

# Issue 632 - SEPTEMBER 2023 "TRADITION 9 - NEVER ORGANIZED; BUT......"

# You're not the boss of me!

A.A. is an unorganized organization with plenty of structure. Did I just contradict myself? Unlike other organizations, we prefer to be unorganized but not disorganized. There is a big difference when you think about it. Experience has shown, at every level of A.A. service, there must be some organization, or nothing could be accomplished. At the homegroup, we have the meeting chair, the coffee maker, the treasurer. If nobody is assigned to perform these basic tasks how would the group continue to carry the message? Then, if no one is willing to rotate into these positions how will the group survive? How about intergroup? If there were no committees, how would anyone find a meeting or get help for their drinking problem? What about the hospitals and detox centers we visit to bring hope to those who are sick and suffering? Our General Service Conference meets every year and makes decisions that continue to help spread the good news around the world that there is a solution to alcoholism.

But why do we say we are unorganized? We say this because we don't have rules. Tradition 3: *The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking*. This

WHATS INSIDE

- FALL 2023 CONTRA STUDY Flyer
- BXUM Spiritual Breakfast Flyer
- Queens County Spiritual Breakfast Flyer

tradition, while true, is meaningless without the other traditions together. Some people use Tradition 3 as a license to behave as they wish. However, Tradition 9 makes it clear "Unless each A.A. member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant." "Unless there is approximate conformity to A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, the group, too, can deteriorate and die." (12X12 page 174) We ought to practice all the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions simultaneously.

When I came to A.A., I took for granted the service that was given to help me get and stay sober. I appreciated the people who came to speak at the detox I was in and for the meetings I was able to attend every day. I didn't think about what it took to make this happen. After being here for a while and joining a group, I began to learn what this fellowship was about and what I needed to do as a member to keep it going. One of the things I heard when I got here which made a lot of sense was when you start drinking you stop maturing. I truly believe that, and I have had the opportunity to "grow up" in A.A. We don't need to be governed or ruled, and don't expect the A.A. police to come knocking on your door. As members, we all have a responsibility to practice these spiritual principles and to work together in unity.

Jo Ann M., Delegate Area 49

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# **Tradition 9**

I swear every time this Tradition is the topic of a meeting, people's eyes just glaze over. Mine definitely did for a long time. Why would I care about this Tradition? It's not a juicy one like 10 or 11. What does this have to do with me, the average AA member? How can I possibly relate to this Tradition if I'm not involved in service below the group level (or as I used to call it: Advanced AA–I was wrong, by the way). Let's make it simple, then.

My first AA meeting, there was a chairperson leading the meeting. That person chose who got to do the readings, etc. To me, they were obviously in charge. But, alas, I was wrong. The following week, I went to the same meeting, and there was a different chairperson! What even was that? \ Every week, somebody new led the meeting? Even I could have had the chance to read the script (not that I was interested because I was "too cool" to participate). Little did I know that I was experiencing Tradition 9 right from the start.

This is to say that we aren't organized like typical organizations. We do have structure, for sure. You should totally check out the upside-down triangle in the AA Service Manual. However, our structure is very loose in a sense. We rotate service positions to show that we are all the same. We have leaders but not superiors. For example, I'm currently the Area 49 Chair. I did not need any special skills to be Area Chair except being an AA member. I get to do this position for two years. Then, you'll get \another alcoholic to

be Area Chair. You get someone new in 15 months or sooner if you make a motion to kick me out. I don't know about you guys, but this is super different from how my job works, for example. \Unfortunately, I do not just get a turn to be CEO at some point.

Like I said, though, we do have structure. This Tradition allows for that. We have committees that get work done such as Accessibilities, Treatment, Public Information, Corrections, Cooperation with the Professional Community, etc. (by the way, you can join any of these committees at any time–just show up at one of their meetings!). We elect Delegates in each Area to represent us at the General Service Conference (where changes to AA as a whole are decided!). Plus, we have Trustees that see m ore of the day-to-day operations of AA. This is to say, there is a lot of structure. It just isn't traditional. At the end of the day, we are really all just alcoholics trying to stay sober.

