

# BOOZE NEWS

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## STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

## TRADITION THREE

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

## LONG FORM

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

## Pamphlet of the Month

The pamphlet "***The A.A. Group... Where It All Begins***" explains that while the A.A. group is autonomous, it is not isolated. Each group is connected to the broader Fellowship through its General Service Representative (GSR).

Elected by the group, the GSR serves as the vital communication link between the home group and A.A.'s General Service structure. The pamphlet describes the GSR as "the link between the group and A.A. as a whole." 12x12\_\_en\_step1

Through attendance at district and area meetings, the GSR carries the group's conscience to the General Service Conference – where matters affecting A.A. worldwide are discussed – and then brings that information back to the group. The role is not one of authority, but of trusted service. The GSR helps ensure that the group's voice is heard in A.A.'s collective decision-making process, while also keeping members informed about wider A.A. activities, literature, and service opportunities. In short, the pamphlet reminds us that the GSR helps maintain unity across A.A., ensuring that each group both contributes to and benefits from the shared experience of the Fellowship.

Available for Download or purchase [HERE](#)



# dictionary definitions

## **Alcoholism**

A chronic disorder marked by uncontrolled drinking and preoccupation with alcohol.

## **Care**

Serious attention, responsibility, or concern shown toward someone or something.

## **Conformity**

Behavior that matches the rules, standards, or expectations of a group.

## **Decision**

A conclusion or judgment reached after consideration.

## **Desire**

A strong feeling of wanting or wishing for something.

## **Membership**

The state of belonging to or being a part of a group or organization.

## **Recover**

To regain health, strength, or normal condition after illness or difficulty.

## **Requirement**

Something essential or necessary; a condition that must be met.

## **Sobriety**

The condition of not being intoxicated; freedom from alcohol; seriousness in demeanor.

## **Suffer**

To experience pain, distress, or hardship.

## **Understand**

To grasp the meaning, nature, or significance of something.



# TRADITION THREE

## a checklist for groups

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR AA  
MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP  
DRINKING.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as those who likely will not make it?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately or publicly do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or not?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, sexual identity or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity, a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what they do for a living? Where they live? What their domestic arrangements are? Whether they have been to AA before? What their other problems are?

*\*These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.*

# YOUR VOICE IN A.A.

*Where Fellowship Meets Responsibility*

## 2026 Southern Illinois Area 21 Pre-GSC Workshop

**April 11, 2026 | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Before the General Service Conference begins, Southern Illinois Area 21 will host a Pre-General Service Conference (Pre-GSC) Workshop on Saturday, April 11, 2026.

This workshop is designed to help prepare our Area Delegate for the upcoming Conference. At the workshop, members will review and discuss [proposed Conference agenda items](#) and provide feedback. This gives groups and trusted servants the opportunity to share their informed group conscience, which the delegate can then carry to the General Service Conference.

The workshop will be held in person in Decatur, Illinois, with a hybrid Zoom option to allow broader participation – You can find more information about the event [here](#).

## 2026 / 76th General Service Conference

**April 26 – May 2, 2026**

Each year, Alcoholics Anonymous holds its General Service Conference—an annual week-long meeting where matters of importance to A.A. as a whole are considered and discussed. In 2026, the 76th General Service Conference will take place from April 26 through May 2.

The General Service Conference is a vital part of A.A.'s service structure. Delegates from U.S. and Canadian Areas meet with trustees of the General Service Board, directors of A.A. World Services and the A.A. Grapevine, and General Service Office staff. Together, they review reports, discuss agenda items submitted from the Fellowship, and consider issues that affect A.A. groups worldwide.

When a proposal receives a two-thirds majority vote of Conference members, it becomes a Conference Advisory Action. These actions are then referred to the trustees of the General Service Board for implementation or further disposition. In this way, the collective conscience of the Fellowship helps guide A.A.'s services, literature, finances, and public outreach.

In short, the General Service Conference is how A.A.'s groups—through their General Service Representatives (GSRs), districts, areas, and delegates—participate in decisions that affect A.A. as a whole.

[Review the Quarterly Report from GSO](#)

# FROM THE ARCHIVES

## The First General Service Conference - 1951

In 1951, a quiet but pivotal event took place in New York City: the first General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. For A.A.'s first sixteen years, there was no Conference. The Fellowship was guided largely by its co-founders and the Board of Trustees. That structure carried A.A. through its fragile early growth — but a serious question remained: What would happen after the founders were gone?

Bill W. believed A.A. must not depend on personalities. If the Fellowship was to survive, authority had to rest safely in the hands of the groups. Tradition Two had already pointed the way: “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.” The General Service Conference became the practical expression of that principle.

Delegates from the United States and Canada — trusted servants chosen by their areas — gathered to represent the voice of the groups. Many traveled long distances to attend. They met with trustees and staff to discuss matters affecting A.A.'s unity, literature, finances, and future. Bill later described the Conference as a bold experiment. Could the Fellowship be trusted with its own destiny? Would delegates act in the spirit of the Traditions? Would the structure prevent control by any one person or small group?

