

THE COURIER

Naples Area Intergroup
1509 Pine Ridge Road, Unit B
Naples, Florida 34109



April 2025

239-262-6535
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www.aanaples.org



Step Four At A Glance

My sponsor, wisely, did not allow time for fear to develop before writing my Fourth Step. He pointed out that the Big Book indicates that we are to begin Step Four “at once!” (p. 64). It seems like only seconds after we prayed the Third Step Prayer that he laid out four sheets of paper with respective headings of Selfishness, Dishonesty, Resentment and Fear. I was to write: “God help me I am writing my inventory” under each of these words.

I was informed that I was not capable of enough honesty to do this alone. I needed God to help me. (After all a week or so before I had marched into a bar and almost spoke out: “Gin and tonic, please” —Thank God I didn’t). Obviously, my mind lied, so I did, indeed, need Gods help!

The Oxford Group called this ‘automatic writing.’ If the words did not come from deep within, I was not to write them. No thinking allowed! I believe more honesty landed on those papers in a few minutes than many weeks out of my good-keen-intellectual-alcoholic-mind.

This was not exactly Step Four, but it brought about honest information for the upcoming Fourth Step fun

Then from page 65 of the Big Book I learned how selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear had negatively affected me—and others. These were the very ingredients of the “bondage of self” I had asked God to remove in the Third Step Prayer! I needed to learn how to face and be rid of these aspects of my personality. How? I didn’t even know what they were! I believe such understanding is a vital function of this step. The Big Book refers to the above four character defects as our “Grosser handicaps.” (p. 71)

I was taught how to face and be rid of repeating thoughts of anger (resentments) on page 67. The same for irrational fears on page 68. I came to realize how dishonest and selfish I had been by my sexual conduct on pages 69 and 70. This vitally important information was necessary to adequately do Step Five with my sponsor and to be willing to ask for God’s help in Steps Six and Seven (p. 76). Honest information from this step was even helpful in Steps Eight and Nine because I had listed my harms to others on page 70.

I was taught to remain continually aware of these “Grosser handicaps” because they crop up in Step Ten all through the day and in Step Eleven before going to bed at night. Step Four is a learning process to be used in the maintenance Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve for the rest of my life.

By Bob S., Cleveland Central Office

APRIL: The Fourth (4) Month Of Alcoholics Anonymous

STEP FOUR: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

TRADITION FOUR: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

TRADITION FOUR: (Long Form) With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

CONCEPT FOUR: "Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge."

47th Step Prayer: "God, Please help me to be free of anger and to see that the world and its people have dominated me. Show me that the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, has the power to actually kill me. Help me to master my resentments by understanding that the people who wrong me were perhaps spiritually sick. Please help me show those I resent the same Tolerance, Pity and Patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend.** Help me to see that this is a sick man. Father, please show me how I can be helpful to him and save me from being angry. Lord, help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I can't be helpful to all people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done."(66:2, 66:3, 66:4, 67:0, 67:1)

TRADITIONS—CHECKLIST

This is a Checklist for Tradition FOUR.

Reprinted with permission from Service Material from the General Service Office:

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

**Thoroughness Ought to be the Watchword
The Willingness to Move Forward**

By Rick R., San Diego, California

When I attended my first AA meeting, I had no idea what the 12 steps entailed but at that meeting I heard the things that were read, and I heard people sharing about steps and, looking back on it now, I realized that I came away from that meeting a changed man.

My life took a 180° turn at that point, and I have never been the same since. For the first time in my life, I saw a refreshing new approach to living and all I had done, up to that point, was to show up and listen. From that day on, I have had a huge change of perception, and I learned to recognize faulty thinking and to find the answers to life issues as they were articulated by the collective sharing in that meeting.

