

The ***** NORTHERN LIGHT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY

ISSUE No. 6, October 1, 1983 Box , Moorhead, MN 56560

DON'T MISS IT!

8th ANNUAL SERVICE WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 11th, 12th, & 13th
RAINBOW INN, GRAND RAPIDS, MN.

The Northern Light
Post Office Box
Moorhead, Mn. 56560

Easy Does It!

TO:

One Day at a Time!

Just For Today...

First Things First

Think...Think...Think...!

From the Editor...

In the Spirit of Love

Many of you will be reading this newsletter at the Fall Assembly and some will be reading it afterwards. We are most assured that when a bunch of alcoholics get together to conduct some business about the fellowship there is bound to be controversy. Well, let's be honest; if a group of alcoholics got together to discuss anything...there would be trouble of some sort.

In understanding "us" it is important to examine the motives for all of us getting together in the first place. Why would a group of the most selfish people in the world give up a nice weekend and spend their own money to travel to Cragun's, a beautiful resort, and then spend two days in a smoke filled room listening to about eight people expound and take up about eighty percent of the time? Are we just nuts...is it that simple?

The answer is that we love A.A.; we love other alcoholics; and finally, all of us feel a duty to carry the message the best way we can. We may not recognize that urge as a duty but when we fail to do it we feel guilty. All of us know down deep that A.A. is the last stop for us as it is for the still suffering alcoholic.

When there is debate, argument or discussion about what is best for A.A. it should always be remembered that the discussion is held within a frame-work of love. A.A. is an all volunteer organization. Everyone donates their time, money, and effort without any compensation. It is all done for free and for fun. Let's be tolerant and understanding of all who express opinions or concerns about our fellowship.

It is interesting that when business is conducted within the A.A. structure that with the love that the members have for the organization there can seem to be no real harm done. For some reason or other things work out without any disaster. Sometimes A.A. does foolish things and then later when we check the book we think how in the world could that happen.

A few weeks ago a long time member and I were having coffee and he was telling me a story of how the Northern Assembly got started and some of the foolish things that had occurred because of lack of experience. He recalled the time the Northern Assembly nominated a candidate for trustee and the fellow lived in Florida. I asked him how in the world something like that could get by when the **A.A. Service Manual** clearly sets forth limitations on the selection of trustee candidates by each area. "Well", he replied, "I guess nobody thought to look in the book".

"You have a right to speak up"

When answers to A.A. problems come from the heart, they can never be wrong...mis-guided maybe...but never wrong. Many of the answers to problems in the service area of A.A. are found in the **A.A. Service Manual**. When you get mad about something or want to win an argument or for whatever reason, look in the Service Manual for the answer and you will be amazed at the information stuffed into that little book.

Above all remember that if you are at a meeting in a representative capacity, you have an obligation to those who sent you to speak your mind... (even if you suspect you don't have one). The people who sent you think you are smart so do your best. If you are at a meeting as a member of A.A. **you have a right to speak up**. You may not have a duty or obligation to participate in the meeting but you have the right to do so. If you have volunteered your time, money and effort to come to the meeting and do so in the spirit of love and concern, how could you possibly ask a dumb question or offer a stupid remark...You can't. Speak up, take part, get involved, argue, reconcile, point fingers, shout, listen, but whatever you do **GET INVOLVED!!!**

Editor, Bob R.

The comments by the Editor are strictly personal opinion and are not offered under any authority from A.A. or the Northern Assembly. The Editorials are offered only as personal opinion and comments are welcome. No one has to agree with the editor. Please send any comments, gripes, praises or whatever to ; Editor, P.O. Box Moorhead, Mn. 56560. Every effort will be made to print your letter.

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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Our Past Delegate says...

Editor;

I wish to comment on a few things I've been concerned about since I became involved in service.

We hear so many times about some who think service is just for the elite few who are on an ego trip. I would like to inform them that those elite few think of all the groups in the fellowship, not just one group. They see that all the groups get all the correspondence of G.S.O. and the area. I hear so many times that it is a lack of communication, or they are misinformed. This was probably true a few years ago, but this excuse is no longer true. Approximately 50 percent of the groups contribute to the fellowship to keep A.A. strong and growing; and believe it or not, they keep the non-contributing groups strong and growing also.

I wonder how many of these non-contributing groups went out for a nice gala Christmas dinner with group funds last year. Or how many groups are financing the up-keep of clubs rather than help support our fellowship. Or how many are using group funds to buy non-conference approved literature. They want the benefits of our beautiful fellowship, but they allow the other 50 percent of the groups to support their non-support. It has been said someplace that this is a selfish program. That is a ridiculous statement. I think what it means is that we unselfishly give to to others which was so freely given to us and selfishly hang on to this God given gift.