We don't have excessive organization, but we do have practical service structures. Tradition 9 basically creates a balance between a non-hierarchical structure and providing the necessary support systems for members. Get involved to learn by participating!

Paola A., *Area 49 Chair* she/her

# Tradition 9-Chaos or Organization

The importance of Tradition Nine is like all the traditions it cements our Unity as a Spiritual Entity in the guise of an organization. As with all the Traditions, it has a long and a short form and the difference between the two can often be quite informative. While the short form of the Tradition always conveys the underlying principle, here, once again, the long form gives us a more specific guidance as to the main purpose. **The short form:** "A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but..."

**The long Form:** Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best... The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee..." It states briefly what their duties are in relation to the AA group.

Whoa! That's a mouthful. But what all this really says is that we, as an organization, are organized to the extent that is

necessary for the proper functioning of such a society and that the most minimalistic approach is all that is necessary when combined with the Spiritual Guidance that we receive from above and is responsible to those that it serves. This is a reinforcement of Tradition Two - "...one ultimate authority, a loving God as he may express himself in the group conscience." In such a pared down organization it is easier to maintain a cohesive Unity by the very nature of the limitations placed on it by a Tradition such as this one.

We need some organization or there would be chaos and disunity and it is this barest of organization which benefits the operational procedures by which we function as a society. With the bare minimum of committees and staffing in place, we are sure to always function as a life-saving organization that we are. Remembering that all the Traditions are to help preserve our Unity - a unity which we all need if we are going to stay sober and survive to thrive.

Kevin F., DCMC Rockland County A49/P73



Sharing is caring... Write an article about your experience, strength, and hope in AA service. Please limit your article to 350 words, and email it to link@aaseny.org

# **UPCOMING EVENTS**

9/9 - Staten Island 3rd Annual Block Party

9/10 - SENY Area Assembly (HYBRID)

9/23 - BXUM Share-A-Day (LIVE)

For more events go to AASENY.org

LET'S Link UP!







When I arrived in A.A., my brain was so foggy. I was living on two hours of sleep a day. It was so difficult trying to read at meetings because of my dyslexia. The first piece of literature I read was "It happened to Alice". It's a small comic-like pamphlet describing the journey of Alice from her life of drinking to finding A.A.

It was then that I found hope. I was so grateful that my first home group was a beginner literature meeting. The first week Steps One, Two and Three were read to me from the step book, then a story from the Living Sober book, and on the third week, I was read a story from Came to Believe. It was important that someone read the literature to me because I was in no state to read it for myself. I was glad that my home

group had large print books. With the large print books, I was able to use an index card to guide me through reading, so it didn't seem like the words were jumping all over the place. But, after some months of sobriety, my ability to read with ease increased.

It was also wonderful to find out that I could get the big book on a CD. It was a great help as I started to go through the Big Book with my sponsor. Being able to listen to what we were reading repeatedly until I got it, was helpful. The gift of my sobriety was that I was able to start sleeping, my reading comprehension increased dramatically, and I joined book clubs in my community. It gives me a sense of comfort knowing that there are different formats of learning from our literature. Now, I order literature from an e-book reader and I'm able to adjust the font for easy reading. It reminds me of my early days in sobriety when reading large print books.

K. Past GSR and Secretary for District 305

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DCMC

Our service Manual states, "District Committee Member Chairperson (DCMC): A large district in a city or county may hold regular meetings led by a DCMC, who serves as the link between the district and the area."

Deciding to stand for DCMC was intimidating and stretched me to expand my service knowledge. It was not a job I took lightly, and I did a thorough research into the history of AA, service below the group level, and the 36 principles. I read the Service Handbook and Articles of Association and By-Laws for Area 49, my county's By-laws, and Group Conscience.

I get to carry the message between the county and the area, a great responsibility, one that I do not take lightly. This is done by attending all Assembly meetings and Area committee meetings.

I am granted a multitude of gifts from doing service. I get to make myself available to anyone in the county and guide them on any concerns their groups might have. A gift of this exploration was the web of people that have come into my life to be resources for me along this journey. I have no shortage of people I can reach out to with a tough question or just to talk member to member.

