

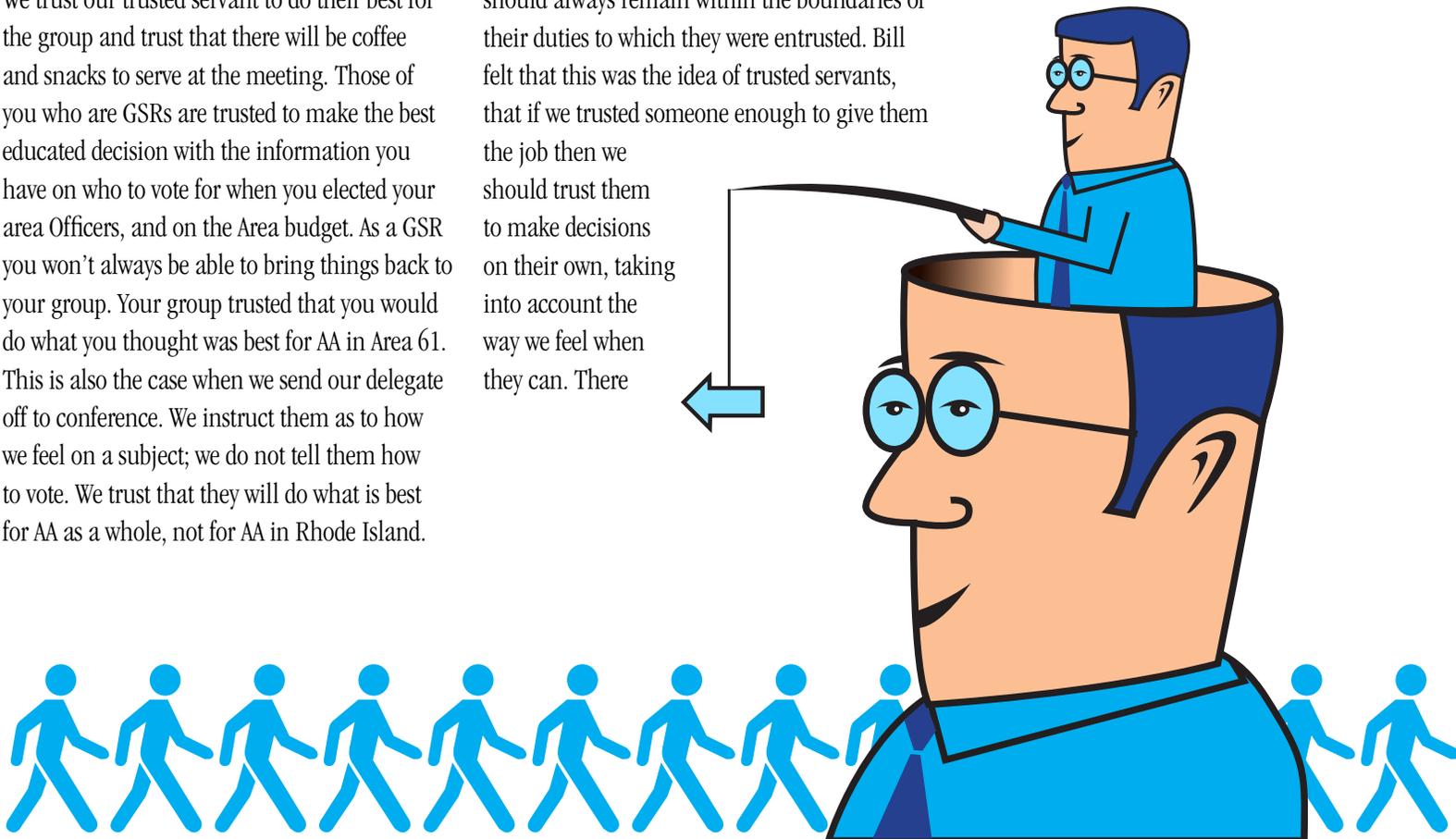
## CONCEPT 3: THE RIGHT OF DECISION

I had come into AA a broken man and would never have guessed that a drunk like me would have had the opportunity to serve as the Area 61 Delegate. I remember sitting at the General Service Conference with tears in my eyes as they did roll call and thinking it was a miracle that I was even alive. While sitting in conference I had a decision to make on an issue and I was leaning away from the conscience of Area 61. It was then I remembered a talk on Concept 3, "The Right of Decision." This concept may be the most important to anyone serving at any level of service in AA. At the group level we do not instruct our cake maker or coffee maker what kind of coffee to buy, what snacks to purchase or even what kind of cake to bake. We trust our trusted servant to do their best for the group and trust that there will be coffee and snacks to serve at the meeting. Those of you who are GSRs are trusted to make the best educated decision with the information you have on who to vote for when you elected your area Officers, and on the Area budget. As a GSR you won't always be able to bring things back to your group. Your group trusted that you would do what you thought was best for AA in Area 61. This is also the case when we send our delegate off to conference. We instruct them as to how we feel on a subject; we do not tell them how to vote. We trust that they will do what is best for AA as a whole, not for AA in Rhode Island.