While attending a step study meeting recently, we were on Step 4 and as each person shared their experience with what we had read, it occurred to me that the same thing was happening there that happened at my first meeting decades before. It seemed that many of the people were assimilating into their thinking the things we had read and talked about; and, that it had influenced them in ways that they probably didn't even realize at the time. I've heard people in the program, when attending structured step study meetings say that there may be as many as 50 people at the meeting when they started on Step 1, but by the time they got to Step 4 they might be down to 12 people left in the room. There seems to be something in Step 4 that their ego would not let them address at the time. It appears they had reached a fork in the road.

When this happens, I believe they may not be ready for Step 4; and, if they are hurried into it, they may start to search for an easier softer way. If they stay on the softer path for long, they may end up developing a half measures approach and they may waste many precious years ... or worse, they may relapse and do irreparable damage that cannot be undone.

When I hear of a person who has a relapse after long term sobriety I often wonder if it was due to skimping on Step 4 and 5, which may lead to a superficial approach to the remaining steps. "Thoroughness ought to be the watchword when taking inventory. "(12&12 pg.54) I use the 4th step to illustrate what I mean when describing the way reading and hearing the things described in Step 4, are the things that we live with every day of our lives. Each time we cycle through them again, we realize that we have addressed some of these issues without being aware of it. I've heard people who have not taken Step 4 yet using such terms as "Restraint of pen and tongue" or "Remove the word blame from my speech." Without realizing it, they are reducing their problems as the result of this different mindset. If they are honest about it, not being ready to take Step 4 leaves the door open for the time when they are more confident, and they will be able to revisit this step and make a clean slate of it without feeling guilty about it.

I believe that the main reason why they wrote and published the 12 & 12 was because they did not want to establish a precedent of editing the big book, and they wanted to give amplifying information and examples of how to navigate the 12 steps. We can tell stories and drunkalogues of our drinking days and that is fine. But if we do not go through a meaningful process of addressing the causes and solutions to our problems "The willingness to move forward "(12&12 pg.54) ... we will be selling ourselves short ... and life is much too precious to



EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY II

The Next Frontier

“While we readily share our views, perhaps one of the nicest things about the AA program is that we don’t always have to agree with each other.”

“Self-Acceptance,” Brooklyn, New York, June 1975, Emotional Sobriety II

“Am I strong enough? Am I willing to commit my life and my heart at an even deeper level to doing whatever it takes to keep moving forward?”

“Where’s My Reward?” North Hollywood, California, September 2005, Spiritual Awakenings II



SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS II

More Journeys of the Spirit

What Brought Us Into AA? *By Central Bulletin, March 1946*

It was the realization that we had no power to help ourselves.

We had relied entirely upon ourselves because we liked the rules we made for ourselves better than those rules that generations upon generations of mankind had found necessary for living without personal disaster. We had considered ourselves above those who lived by the universal rules.

When trouble came, we sought to help self-imposed discipline, we usually succeeded, for a while. But again, we made our own rules, and as we got the upper hand over our troubles we compromised with evil. A little evil would be all right: it was too much evil that got us into trouble. The particular evil that we compromised with was luring because we wished to recognize no responsibilities and because that evil destroyed all reminders of responsibility.

Simple first grade arithmetic ought to have been enough to teach us. But we wouldn't believe the simple addition because we wouldn't believe that what was meat for moderate, disciplined men was poison for the undisciplined.

Many of us still have trouble in believing it, and in accepting the simplest facts of our experience. We still want to make our own rules. We still want to avoid responsibility. We still are unwilling to accept our lots in life.

Let us look back at our efforts to help ourselves. How did we reach the position in which we found ourselves when we grabbed desperately at the help that AA offered? Very few of us were on an unbroken downward descent. We stopped the slide "many times and tried to walk up hill. Then we compromised with evil and tried to ride up hill, with no power other than our own feeble wills. It wasn't long before we found ourselves sliding backwards at breakneck speed.

