiar with this service manual? With "*A.A. Comes of Age*"? And, of course, with the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts.?

4. Have you talked with past delegates to get an idea of the time and effort required and the sort of work you will be called on to do?"



"Service is the "life blood" of Alcoholics Anonymous..."

"There is no standard type of delegate. Like every A.A. member, they come in all shapes, and sizes. But there are some characteristics that seem to make for better qualified delegates, as they themselves agree -often several years after their terms when they can more accurately measure the quality of the job they turned in."

"It is generally felt that the delegate should have been active in local and area affairs - as a G.S.R. and committee member. The delegate should have time available - not only for attending the April meeting of the Conference, but for all the efforts needed before and after the Conference. A quick glance at the review of duties earlier in this chapter tells all as far as time is concerned."

"Some feel that at least six years of continuous sobriety is essential; some say five. In any event, he or she should have been sober long enough to be considered responsible."

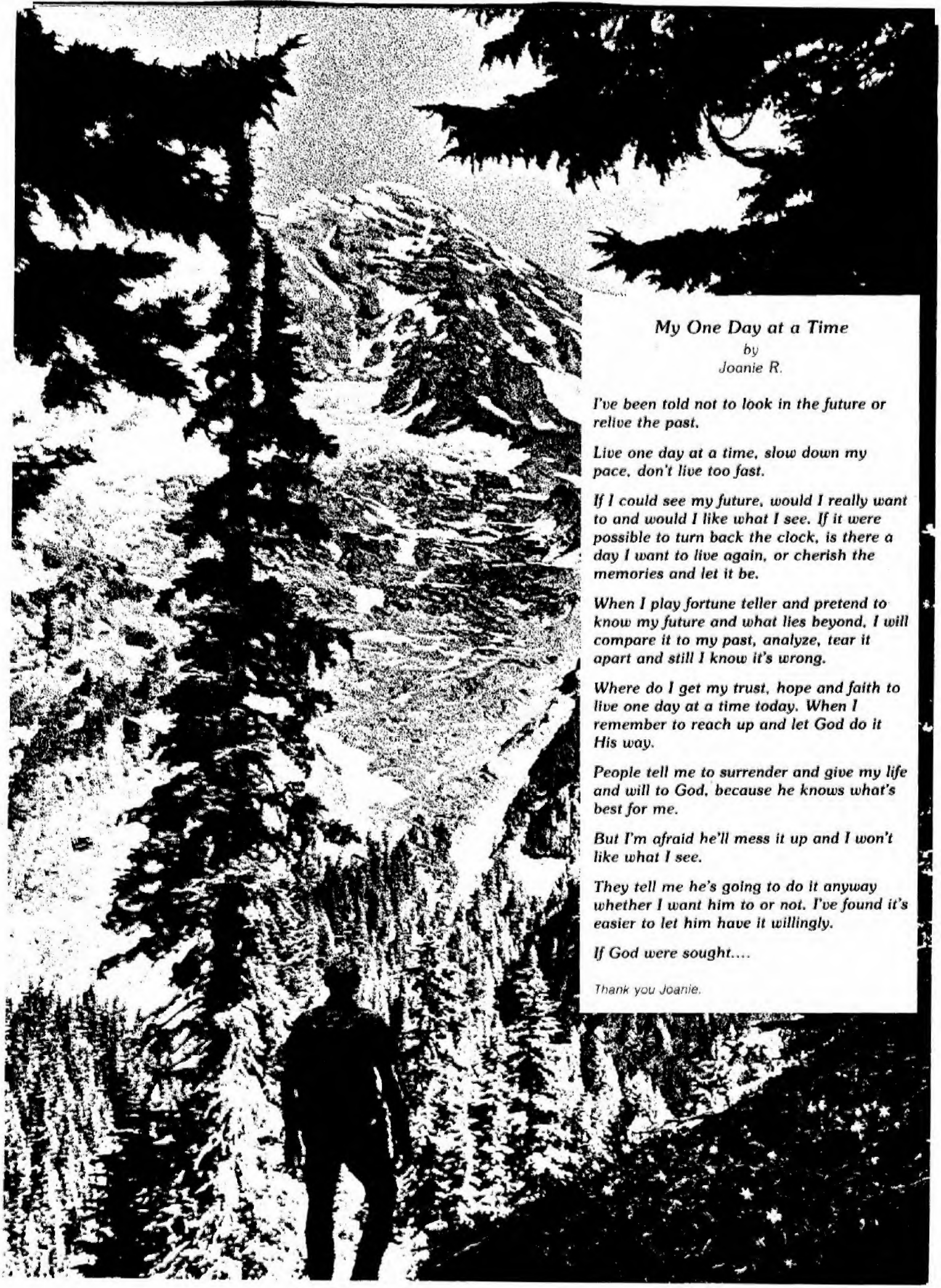
"Delegates should be able to make suggestions - and criticisms, too. Since they must chair a meeting from time to time, they should be experienced in this respect. While they do not need to be *final authorities* on all A.A. matters they should know where to get information. Delegates should know the Traditions and how they apply to local problems."

"If a delegate has leadership qualities, so much the better. Then he or she can stimulate action in the area, and team well with the committee chairperson in helping the area to become more service-minded."

"A delegate should be open-minded, able to sit down with other delegates to discuss and act on matters affecting A.A. as a whole."

Delegates Are Servants, Not Senators

"Assemblies and delegates alike should remember that delegates are not representative of areas in the usual political sense. Delegates do not go to the General Service Conference to logroll special benefits for their respective areas. They go primarily to render a service to world A.A., to insure that A.A. continues to function as a whole. However, they should bring with them the viewpoints of their own areas on world problems or even such local problems as may affect A.A. *as a whole*. Delegates are always servants, never senators."



My One Day at a Time

by
Joanie R.

I've been told not to look in the future or relive the past.

Live one day at a time, slow down my pace, don't live too fast.

If I could see my future, would I really want to and would I like what I see. If it were possible to turn back the clock, is there a day I want to live again, or cherish the memories and let it be.

When I play fortune teller and pretend to know my future and what lies beyond, I will compare it to my past, analyze, tear it apart and still I know it's wrong.

Where do I get my trust, hope and faith to live one day at a time today. When I remember to reach up and let God do it His way.

People tell me to surrender and give my life and will to God, because he knows what's best for me.

But I'm afraid he'll mess it up and I won't like what I see.

They tell me he's going to do it anyway whether I want him to or not. I've found it's easier to let him have it willingly.

If God were sought....

Thank you Joanie.