The same holds true for the General Service Board, AA World Services, The Grapevine, and the General Service Office. Although the conference has authority over them regarding matters of AA policy and recommendations, we realize that in order for these decisions and the orderly management of day to day affairs to be effectively carried out, they need to be given the right to make decisions. To me, the most intriguing part of the right of decision is that each trusted servant is given the ability to decide how they interpret and apply their authority as each situation arises. So each trusted servant or entity should decide for themselves when they can make a decision and when they should seek guidance. Now with that said, their decision should always remain within the boundaries of their duties to which they were entrusted. Bill felt that this was the idea of trusted servants, that if we trusted someone enough to give them the job then we should trust them to make decisions on their own, taking into account the way we feel when they can. There

was always the thought that if a mistake was made, there would be ample time to rectify these mistakes. Upon returning home to give my report, it was also particularly humbling to have to report back to the body that I had used Concept 3 and made a decision to vote differently than the area wanted. Once I explained the reasons for my decision the area accepted my decision with approval. It is for reasons like this that AA keeps giving to me. I always say that "AA saved my life, but service changed it" and today those words ring more true than ever. I will always be grateful for having been able to serve as the Panel 60 Delegate for Area 61. Yours in love and service,

— Coop



# MAYFLOWER MOMENT



I got sober at the world famous TIE Club in Las Vegas. At thirty days, I was shaky and hurting inside; the obsession to drink hadn't left. I'd taken a chip at the meeting, and spent the ensuing hour passing it back and forth between my sweating palms. I'd wanted to confess that I felt like drinking, but was afraid to raise my hand. The chairperson suggested, to those who'd not had the opportunity to share, to grab someone after.

I randomly reached out to a guy who looked the least intimidating. I asked if he had time to talk. He said he did, and we were off to a coffee shop. He listened, somewhat distractedly; occasionally interjecting a few words. His responses sounded like bumper stickers. I sensed he was disingenuous; shooting from the hip, as they say. I didn't get much from our talk. He invited me to his apartment afterward, and I reluctantly went along, afraid to be alone.

At his place, he lit incense while we waited for coffee. He sat on the sofa adjacent to my chair, reached under a cushion, and retrieved a bag of marijuana. I was aghast. Visibly upset, I stormed out, slamming the door behind.

I felt cheated, somehow. Had I not reached out, as suggested? I set my course for downtown Las Vegas. For those unfamiliar with downtown Vegas, I'll take the liberty to assure you of what you likely suspect. It is temptation alley, alive and kicking. It is laced with every form of vice under the sun, known or imagined, and equates to the jaws of death for a thirsty newcomer.

I shambled along, disappointed, discouraged. I passed bars, casinos; neon lights raced up and down; my heart pounded. I stopped in front of a bar, feeling beckoned and defenseless. A jolly crowd laughed and danced inside. Over the years, I have come to identify that moment with Bill W.'s frantic search through the phone directory at the Mayflower Hotel. I call it my "Mayflower moment."

I was about to step inside, not because I wanted that drink, but because I didn't know how not to take it, when a voice called my name from a car that had pulled to the curb. A fellow named Bill, whom I'd seen around the halls, was sitting in the passenger's seat. He invited me to join him and his friend for dinner at the Horseshoe Club, a favorite "after the meeting, meeting spot." I climbed into the back seat. A red-headed fellow named Bob, who'd become my sponsor, was driving. No fooling; Bill and Bob. Now, it wasn't Wilson and Smith, but considering the pinch I was in, these two would suffice.

We were joined by three others at The Horseshoe. After dinner, we proceeded to drink from a bottomless cup of coffee for the next few hours. They generously shared their experience, strength and most importantly, their hope with me. My conviction to stay sober was recovered and strengthened. I didn't have to take a drink that night and haven't had one since. On Nov. 12, 2017 I celebrated 37 years clean and sober. Thanks, Bill and Bob, for rescuing me.

By Michael L.