Let us keep on looking back at our efforts to help ourselves. Each successive time that we tried to help ourselves, we were on a lower level than we had been before. Each effort to rise was less successful. Sometimes we thought we had gained a pinnacle, but we never looked back to see the towering mountain from which we had slid.

When we landed in a heap at the bottom of the slide, or banged up near the bottom, we realized at last that we had no power to help ourselves. We could not get up, we couldn't walk, and we surely couldn't climb. We seized the hand that was offered us. We took the nourishment that restored our ability to stand and then helped us to climb. We were restored outwardly and we found an inward strength.

The hand that was offered us was the hand of AA, the hand of another alcoholic. The strength that that hand found to pull us to our feet was not the hand's own but it was the strength that the hand had found after it had learned that it had no power to help itself.

It had found a power greater than its own. It had found it in the realization that if the body is to be saved the Spirit must also be saved. It had found that since it is not able to defend itself it must seek the help of a higher power than itself.

This power is not a crutch that can be used for a while and then thrown away. Our whole experience should teach us that. And so should the experience of those who thought that the power was a mere crutch.

Our experience should teach us that when we try to make our own rules the temptation comes to embrace evil because a little evil seems pleasant; or we eagerly seize upon evil because we cannot stand to face a new adversity or we are not willing to accept the realization that our stature is less than we wish it to be.

No, the power is not a crutch: it is a backbone. It is a backbone whose living fluid is the Spirit, and that living fluid must be defended against assaults of evil and against the temptation to believe that we have the power to walk alone in any direction that we choose.

Those of us who are wise have learned that we have no power to help ourselves. Our help is in a power outside ourselves, a help that first comes to us through the hand of AA.



“In AA, we discover that it is impossible to give without receiving, or receive without giving.”

**“The Gift of Sobriety,”
North Hollywood, California,
February 1993, AA
Grapevine**

“AA is spiritual, is the eye of the hurricane, is my refuge and my comfort.”

**“Eye of the Hurricane,”
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,
December 1992,
Spiritual Awakenings**



**SPIRITUAL
AWAKENINGS**

Journeys of the Spirit



What all does AA give us? A member in Kentucky attempts to answer.

A newcomer recently asked me what AA taught me. I thought, how on earth can I summarize my time in the Fellowship?

First off, it taught me how to be a decent person and how to live a life inconceivably better than the one I had been living. It taught me how to form a connection with an amazing community of recovering alcoholics and a Higher Power of my own understanding. I learned that AA is a “we” program. We learn from each other, and we are here for each other.

Over the years, I’ve gotten to listen to members who offer hope when it seems like there’s no hope. I’ve learned from those who share that humility is not humiliating and those who show us the futility of envy. I’ve listened to those who show gratitude in the face of deep loss, who give more than they take and who show how faith can overcome fear.

Fellow members have taught me how to pull myself off my pity-pot, demonstrate generosity in the face of personal poverty and appreciate the perpetual joy of practicing our Twelve Step principles. They have encouraged me to embrace the love in our Fellowship and become a more honest, kind and emotionally sober human being.

This has been my experience. Our sponsors lead us and our sponsees show us. Newcomers inspire us and old-timers forgive us. We’re here for each other. We lift each other up, we take this journey together and yes, sometimes we even carry one another across a deep, icy stream. That’s what we do. We’re AA. What we’ve been given is a gift, and we’ve learned how to give it all away.

By Alex M, Louisville, KY, Reprinted from the May 2024 A.A. Grapevine. Used with permission



A Tool For Reading Alcoholics Anonymous

After reading through several chapters of the Plain Language Big Book, I must say that I like it! Hence, this review. Then, the question came to mind “Do I wish I would have had this book available to me instead of the original Big Book in early sobriety?” The answer is, no. Allow me to Let me explain.

It worked with the tools I had available and the message does come through in this new version. It’s quite a refreshing experience. The message is very similar to the way my sponsor relayed the information to me and also similar to Big Book and step studies I have attended.