Over time, the answer proved to be yes.

The Conference became the guardian of A.A.'s unity and services. It ensured rotation in leadership, protected the Traditions, and shifted responsibility from founders to the collective group conscience.

What began in 1951 as an act of faith became one of the great safeguards of Alcoholics Anonymous — built not on authority, but on trust.

### Sources:

- A.A. Service Manual, Combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Tradition Two.
- Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Bill W., Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.

# Thoughts From our Membership

## Tradition 3-Desire to Stop

“Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity.

Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.” Bill W., Grapevine 1947.

In creating Tradition 3 the main thought process was to eliminate the fear and judgment that affected the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It acknowledges that the desire for sobriety is enough to initiate the recovery process, and allows for anyone who wants to, to be part of the fellowship. Tradition 3 appeared in the 1939 Big Book, stating: "The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking."

This tradition says, "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." This principle ensures that anyone seeking recovery is welcome, regardless of background or drinking severity, and promotes open access.

Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. We may refuse no one who wishes to recover. The main focus was on the fact that all alcoholics seeking help be accepted. In its early days, Alcoholics Anonymous faced challenges with membership restrictions but found that judging people was unnecessary and caused harm. Anyone who says they want to be part of AA is welcome. Membership isn't determined by money, strict rules, or behavior, only by the desire to quit drinking. AA's purpose is to support anyone suffering from alcoholism, no matter what their history. The only obligation is the individual's personal desire to discontinue drinking, and this does not require demonstration to others.

The previous section is my understanding, while the next outlines my thoughts. The spiritual principles of inclusive love and responsibility teach us to welcome anyone who seeks recovery.

...Cont'd on next page...

As we begin March, my article examines Tradition 3, which, while not directly tied to Tradition 2, has connections to Tradition 1. It promotes unity, and Tradition 3 sets principles to support it. If groups respect Tradition 2, then Tradition 3 integrity follows. Although Step 3 and Tradition 3 aren't identical, both relate closely. Step 1 is about surrendering willpower as laid out in Steps 1 and 2, Tradition 3 includes anyone willing to do so, its strength rooted in completing these Steps. Interpretations of Tradition 3 may differ between groups, as described in the simple reading of the 12 & 12 (short version). Understanding its purpose is essential before exploring diverse viewpoints and practical uses.

When I was new, Tradition 3 was a lifeline for many reasons. There were no forms to fill in, no joining fee, didn't have to be diagnosed, didn't need a certificate or a letter from a doctor to say I could come to AA, didn't have to prove I was an alcoholic by explaining how much I drank, what I drank etc., didn't have to take a test, that I hadn't been in trouble before I arrived, and never been in treatment. All I had to do was show up at a meeting. This seems simple if there was no fear and anxieties attending my first meeting.

It reminds me to be as tolerant of newcomers as others were with me. Whatever they've done, or whatever other problems they may have, it doesn't matter. Like it says in the Big Book: "No-one has sunk too low to be welcomed – if they mean business." All I need to remember is that it may take some people a bit longer to reach that point of being serious. It is a reality check where I once was!

My last thought is Tradition 3 of Alcoholics Anonymous states that the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. Similarly, the Al-Anon version states that the only requirement for membership is that there is a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. Both offer an essential service.

Although the qualifications for membership in 12-step support groups are specifically defined, my mission is to help anyone that is affected by this disease.

**John D.**

# Upcoming Events

## Monthly Delegate's Roundtable Meeting Thursday, March 5 at 7:00PM CST.

Zoom Meeting Information:

Meeting ID: 883 6069 3283

Passcode: 413794

## New Meeting in District 14: Our Brother's Keeper, Tuesdays at 12PM

Discussion Meeting

614 N 7th St East St Louis, IL

## Area 21 Assembly

### Sunday, March 8, 9:00AM - 3:00PM

In-Person at Moose Lodge, 614 IAA Dr., Bloomington,  
IL 61701

Or online via Zoom:

Meeting ID: 844 1903 0614

Passcode: 177777

## Pre-Assembly & Speaker Meeting Saturday, March 7; Potluck at 7:30PM & Speaker at 8:15PM

Cedar Lake Fellowship, 401 E. Empire St.,  
Bloomington, IL 51701

[More information & details can be found here!](#)

## Great River Round Up March 13 & 14

Pere Marquette Lodge, Grafton,  
13653 Lodge Blvd, Grafton, IL 62037

[Schedule, Details, & Tickets are available online now!](#)

## District 14 GSR Meeting March 15 @ 1:00 PM

In Person at the 623 Club

120 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Belleville

Or online via Zoom Meeting ID: 720 074 2222

We Want to Hear  
From you!



You can now submit your  
own content to the Booze  
News for publication!

There is a submission form on  
the District 14 Website where  
you can submit feedback,  
articles, art work, events,  
poetry, quotes, your favorite  
sober stuff, literature  
recommendations, sober  
playlists, ANYTHING!

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but the original will not be modified.  
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