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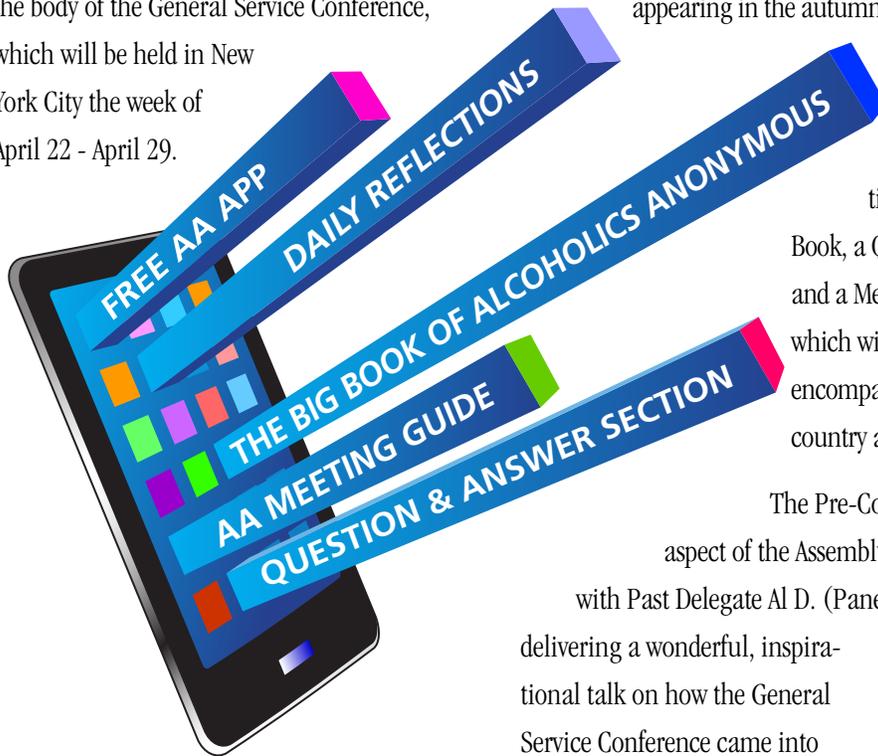
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# PRE-CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY REPORT

Area 61's Pre-Conference Assembly was held on Saturday, April 7, at St. Kevin's Church on Sandy Lane in Warwick. It was the most well attended Assembly in recent memory, and lots of new faces helped shape our Area Conscience on the agenda items that will be presented before the body of the General Service Conference, which will be held in New York City the week of April 22 - April 29.



Before we got underway with the actual business of the Pre-Conference Assembly, we were given a Treasurer's Report by Area Treasurer, Tricia I., who stated, in no uncertain terms, that we are in financial straits. By the time this article is printed, we will be dipping into our prudent reserve. We are not getting anywhere near the contributions we require to continue the 12th Step work we are charged to do. We set up and put on meetings, and provide literature in prisons and treatment centers throughout the whole state. We provide public outreach to schools, colleges, nursing programs, hospitals, doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers and clergy, as well as public service announcements and ads (papers and buses). WE NEED YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS NOW, MORE THAN EVER!

We also were given a Power Point presentation by Area 61 Delegate (Panel 68), Mary K., concerning news in AA, a lot of which was focused on the original manuscript and the timeline of events which led to AA's lawsuit and subsequent settlement. On a happier note, the Free AA App will be appearing in the autumn of 2018,

featuring Daily Reflections, a Big Book, a Q&A section and a Meeting Guide which will eventually encompass the whole country and Canada.

The Pre-Conference aspect of the Assembly began with Past Delegate Al D. (Panel 58)

delivering a wonderful, inspirational talk on how the General Service Conference came into existence and how it operates today. Al further illustrated how divinely inspired Alcoholics Anonymous truly is. Not only did Bill Wilson (chiefly) write the Big Book at 3 1/2 years sober, but he developed a business model for Alcoholics Anonymous which makes absolutely no sense in the business world. The "upside down triangle" where the groups are at the top, and the General Service Board and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services are at the bottom, goes against every idea in today's (or even yesterday's) business

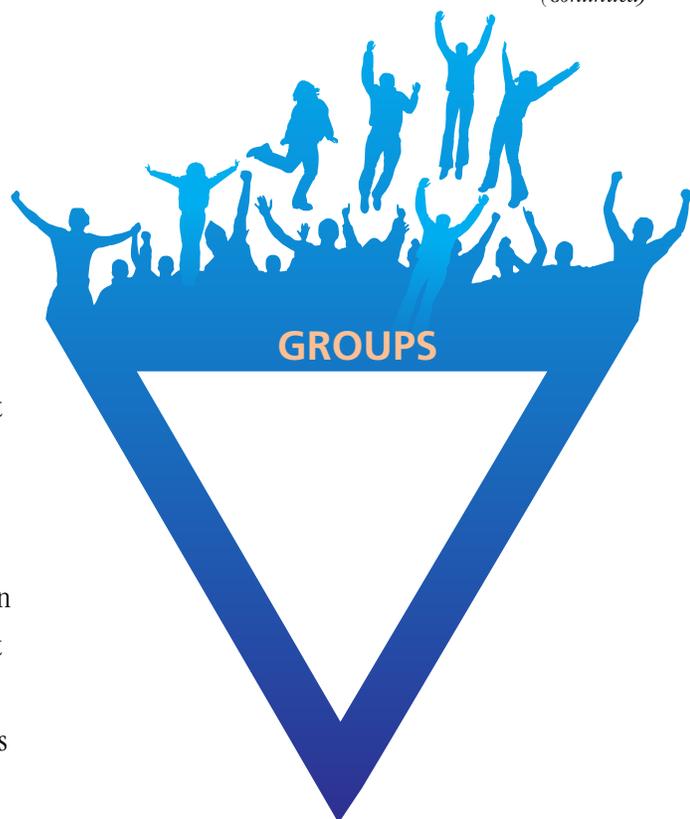
world, but here we are as a Fellowship, just about 83 years old and going strong. And he closed with a heartfelt thank you to AA for what it's done for his family, but also a heartfelt plea for all of us to keep this thing going for future generations.

