

The Newsletter of Alcoholics Anonymous Area 86

focus

Informed Group Conscience



An Informed Group Conscience and My Sobriety

The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes (The AA Group p28-29). Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety (AA Grapevine).

I came alone to my first AA meeting. I was wandering the halls looking for the meeting, feeling very lost until another man looked at me and said, “I think I know where you are going, follow me”. When I came through the doors of AA; I was very much lost. I could no longer trust in myself. I wanted to stop drinking but I could not. At first, I was depending on my own determination. I followed your suggestions to stay sober, find a sponsor, find a group and get involved in it. As I got more involved, my faith in the group grew. I came to realize that God does the gathering and I was exactly where He

wanted me to be. My involvement started with group set up and making coffee. After awhile I also took on a service position for the group. I have been our intergroup representative for a few years now. This involves attending monthly meetings with

other groups in the district, sharing our group's experience in carrying the AA message, and

helping to make an informed group conscience so that every vote is ideally based on information passed down the line

preparing a summary report of the meetings. I then present this report to our group to keep them well informed about what the local intergroup is doing; in effect, helping to make an informed group conscience so that every vote is ideally based on

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information passed down the line. How has AA helped my sobriety? As I went through the steps with another alcoholic, my dependence on God became greater than myself. It was not what I was doing that made me who I was, it was who I am (a believer in God) that made me do what I do. I was trusting in God. He had relieved me of my obsession to drink, He has united me, He has told me who I am. In all of this He has trained me up to help another alcoholic. I am very grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous. I am not alone; I have a purpose; to stay sober and help another alcoholic to achieve sobriety.

Tim R.
2x4 Beamsville

gentlemen.

I really identified with Scott when he talked about how the New York Subway was not as we so often see depicted on the media – a dangerous place to be. This becomes more obvious at the end of this story.

In August of 2011 I received a call from our Publishing Director at our General Service Office. She informed me of a request for the translation of the “Big Book” into Low-German from a member of my home district and asked if I would see if there was a need. A week or so later the district had their roundup where I was invited to deliver a Delegate’s Report. The person that made the request for the translation was also there and I confirmed his request. Oddly I received another request from another person from another district. Since I was also told that translations could take a year or so, I made notes and just filed the information until I was going to the General Service Conference when I would see the Publishing Director in person.

Fast forwarding to the Conference both the Publishing Director and myself were both very busy, more so the Publishing Director. When we were finally able to meet it was after the last bus had left Time’s Square. Informing the Publishing Director, sadly I could only find two requests and I was really uneasy with her taking the subway home alone. The Publishing Director then informed me of a few things. She said one request was all that was needed to get the translation going because we’re helping the suffering alcoholic; the translation was already for sale (just 5 months after the request – that blew me away; And last but not least she was safer on the subway platform and on the subway than she was on the street.

A Past Delegate’s Conference Memory

My name is Dean and I am an alcoholic. It is my honour and privilege to serve as the Area 86 Delegate for Panel 60 (2010 – 2011). My home group is the Brantford Men’s Group in District 1. I write this post Fall Assembly (November 2018). It was great to see Scott H again (Panel 61 Area 79) now our Trustee At Large – Canada.

I like how Scott expanded on things as he talked. There is a parallel with Scott and our Past Regional Trustee Richard B (Panel 60 Area 90) who often used the line “long story short” which he translated to “short story long”. Yes, if you do the math, I was very privileged to have served with both of these

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Just one of my fonder Conference moments.
With much gratitude,

Dean T
Panel 60 Delegate
Area 86 Western Ontario



My First Service Job

My first service job in AA was cleaning ashtrays at the nooner meeting. It was there I met “Crusty” a long-timer who suggested I get a home group. I decided to join the Spiritual Progress Group that met Saturday nights at 8:30 in Brampton. That first year I greeted AA members at the door, and then drove to my job slinging beer and shooters at an East Coasters rock bar. My life had changed by the Grace of God and I no longer stole beers from customers at last call. I wanted sobriety more than anything. A lot of what I heard at meetings still didn’t make sense, but I was honoured when the group asked me to order the birthday cakes. One Saturday night Sheila suggested I attend the group “business meeting.” When I was drinking, I loved to debate and would inform you I was entitled to my opinion and my opinion was that your opinion was wrong! Now here I sat sober- levitating with anxiety -afraid to speak. “You are just as important as anyone else”