I agree with the view that the style in which the original Big Book was written is beautiful, a sign of the times, a subtle insight and reminder of just how long this book has been around.

I did have some difficulty reading the original Big Book, but I also had access to those who had more knowledge of the material than I did, who could answer my questions, comments, etc. It is understood that there are folks who don’t have that luxury and it is in this way, I feel, that this version will be of great help.

While reading through this new version, I felt disoriented sometimes, no doubt due to being used to reading something a certain way for so long and then reading it in a different way, could be rather jarring. This was quickly replaced, however, by a sense of calm and excitement, refreshment and vigor before, during, and after.

My first thought towards such an idea was “Why mess with something that has worked for some time now?” I admit, my view has changed after reading this book. I have no doubt that this version of our book will be a great tool. Not only for those who have difficulty with the original, but for all members of our Fellowship.

Regards,

By J.C., Cleveland Intergroup Office

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*Naples Area
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Next Month.

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God as We Understand Him

Alcoholics Anonymous came into existence in 1935 at a time when much of our society was centered around the churches in the communities where we lived. Much of the South and the Midwest are still like that to this day. As a child in my home town, on Sunday morning I could look out the window and see a great majority of my neighbors walking to church. That was the way it was in the early 1940's. The book, Alcoholics Anonymous, was published in 1939 and seems that it was highly influenced by the many early members of the program at that time.

A.A. could have, very easily become a religious program. But, fortunately, the elders of that time realized, by the mistakes of the Oxford Group, and the Washingtonians, that they had to make it clear that, a desire to stop drinking was the only requirement for membership, and that the individual members could choose their own concept of a power greater than themselves, i.e. God as we understand him.

In Tradition Two it says, "*As He may express Himself in our group conscience*" When the word God is used in the remainder of the book, it is not always followed by the "*as we understand him*" qualifier, and I believe that many members get the idea that somehow, they are trying to push religion on them. I think that's understandable.

When I was faced with that possibility, I personally found it easy enough to read the black part of the pages in the book and to not let myself become distracted by what I now recognized as a cultural norm at the time. I had no problem setting aside my religious bias and recognizing the parts of the Big Book and the 12x12 that clearly state all of the options available when it comes to finding a "*power greater than myself*", and I can name several right off top.

Alcohol itself was my higher power for a long time and still would be if hadn't gotten into the program.

My EGO ran my life for quite awhile until I got serious about life issues.

The A.A. program itself. I found myself spiritually lost when I surrendered and entered the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and when faced with the need to come to terms with the Higher Power issue, I now realize why it took such a long time to settle this subject.

Years of drinking and an underdeveloped thinking process that was hard to get up to speed right away. As I got more familiar with the Big Book, and the 12x12, I started to uncover all the evidence that debunked the idea that I had to conform to any religious doctrine. In the 12x12 I read on page 26, "*Alcoholics Anonymous does not demand that you to believe anything.*" On belief, "*to acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.'s program as enthusiastically as I could.*" (p 27)

Also on page 26 where it states, "*Take it easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think..... A one-time vice-president of the American atheist Society ... got through with room to spare*" Then on page 33 of the 12x12 it says "*Therefore, Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believer, we can stand together on this step.*"

Today I am very comfortable with my own concept of a Higher Power and I use the word God only to put a name on a concept that has no physical form and I might say that it expresses itself in the collective conscience of the world we live in. I can assure you that if you read these qualifiers and practice the rest of the principals of the program, as enthusiastically as you can, you will come to terms with a personal concept of a higher power as well as any of us.

“Surrender has nothing to do with giving up. It means to stop fighting.”