After Al's great presentation, the body of the Assembly broke up into groups to discuss agenda items and arrive at an Area Conscience. Our Area 61 Delegate, Mary K., will be representing RI at the Conference, and she'll be voting, for the most part, according to our wishes (unless someone presents something in a different way, thereby changing the way everyone else sees it).

Some of the items discussed were:

Consider request that AA (U.S./Canada) publish "The God Word" (a pamphlet currently published by the General Service Board of AA, Great

*(Continued)*



**General Service Board and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services**

(Continued from page 3)

Britain), which was not approved by the group, citing many 'spiritual' pamphlets already in circulation, among other reasons.

Consider request to create a pamphlet for inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration.

This one was also not approved by the group. However, they did recommend mention of the topic in the current pamphlet, 'Sure beats sitting in a cell.'

As far as 'Proposed revisions to Alcoholics Anonymous' (the Big Book), adding the Preamble and the Responsibility Statement was shot down, citing no need for it, the Big Book is sacred, it could open the door for other revisions, where would it go? and many other reasons.

A footnote at the end of Bill's Story mentioning Dr Bob's Nightmare on pg.171 was also dismissed as unnecessary.

However, a request to add an appendix reflecting recognition

received from the Library of Congress (as one of the 88 most influential books of the 20th century)

was approved to be added to the page where the 'Lasker Award' is displayed in the Big Book.

Also dismissed as unnecessary was a request for changes in 2, 3, & 5 in the Service Manual.

And a Google for non-profits account caused some consternation with issues in anonymity, attraction and push-ads, as did Linked-In, due to sponsored links, comments and followers.

For lunch, we experienced the 3rd Annual Sweet and Savory Pie Competition. It was a gastro-



## 3RD ANNUAL SWEET & SAVORY PIE COMPETITION

nomonic delight! All of the districts brought various types of pies in the hopes of taking home a ribbon for their district. In the sweet category, it was Ned of District 5 taking home the ribbon for his Chocolate Budino Pie. Seana S. of District 6 took home 2nd place in the sweet category with her Ricotta Pie. 3rd place went to the Coconut Cream Pie. In the savory category, Steve L. of District 6 took home the ribbon for his Italian Taco Shepherd's Pie. 2nd place was a tie and it went to District 6 for Buffalo Chicken Pie and District 7 for Chicken Pot Pie.

There's nothing like feeling part of the team, and the Pre-Conference Assembly accomplished

just that. It's a place where anyone in AA can come have a voice in the continued growth and protection of Alcoholics Anonymous. We thank

everyone who participated, and we hope this article catches the eye of someone who might be interested in getting a foothold in Service. All in all, it was a great day for AA in RI, and AA as a whole!

Steve L.  
Panel 68, Area 61 Alternate Delegate

**THE PRE-CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY IS A PLACE WHERE ANYONE IN AA CAN COME HAVE A VOICE IN THE CONTINUED GROWTH & PROTECTION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

## HELP WANTED

Below is a listing of open service positions in Area 61. The chief requirements to fill these positions are a desire to carry the message and a willingness to serve.

### Archives Committee

- Chair
- Alternate Chair

### Grapevine Committee

- Alternate Chair

### Treatment and Accessibilities Committee

- Alternate Chair

### Information Services Committee

- Alternate Chair

### Districts 2&4

- District Committee Member
- Alternate District Committee Member

### District 8 (Hispanic)

- District Committee Member
- Alternate District Committee Member



**Area 61  
Rhode Island  
Alcoholics  
Anonymous**

**Area 61 has  
a new website!**

**[aainri.com](https://aainri.com)**

**Meeting list, Maps, Calendar,  
Committee Info  
Register for the Convention**

**Subscribe for updates:  
<https://aainri.com/subscribe>**

**Text follow *area61aa* to 40404**

## HEARD IN THE HALLS

I want a mind that's open to everything, but attached to nothing.

When I got here, I had a well developed facade.

Bless them. Change Me.