Our group needed to be part of the decision making as we were part of the whole AA fellowship

A.A. Trivia Challenge

1. When was the first issue of AA Grapevine published?
 - (a) June 1954
 - (b) Sept 1954
 - (c) June 1944
2. What common human failing can undermine AA philosophy and tradition?
 - (a) the 12 Steps
 - (b) Personal Experience
 - (c) Gossip
3. Most of us are aware of the YETs which are still out there if we return to active alcoholism, but what else could these letters stand for?
 - (a) Youth Education Town
 - (b) You're Eligible Too
 - (c) You Eat Tacos

Sheila said. Pay attention and then vote yes or no so we can get a group conscience.” Our AA service structure would remain a mystery for a few 24 hours, but that night I sensed the business meeting was an important event where all opinions were welcomed and respected. Shortly after the Traditions were read, we were handed a “report” by someone called the “GSR” rep. He waited while all present read the report - so we were “informed.” The words swam on the page

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and I voted Yes to something because everyone else did and I needed a smoke. I relaxed a bit when the Secretary said she would mail the minutes to everyone so we could learn about what we were voting on at the next meeting. But then an argument broke out between two members. One member yelled “I don’t need this #@!! and he tore up the basement stairs! I didn’t know what was happening, but this AA group conscience was exciting!!! A few months later it was announced the “Area Assembly” was coming up and I was told I was now to be GSR! The members said they would count on me to carry their “voice” on the Motions at the Assembly. We read and voted on each Motion as there were changes coming up to some of our AA Literature. Our group needed to be part of the decision making as we were part of the whole AA fellowship. It was our responsibility to speak up! The powerful message of the importance of informed group conscience stuck, even though I tanked when

I got to the Assembly. Overwhelmed by the amount of people in the main ballroom, I bolted down the 401 for home. I didn’t carry my groups voice that weekend. I am not proud of that, but today when I sponsor new members into service, I try to be gentle and remember we get responsible sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. It’s been a few 24 hours since “Crusty” suggested I join a home group and I sat at that first business meeting. I’ve been an active member of the Program of Action Group in District 25 for awhile now. We are small in members, but we send a GSR to District so we can be communicating with our wonderful fellowship as a whole. Today our Secretary looks at her Smart Phone to read the District Minutes and Area Assembly Agenda aloud so we can have all the information we need to vote an “informed group conscience”.

Yours in service, Kim O, Area 86

AREA OFFICERS

Area Delegate: Dale S.

Area Alternate Delegate: Sandi W.

Area Chair: Jeff S.

Area Treasurer: Pat S.

Area Secretary/Registrar: Janice F.

Comments, feedback or articles contact:

www.area86aa.org

Informed Group Conscience

When I first became involved in Alcoholics Anonymous service as Alternate GSR, I would attend business meetings eager to learn and understand the process. What I found there was the loudest and most persistent voice prevailed. Everyone was not offered a chance to speak and be heard and I would surmise some did not speak up because they felt intimidated by

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Path of Destruction

the loudest voice. It was about opinions instead of facts. There were group bosses instead of group servants. The more I became involved in service and learned about Informed Group Conscience, the more I came to understand and appreciate its importance. First and foremost, I think the Informed part is often lacking when people have their own agenda. All relevant facts need to be presented for discussion and everyone should have the opportunity to have their say. As DCM, my role requires me to provide all the information and hope that the right decision is reached. What I perceive is the right decision is not necessarily the right decision to everyone else. This is where the principles of AA come first. What I have also found lacking in the Informed Group Conscience is the Group itself. In my experience there are a fraction of members who participate in the side of service that calls for Informed Group Conscience. When it is only a tiny minority of potential participants and voters who are being informed, I think AA is shortchanged. I would argue that whether a member of a group holds a position or not, they should be encouraged to attend business meetings. My experience has been that the group bosses do not encourage and welcome attendance for all at business meeting because things may change and that loud, persistent voice might be silenced by the voices of others. Tradition One reminds me that my personal recovery depends on AA unity. I believe we can still be

united and have differences of opinion. Tradition Two says in part that "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern". I have the honour and privilege of serving AA as a DCM and the best way that I can do that it to ensure there is an Informed Group Conscience and then get out of the way. It's not about me. It's about a fellowship that has given me an inner peace and freedom that I never knew existed.