I would like to thank the people of Area 35 for allowing me the privilege of being involved in service and getting to know and love so many dedicated A.A. members.

Thank you, Vern R.
Past Delegate

A.A. IS FREE ?

There is a common mis-conception floating around A.A. that it is all free. We let the new people think that way for a while but as maturity or reality (I'm not sure there is a difference between the two.) sets in, it becomes apparent that the message of A.A. is freely given to those who need it but producing the message and getting it to the groups is not! We must pay for rent, postage, coffee, expenses of trusted servants, publications and many other costs just as other responsible organizations do to carry out their work. A.A. is not immune or exempt from paying its way.

Is your group paying its way? If all groups payed just a little of the freight, new people in service would not have to pay to go to service meetings. While it is a sad state of affairs in one respect, we can look at how far we have come and be thankful for the progress. We can be proud of our organization. Remember, we strive for progress, not perfection.

Peace and Serenity

**Oh! the winter winds are blowing,
from the far north tundra shores,
and the temperatures are plunging,
by the scores and scores and scores.**

**As we snuggle by the fire,
just as toasty as can be,
there isn't much this time of year,
that we could put to thee.**

**But to be among friends tonight,
where fellowship is keen,
we have a common bond and need
to have peace and serenity.**

William A. Brownlee

NORTHERN MINNESOTA ASSEMBLY

1983 FINANCIAL REPORT

January 1 - August 21

INCOME:

Beginning Balance	2154.13
Group Contributions (90 groups)	2467.98
Duluth Roundup	105.00
Paul Bunyan Roundup	50.00
Spring Assembly Coffee Kitty	100.20
Workshop Pre-Registrations (2)	14.00

TOTAL INCOME 4891.31

EXPENSES:

Final 1982 Tres. Reports	42.69
Southern Minnesota Workshop	140.88
February Area Committee Meeting	127.50
Souix Falls Regional Forum	892.65
General Service Conference	550.00
Spring Assembly	871.68
Northern Light	557.72
Postage and Envelopes	132.40
June Area Committee Meeting	203.50
Delegate Resumes	65.00

TOTAL EXPENSES 3584.02

Who are we really serving?

The *Big Book* tells us that the root of our problem is selfishness and self-centeredness. I don't know how we manage to do it but sometimes even our service efforts can fall into that trap. With the best of intentions we take new people to round ups and other A.A. functions and to make certain they get the message we save seats right up front so that all can see our concern and eagerness. Well, apparently these "good intentions" do not go unnoticed. It has even raised enough concern to cause *Box 459* to print articles about the problem. Reprinted below, with permission of *Box 459*, A.A. World Services, Inc. is an article from the February - March 1983 Issue.



Save a Seat—Lose a Newcomer?

"Someone had obviously laid claim to blocks of seats," said Merl M. of Los Angeles, Calif., in a 1980 article recently reprinted by *Hello, Central*, newsletter of that city's central office. "What if a newcomer is confronted by this 'reserved seats only' atmosphere? Chances are he or she would be saying goodbye before we had a chance to say hello."

Comments the newsletter added indicated that the seat-saving problem persists at meetings in the city. And it is evidently widespread, for the article has been picked up by other local bulletins.

Solutions that were tried worked only temporarily, the newsletter reported. If seat-saving has been a concern in your area, have you found an answer?

Fall Guy

Strolling through the art museum with his wife, a man paused at a painting of a woman of extraordinary beauty covered only by a few leaves. As he stood there his wife nudged him. "Let's go, dear," she said. "We can't wait here for autumn."

The concern didn't die with the one article; In the August-September Issue of *Box 459* the following appeared in the *Mailbag*.

Mailbag: More on Seat-Savers

A.A.'s who stake out seats for their friends at meetings ("Save a Seat—Lose a Newcomer?," February-March *Box 4-5-9*)—with everything from keys to coats to candy bars—earn less than kudos from Spanish-speaking member Francisco A.: "I never thought that someone in an A.A. group had the privilege to save a seat. How can you save a seat for an alcoholic if you do not know that he or she is coming back? I myself can only know if I am going to be sober today, and I would never dare save a seat for someone else. I feel happy when I see a friend who is sober, who comes to a meeting to join me today, and sits wherever he or she wishes."

Reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

If our primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, it is rather rude, boorish, selfish and immature to save a whole block of seats at a function; even more so if it's your own group's function where you have sold tickets and invited guests to come to your party.

Humility

Humility is perpetual quitness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble.

ANNUAL FALL WORKSHOP TO BE HELD IN GRAND RAPIDS ON NOV. 11, 12, and 13 at the RAINBOW INN.