**“The Gift of Sobriety,”
Carrollton, Texas, February 1993, AA Grapevine**



THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

Bill W.'s
Grapevine Writings

“Each AA has been an individual who, because of his alcoholism, could seldom govern himself. Nor could any other human being govern the alcoholic’s obsession to drink, his drive to have things his own way ... Yet we alcoholics can be led, we can be inspired.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., January 1947, “Will AA Ever Have a Personal Government?”, The Language of the Heart



Naples, FL 2025

June 20, 21, 22

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2025 A.A. International Convention

July 3-6, 2025



AA.org/International-Convention

Language of the Heart
Lenguaje del corazón
Le langage du cœur



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Registration Fee (Required)	\$60.00
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Guest Banquet	\$65.00

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This is a fundraiser. All sales are final. NO REFUNDS. Cancelled/unclaimed registrations will become scholarships.

FINANCES**Feb 25****YTD 25****Income**

Literature/Merchandise \$7,676 \$16,499

Group Contributions 3,493 7,408

AA Birthdays 450 450

Faithful Five 450 470

Individual/Anonymous 3,114 3,114

Total Income 15,183 30426**Expenses**

Bank/Credit Card Fees 177 530

Licenses/Permits - 200

Office Supplies 265 1,098

Office Improve/Repair 191 191

www Hosting - -

Payroll 2,331 6,993

Payroll Tax - -

Postage - 29

Printing - -

Purchases/Lit./Merch. 8,110 14,165

Insurance - -

Rent 500 1,500

Sales Tax 525 1086

Telephone/www 218 649

Utilities 200 300

Computer Equipment - -

Computer Software 107 477

Computer/Maintain - -

Accounting Services 468 610

Total Expenses 13,858 27,962**Net Ordinary Income** \$1,325 \$2,464

Gratitude Dinner Tickets - -

Raffle Ticket Sales - -

Gratitude Expenses - -

NET OTHER INCOME - -**NET INCOME** \$1,325 \$2,464

**Thank you to all who contribute to
Naples Intergroup / Central Office.**

Spirituality and Money

"While the work of the group treasurer often involves many details, it is important to remember that the money the treasurer oversees serves a spiritual purpose: it enables each group to fulfill its primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is the fundamental work of A.A. and to continue it the group must keep its doors open. The group treasurer is an important part of this Twelfth Step work."

SELF-SUPPORT:**Where Money and Spirituality Mix****Naples Area Intergroup**

1509-B Pine Ridge Road
Naples, FL 34109
(50%)

General Service Office

James A. Farley Station
P. O. Box 2407
New York, N. Y. 10116 (30%)

District 20

District 20 Treasurer
P.O. Box 2896
Naples, FL 34106
(10%)

Area 15

Area 15 Treasurer
2950 W. Cypress Creek Rd.
Ste 333 #1097
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33309
New Address (10%)

Disbursement of a Group's Funds

"After the group's basic needs are met, such as providing for rent, literature, refreshments, and insurance, the group can participate in the financial support of the Fellowship as a whole by sending money to various A.A. service entities: 1) their local Intergroup or Central Office, 2) Area 15 and District 20; and 3) the General Service Office in New York. Many groups provide financial support for their G.S.R.s attending service functions. These entities use contributions in a number of ways, always with the aim of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. *The A.A. Group Treasurer, F-96,*

*Service material prepared by the
General Service Office*

The six digit number next to the meeting name is their unique AA Registration Number assigned by the General Service Office in New York. This number signifies they are a “Registered Group”...Those meetings listed without a six digit number are **NOT registered with G.S.O.** and therefore not a “Group” (by AA definition), but is a “meeting”. *Please see A.A. pamphlet: “The A.A. Group...where it all begins” P-16



The Birthday Club

Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the AA Birthday Club? Sign up today and be featured in the *Courier*. Show your support for your Central Office. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety will help carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer.



Rick G.	54 years
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Ron P.	51 years
Ron L.	46 years
Jim B.	41 years
Jackie G.	39 years
Bill D.	37 years
Michael L.	36 years
Dennis F.	35 years
Rad W.	35 years
Judy W.	34 years
Steve K.	33 years
Bill S.	23 years
Ken H.	22 years
Laura .	7 years
Eric S.	6 years



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District 20

(Collier County, the portion of Monroe County bordered by Collier and Miami-Dade Counties, and the portion of Hendry County below the northernmost boundary of Collier County.)