I would attend business meetings eager to learn and understand the process.

Yours in Love & Service,

Tammy S. District
 Committee Member
 Area 86 District 2 Panel 68



Informed Group Conscience....

IC i my name Kim and I am an Alcoholic. My experience with an informed group conscience. One thing I have learned in service work is acceptance, and that has

- AA Trivia Answers**
1. June 1944
 2. Gossip
 3. You're Eligible Too

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really proved to be useful especially when it comes to hearing other people's thoughts and opinions, it's not always easy to hear opinions that are different from my own and to respect them. I find it rather challenging most days if I'm being honest, but I also feel it is really necessary to be open minded and willing to hear all information so that as a collective whole we can make the proper decision necessary. I also know that it's the difference of opinions that make us all unique. There is a real sense of peace for me when someone is barking their opinions at me and I just allow them to have their thoughts. Why does everyone have to think the same as me? There was a time in my life that I didn't allow others to have their own thoughts, I would get angry or upset or so desperate for you to like me that I wouldn't have a different opinion I would change my thoughts to yours. Recently my home group had to deal with an issue of safety, and whether or not we should ask someone not to come to our group or have some members decide to leave. It was really difficult not to try and make this person feel like they had to leave because their very presence was upsetting to a few people. This is where we have the opportunity to grow. Truth is, we aren't always going to like everyone and we need to learn how to accept that. For me, It's really important that I push thru that fear and hold my head up knowing I don't have to like everyone and not everyone will like me. After hearing all sides and educating ourselves with all the A.A information available on Safety in A.A and inviting our DCM to come and talk with our members at a business meeting, we were finally ready to make a motion, vote on that motion and we came to an informed group conscience decision. It was pretty awesome

to watch. It showed that we have a really strong group, strong in the way that we all cared enough to discuss it and tried to make things better and safer for ALL Alcoholics. We also decided to come up with a safety statement to read at our meetings, one that would be kind but set a boundary. One that all of our members in my home group felt comfortable with. It's only by the Grace of God that a bunch of Alcoholics can sit in a room and talk, hear each other's thoughts and make an informed group decision.
Yours in Service

Kimberley C. ALT DCM District 16



Area 86 Focus

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Focus: A.A. Puzzle Fun!!

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 R E S U L T E M D M J D G C O U N T W

ACTION	CONSCIENCE	OPEN	WARY	UNANIMITY
INDIVIDUAL	MEMBER	VIEW	GROUP	EMERGE
REPRESENT	SENSITIVE	EXPRESSION	PRACTICE	DISCOURAGING
ARRIVE	COUNT	OPINION	WORK	MOTION
INFORMATION	MIND	VOICE	HEARD	PRINCIPLE
REST	SUBSTANTIAL	FORMAL	COLLECTIVE	POINT
CLEAR	DECISION	PERSONALITY	ISSUE	FULL
INFORMED	MINORITY	VOTE	SENSE	TERM
RESULT				

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Area 86 Calendar



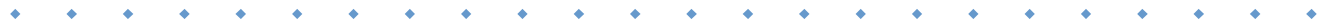
visit [www.http://area86aa.org/district-events.html](http://area86aa.org/district-events.html)

Upcoming Area 86 Meetings & Assemblies

Area 86 Committee Meetings

Area 86 Committee Meeting June 8, 2019 District 16

Tecumseh Golden Age Club 12420 Lanoue St. Windsor ON. N8N 4S3
Meeting starts at 10 a.m. Hotel arrangements have been made at the Hampton Inn and Suites 1840 Huron Church Rd. Windsor ON. N9C 2L5 rooms are \$129.00 plus taxes per night call main 519 972-0770 or office 519 967-2012 Room will be held until May 3rd and are under the booking code WOG or group code WOG at www.windsorsuites.hamptoninn.com



Area 86 Committee Meeting August 17, 2019 District 13

Area Committee Meeting District 13 details to follow.



Area 86 Committee Meeting December 7, 2019 District 18

Area Committee Meeting District 18 details to follow.



Fall Assembly Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kitchener, November 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 2019
105 King Street East, Kitchener, ON N2G 2K8. Block is under WOGS, \$119.00 plus tax. 1 519 744-4141 or 1 877 408-6665

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