Each year the Northern Assembly holds a service workshop at Grand Rapids. Vern R., our past delegate, puts a lot of time into organizing it and each year it continues to grow in popularity and acceptance. The word "workshop" really is a mis-nomer because it honestly is not much work for those who attend. Its purpose is to acquaint the newcomer to service with the concepts of the service structure of A.A. and refresh the memory of the older members who originally thought they knew it all but now in great humility admit that they don't. For those who have been around a while it is a time of fellowship and for the new it is a time to get acquainted with others in the fellowship and realize that A.A. is all over the place and it just doesn't happen by accident. There is a plan to it all and learning about the plan is what the workshop is all about.

People used to say to us, "if you love us you wouldn't treat us that way..." or some similar expression which always made us know that they really didn't understand. It isn't that we didn't love...it was that we didn't know how to love. It is that way in A.A. Everyone in the fellowship who has escaped from active alcoholism "loves A.A.". But that is not the kind of love that helps anyone; it is a useless selfish kind of love that only has meaning for the one who has it and means nothing to those around him or her.

If you love A.A. then you must do something for it to have value. Love not used is like a seed not planted; what good is it? Those who attend the Fall Workshop in Grand Rapids are those members who love A.A. in a way that counts. If you are new come to the workshop and meet these lovers of A.A. You will learn, grow and have a good time doing it; Remember, if you don't put nothing in, you don't get nothing out!!!

TURN TO THE LAST PAGE AND FILL OUT
THE REGISTRATON FORM RIGHT NOW
AND MAIL IT WITH A CHECK TO
NORTHERN MINNESOTA ASSEMBLY,
P.O. BOX GRAND RAPIDS, MN.
5 5 7 4 4

Please help...

The Editor of the Northern Light needs your help in putting the newsletter together. There must be contributions from the fellowship if the newsletter is going to meet your needs. With the new eight page format each issue can really chew up the material.

One particular area of concentration which is missing is news of local events. Please let us know of group problems or activities coming up in your area. This news is needed by us all.

Another concern is that it would be great if other members became involved in the production of the newsletter. There are some problems involved with distance but there is still much that can be contributed. For instance, it would be helpful to have individuals in charge of specific areas of concern such as the calander of up-coming events, group news, and other areas.

On page 87 of the *Service Manual* there are printed suggestions for newsletters. Incidentally, that answers the question of using A.A. materials in newsletters. This editor has been negligent in not printing the magic words, "Reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc." after quotations taken from A.A. material. We will strive to do better...claiming progress rather than perfection.

If there is something you would like to do or write, please let the editor know. Write the editor at box , Moorhead, Mn. 56560 or call after work. Leave a message and your call will be returned if you miss me.

DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTER CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM

We now have the experience of getting the Northern Light out on a fairly regular basis. The printing deadline and delivery has been pretty much centered around the meeting of the Area Committee at Crosby or the Spring or Fall Assembly. The principle reason for this is the problem of distribution. It does not seem to do much good to print the Northern Light a month ahead of the meetings because there has been no realistic way of getting it distributed to all the groups in the Northern Assembly.

Up until now, the current issue has been brought to the meetings mentioned and given to the D.C.M.'s or mailed to them in separate packets for them to distribute to the groups. This has been a slow process. Some have complained that they would like to have the current issues sooner. There is the obvious problem facing the D.C.M.'s as to how they are going to get around the groups. If one looks at a map it is plain to see that the Northern Assembly covers a wide area...some of it quite remote. There are over five hundred groups in the area so distribution is a serious problem.

A plan will be submitted to the Fall Assembly for our area to make an application for a non-profit bulk mailing permit. This plan is a clear solution to our growing mailing costs, not only for the newsletter but for the other material which is mailed out to service personnel in the area. Recently the secretary completed a mailing of materials to all the G.S.R.'s, D.C.M.s and Area Officers. The mailing included the resume' of each candidate for delegate, an agenda for the assembly meeting and some other information. The costs of stamps alone totaled nearly four hundred dollars. It is plain to see that our service structure has grown so large and active that it is necessary to have a bulk mailing permit.

Do you have any ideas...?

The application for a non-profit bulk mailing permit requires that the applicant first be found to be non-profit. Well, anyone would know that A.A. is non-profit so that should not be a problem; except that the United States Government doesn't know that. Therefore it is necessary to submit a stack of papers to the IRS and Post Office to show them the status of the applicant. It will be necessary for the Northern Assembly to have formal papers of association. The Southern Minnesota Assembly has generously provided us with their application and articles of association. These can easily be adapted to our own use.

The whole assembly can benefit from the use of the permit but there are a couple of restrictions. The permit must have a stationary or permanent address. Since the officers rotate this can be somewhat of a problem except that the Editor of the Northern Light does not so that problem could be solved by using box in Moorhead. The other point is that all mailings under the permit must originate at the post office where the permit is issued.

With the use of the Non-profit bulk mailing permit, mailing to each group or to individuals becomes a reality. With the increased size and new format of the newsletter, the membership may want to consider group or individual subscriptions being made available through the Assembly.