District 20 Officers:

Chair:

Joe S. 845/554-8721
joeascalia@icloud.com

Alt. Chair:

Tom D. 845/23-6780
tomadavison@yahoo.com

Registrar:

Katie B. 708/408-9330
kaboyl56@gmail.com

Treasurer

Bob A., 440/667-4372
rsadams00@gmail.com

Secretary:

Maury D. 239/370-7232
maury@mdailey.com

Service Committees:

Archives

Susan H., 280-7093

District 20 Business Meeting

4th Thursday of each month,
7:00pm New Attitudes Club
4133 Tamiami Trail E.

Current Practices

Pete C., 784-7725
pete.curtner@yahoo.com

Grapevine / Literature

Lauren F. 220-2792
laurenfrosh@comcast.net
Jody L. 518/335-9748
jojopr1025@gmail.com
Business meeting the third
Tuesday of each month at
5:30 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Institutions

Maria M.
mmetchear@aol.com
1st Thursday of each month
at 7:00 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Public Information/CPC

Ronnie P., 269-8251

Technology

Opportunity.

The Courier is published monthly by the *Naples Area Intergroup of Alcoholic Anonymous* with an office located at 1509-2 Pine Ridge Road, Naples, FL 34109-2198. This publication is by, for, and about the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or The *Naples Area Intergroup*. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc., and/or The AA Grapevine, Inc..

Contributions from our readers are encouraged.

Submissions are edited for space and clarity only.

District 20

Business Meeting:

Fourth Thursday of the
Month, 7:00 pm
New Attitudes Club
4133 Tamiami Trail E.
(Lakewood & E 41)
Behind Speedway Gas

NAPLES AREA INTERGROUP MEETING

Central Office

1509-2 Pine Ridge Rd.
(next to 24 Hour Club)

SECOND Wednesday of
each month at 7:00pm

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Every day except
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mmetchear@aol.com

WILLOUGH
Sunday, Monday and
Thursday
7:00pm
Peggy E., 269-7651
marco-
angel2000@gmail.com

HAZELDEN
Monday, 7:00pm
Nick Geer 818/424-5463
nicgeer@gmail.com

BRIDGING THE GAP
Joe S., 845/554-8721
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Area 15; Panel 75

(South Florida, Bahamas, US and British Virgin Islands, Antigua, St. Maarten, and Cayman Islands)

Delegate: Lisa D.
delegate@area15aa.org

Alternate: Donna W.
altdelegate@area15aa.org

Chair: Bron F.
chair@area15aa.org

Treasurer: Alan T.
treasurer@area15aa.org

Registrar: Lea A.
registrar@area15aa.org

Secretary: Paul M.
secretary@area15aa.org

Naples Area Intergroup

Trusted Servants

Chair:

Blake B., 285-7174
blake91511@gmail.com

Vice Chair:

Robert C. 784-8514
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Treasurer:

Service Opportunity

Secretary:

Tiana B. 337/283-1208
tsbrancato@gmail.com

Members at Large:

Service Opportunities

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Office Hours:

Monday 9am to 4pm
Tuesday 9am to 4pm
Wednesday 9am to 4pm
Thursday 9am to 4pm
Friday 9am to 4pm
Saturday 9am to 4pm
Sunday CLOSED

Office Volunteers

Annamarie T., Becky S., Bill S., Bonnie B., Carrie W., Chrissie F., Caroline H., Eric S., Gay S., Geoff S., Lara E., MariAnn Z., Natacha A., Peggy E. ... and loyal substitutes.

Service Opportunity

After-Hours Phone Volunteers

Bob M., Craig P., Geoff E., Heather B., Ken H., Lauren F., Steve K., and Tim A.