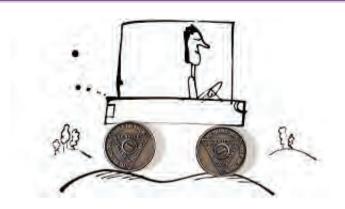
County meetings are held monthly. This allows me to communicate with DCM's, GSR's and to listen to their voice. GSR's are connected with their DCM's and are invited to attend "Coffee with a DCM" on the Monday before the county meeting. I regularly get to encourage and empower members to step into roles that might seem intimidating and show them the light I see in them the same way that people down the service structure did to me.

The county is reminded of AA's Service tools, such as Box 459, The Grapevine, and The Link. I personally love the "What's New" section on the Alcoholics Anonymous page.

Most importantly I am not able to be a DCMC unless I am relying on my Higher Power and inviting HP into everything I do.

Kimberly Jean, DCMC Suffolk County









# A A SERVICE CLASSIFIEDS



OPEN SERVICE POSITION IN YOUR DISTRICT, COUNTY, OR AREA?
OUR NEW SERVICE CLASSIFIEDS CAN HELP!

## ORANGE COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE:

- CORRECTIONS
- Accessibilities

CONTACT DCMC@ORANGE.ASSENY.ORG

### SUFFOLK COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE

- ACCESSIBILITY
- ARCHIVES
- LITERATURE/GRAPEVINE/LA VINA
- CPC
- TREATMENT FACILITIES
- HISPANIC LIAISON

CONTACT DCMC@AASUFFOLKGS-NY.ORG

# Send a brief descri

# Nassau County General Service

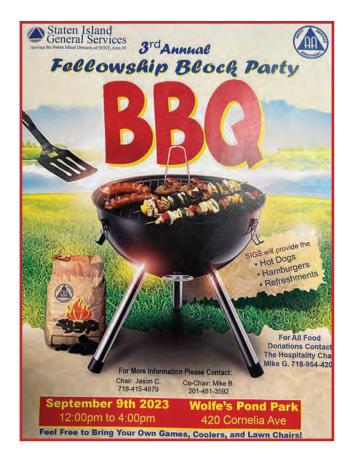
- CORRECTIONS
- PI (PUBLIC INFORMATION)
- TREATMENT FACILITIES
- SERVICE SPONSORSHIP

CONTACT DCMC@NASSAU.AASENY.ORG

Send a brief description of the position, any sober time/other requirements involved, and a contact email, and we'll post your "ad" here where other AA's eager to do service can find it!











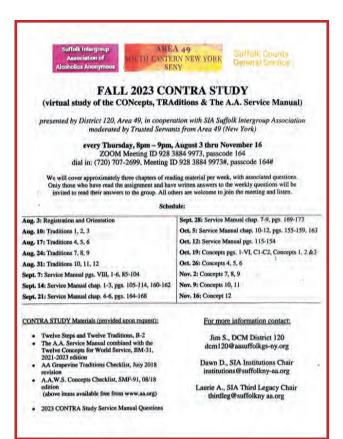








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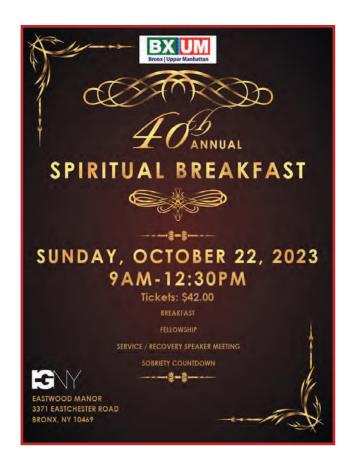