The kind of problems facing the newsletter are a result of the widespread acceptance of the newsletter and the need that it is meeting. These are simply the problems of growth.

If you have thoughts about the future of the newsletter, its distribution, means of support, content, or whatever, be sure to bring these concerns up during the discussions at the Fall Assembly; or contact your G.S.R., D.C.M. or Editor of the Northern Light, Box , Moorhead, Mn. 56560.

**BRING SOMEONE NEW TO THE 8th ANNUAL SERVICE
WORKSHOP TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 11th, 12th & 13th at
the RAINBOW INN in GRAND RAPIDS, MN. REGISTRATION
FORM ON BACK OF NEWSLETTER.**

The reason YOU were chosen for this work

GOD in his wisdom selected this group of men and women to be the purveyors of his goodness. In selecting them through whom to bring about this phenomenon he went not to the proud, the mighty, the famous or the brilliant. He went instead to the humble to the sick, to the unfortunate. He went right to the drunkard, the so called weakling of the world. Well might he have said to us, *"Unto your weak and feeble hands I have entrusted a power beyond estimate. To you has been given that which has been denied the most learned of your fellows. Not to scientists or statesmen, not to wives or mothers, not even to my priests or ministers have I given this gift of healing other alcoholics which I entrust to you."*

"It must be used unselfishly; it carries with it grave responsibility. No day can be too long; no demands upon your time can be too urgent; no case be too pitiful; no task too hard; no effort too great. It must be used with tolerance for I have restricted its application to no race, no creed, and no denomination. Personal criticism you must expect; lack of appreciation will be common; ridicule will be your lot; your motives will be misjudged. You must be prepared for adversity, for what men call adversity is the ladder you must use to ascend the rungs toward spiritual perfection, and remember, in the exercise of this power, I shall not exact from you beyond your capabilities."

"You are not selected because of exceptional talents, and be careful always, if success attends your efforts, not to ascribe to personal superiority that to which you can lay claim only by virtue of my gift. If I had wanted learned men to accomplish this mission, the power would have been entrusted to the physician and scientist. If I had wanted eloquent men, there would have been many anxious for the assignment, for talk is the easiest used of all talents with which I have endowed mankind. If I had wanted scholarly men, the world is filled with better qualified men than you who would be available. You were selected because you have been the outcasts of the world and your long experience as drunkards has made or should make you humbly alert to the cries of distress that come from the lonely hearts of alcoholics everywhere."

"Keep ever in mind the admission you made on the day of your profession in A A, namely that you are powerless and that it was only with your willingness to turn your life and will unto my keeping that relief came to you."

SERVICE - OUR PRIVILEGE & RESPONSIBILITY

8th Annual Service Workshop

November 11, 12, and 13, 1983

RAINBOW INN - GRAND RAPIDS, MINNESOTA

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

5:00 p.m. REGISTRATION: Duffy S
 7:00 p.m. BEGINNERS MEETINGS: Bill S
 Chairman Dale B
 7:30 p.m. BEGINNERS MEETINGS: Steve L
 8:30 p.m. PUBLIC INFORMATION: Scott J
 9:30 p.m. SPONSERSHIP: Bob J
 10:30 p.m. CALL UP MEETING: Jim H

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

8:00 A.M. REGISTRATION: Duffy S
 9:00 a.m. TRADITIONS: Dick S
 Chairman Gordy J
 10:00 a.m. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE: Susan D
 11:00 a.m. ROLE OF THE SECRETARY: Patty R
 12:00 a.m. LUNCH
 1:00 p.m. PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL: Bob P
 Chairperson Sandy P
 2:00 p.m. SERVICE STRUCTURE
 3:00 p.m. GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE: Carol J
 4:00 p.m. THE A.A. GROUP: Bill M
 8:00 p.m. OPEN MEETING: Susan D , Speaker
 Chairman: Doug N

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 a.m. GRAPEVINE: Gary R
 Chairman Bill M
 10:00 a.m. ASK-IT-BASKET & SHARING SESSION
 Panel: Susan D , Louis H , Bob P , Tom L

PREREGISTRATION FORM (PLEASE - ONE NAME PER FORM)

8TH ANNUAL NORTHERN MINNESOTA SERVICE WORKSHOP
 NOVEMBER 11, 12 & 13, 1983 - RAINBOW INN - GRAND RAPIDS, MINNESOTA

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO
 & MAIL TO:

NORTHERN MINNESOTA ASSEMBLY
 P.O. BOX
 GRAND RAPIDS, MN 55744

PLEASE STATE OFFICE

GROUP OFFICER
 DISTRICT OFFICER
 AREA OFFICER
 OTHER

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

GROUP NAME _____

REGISTRATION FEE - \$7.00