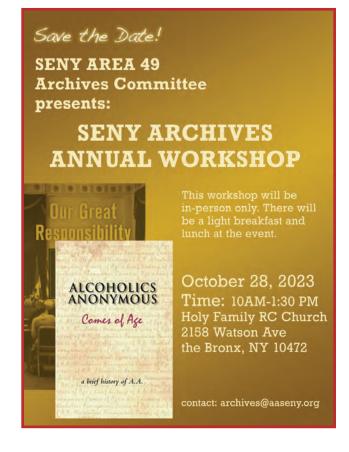






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UPCOMING GENERAL SERVICE MEETINGS To add or update email: agenda@aaseny.org				
Staten Island General Service Assembly (HYBRID)	9/3	7:00p	Zoom ID: 740 881 0586, Password: Freedom22*	
SENY Tech & Communications Committee Meeting	9/5	7:30p	Zoom ID: 894 0024 2856, Password: 033597	
SENY Area Assembly	9/10	10:00a	TBD	
Service Sponsorship Committee Meeting	9/12	8:15p	Zoom ID: 998 938 7641, Password: 714921	
BXUM General Service Meeting	9/13	7:00p	Zoom ID: 429 704 813 Password: Serenity	
SENY Corrections Committee Meeting	9/16	3:00p	Zoom ID: 998 938 7641, Password: 714921	
SENY Intergroup Liaison Meeting	9/17	2:00p	Zoom ID: 998 938 7641, Password: 714921	
Brooklyn County General Service Meeting (HYBRID)	9/20	6:30p	Zoom ID: 961 9888 5103, Password: 069497	
SENY Literature Committee Meeting	9/24	4:00p	Zoom ID: 998 938 7641, Password: 714921	
SENY Accessibility meeting	9/27	8:00p	Zoom ID: 998 938 7641, Password: 714921	

SENY Officers			
Delegate	Jo Ann M.	delegate@aaseny.org	
Alt. Delegate	Nisaa A.	alt delegate@aaseny.org	
Chair	Paola A.	chair@aaseny.org	
Treasurer	Kimbley G.	treasurer@aaseny.org	
Technology & Communications	Ray W.	tco@aaseny.org	

County DCMCS			
Bronx / UM	Chris D.	dcmc@bxum.aaseny.org	
Hispanic	Nelson	distritoshispanos@aacdhseny49.org	
Brooklyn	Charlene B.	dcmc@brooklynaa.org	
Manhattan	Justin K.	dcmc@manhattan.aaseny.org	
Nassau	Cathy C.	dcmc@nassau.aaseny.org	
Orange	Dan M.	dcmc@orange.aaseny.org	
Putnam	Gregg S.	dcmc@putnam.aaseny.org	
Queens	Raj B.	dcmc@qcgsa.org	
Rockland	Kevin F.	dcmc@aarockland.org	
Staten Island	Dan S.	dcmc@statenislandaa.org	
Suffolk	Kimberly L.	dcmc@aasuffolkgs-ny.org	
Sullivan	Jeff P.	dcmc@sullivan.aaseny.org	
Westchester	Peter C.	dcmc@westchester.aaseny.org	

<sup>\*</sup>Special committees (neither standing, nor adhoc committees)

SENY Standing/Ad Hoc Committee Chairs			
Accessibilities	Moses H.	access@aaseny.org	
Agenda	Sherry P.	agenda@aaseny.org	
Archives	Marty K.	archives@aaseny.org	
Convention 2024	Saadi H.	convention@aaseny.org	
Corrections	Toby Y.	corrections@aaseny.org	
Email Update Editor	VACANT	email-update@aaseny.org	
СРС	Devin C.	cpc@aaseny.org	
Grapevine/La Vina	Thomas K.	grapevine@aaseny.org	
Intergroup Liaison	Kristina F.	intergroup@aaseny.org	
Link Editor	Gina D.	link@aaseny.org	
Literature	Eric O.	literature@aaseny.org	
Office Manager	Steven W.	office@aaseny.org	
Public Information	Jeannette K.	pi@aaseny.org	
Recording Secretary	Claudia T.	secretary@aaseny.org	
Service Participation*	Nisaa A.	altdelegate@aaseny.org	
Service Sponsorship*	Matt F.	sponsorship@aaseny.org	
Translation	VACANT	translation@aaseny.org	
Treatment Facilities	Hugo P.	tf@aaseny.org	
Web Chair	Joseph C.	web@aaseny.org	
AlAnon Liaison*	VACANT	alanonliaison@aaseny.org	
Ad Hoc Finance	Larry W.	finance@aaseny.org	
YPAA Liaison*	Nisaa A.	altdelegate@aaseny.org	