

CONCEPTS

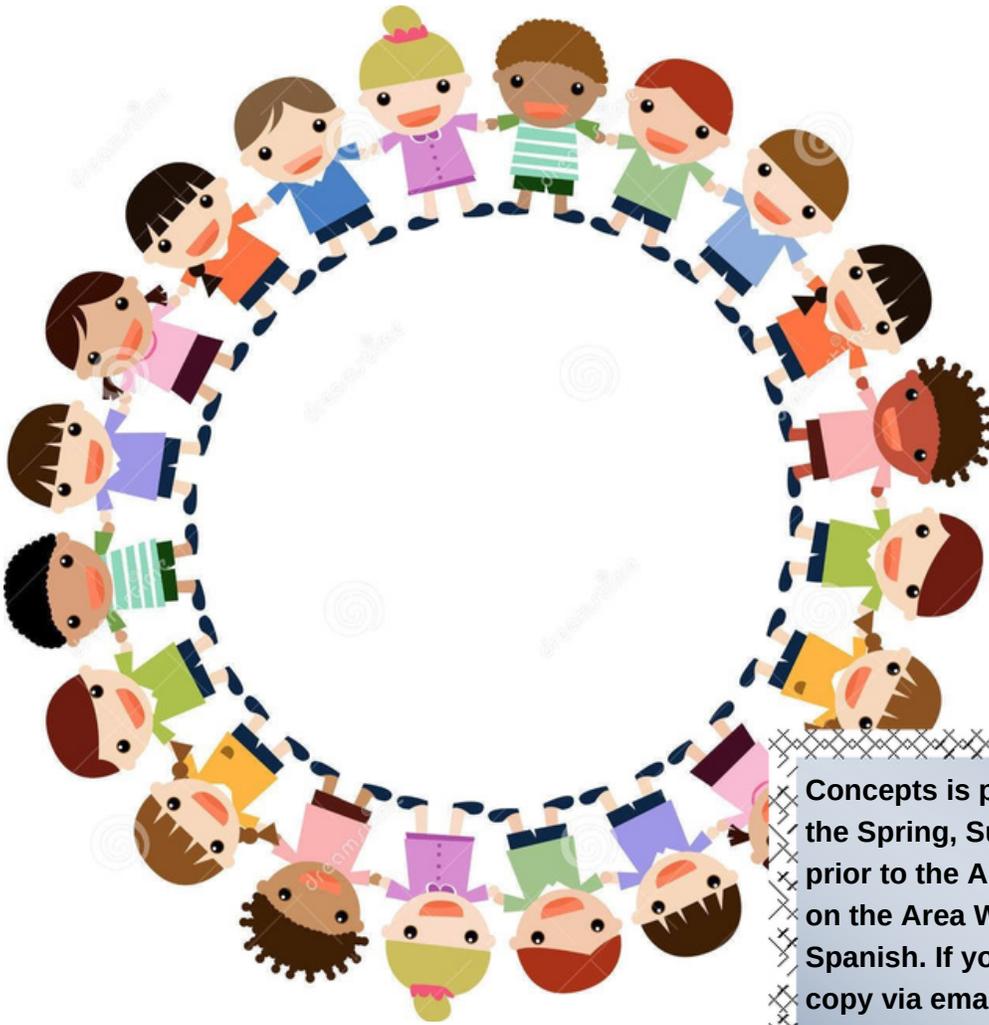
NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA LTD AREA 20 SERVICE LETTER

FALL 2023 VOL. XLVII NO.3



IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Walk Through The Big Book
- 5 Service In Action
- 6 Loners International Meeting
- 9 Email Newsletter
- 10 Editorial Calendar
- 11 Big Book Conference



Concepts is published four times a year in the Spring, Summer, Fall , and Winter just prior to the Area's Assemblies. It is posted on the Area Website in both English and Spanish. If you would like to receive a copy via email please send your request to the Concepts Editor by clicking this [link](#) or using the [Contact Us](#) page of the Area Website. Happy reading.

GSR Preamble

- We are the General Service Representatives.
- We are the link in the communication chain for our groups with the General Service.
- Conference and the world of A.A.
- We realize the ultimate authority in A.A. is a loving God expressed in our group's conscience.
- As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups so that they can reach an informed group conscience.
- As trusted servants, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength vital to our fellowship.

Therefore, let us have the patience and tolerance for listening while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups.

WALK THROUGH THE BIG BOOK

INTO ACTION

Having made our inventory, talked to another alcoholic about it, became willing to have God remove our shortcomings, and asked Him to do that, we are told that we need “more action.” Step Eight is another getting-ready Step, very¹much like Step Six. We must contemplate what going to the people we have harmed and making amends means and whether we are ready to do that. The book tells us: “We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. Now, we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris accumulated from our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember, it was agreed at the beginning that we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.”

“If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” That is a tricky thing. We know that we have done some severe damage. Sometimes, it will mean talking to people we have hated for years, admitting things we had planned to take to the grave, and making restitution for things we have stolen. There is also the case where we feel that the person we need to make amends to has done more harm than we do to them. Bill writes: “It may be he has done us more harm than we have done him and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward him, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults. Nevertheless, we take the bit in our teeth with a person we dislike. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feelings and expressing our regret.” I am reminded of the instructions when doing Step Four: “Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes.” I have to remember, this is about my mistakes, not someone else’s.

The biggest lesson, from doing Step Nine work, has been that I have to forgive myself to be free. It starts by making amends to those I have harmed, and there has been no amendment too hard. Oh, there have been hard ones, don’t get me wrong. But none that didn’t help to free me from my former bondage.

The other lesson from Step Nine is the ability to start being a part of life. I never felt comfortable around other people until I did Step Nine work.

One of the biggest parts of Step Nine is the “except when to do so would injure them or others.” This becomes tricky because it opens the door to avoid an amend that should be made. As a master at rationalization, I can argue that this amend should not be made when it should. That is one reason that doing this with a sponsor is so important. “There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don’t worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen—we send them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don’t delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate, and humble without servitude or scraping. As God’s people, we stand on our feet; we don’t crawl before anyone.” But even when it is agreed that the amend should not be done, with the person, there are ways to do it anyway. You can write a letter but not send it, you can donate to a charity, you can send money anonymously, etc. The objective is to be free from all regrets.

This is where Bill introduces the Ninth Step promises: “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.” I hear these read a lot at meetings, and I always cringe a little. I think there are people who assume that these promises come true by staying sober. But nothing could be further from the truth. I even hear people say that they are beginning to experience the “promises” after a short period of time and no Step work. These promises are based on working Step Nine not staying sober. They come as the direct result of building relationships with people and setting right the wrongs we have done. “They will always materialize if we work for them.” This is the caveat; we have to do the work.

This brings us to Step Ten and Eleven. These two Steps represent our “Design for Living,” the instructions for how to live each day, and therefore I will focus entirely on them in the next issue.

SERVICE IN ACTION

The Cooperation with Professionals Committee (CPC) was out in the Area again this year. Coordinating these efforts is a true effort to carry the message to the community.



CPC members were presenting to nursing students at Elmhurst University.

The Downers Grove South High School Health Fair invited the committee to provide a booth with literature and representatives to answer the student's and teachers' questions.



Thank you for your service,
Jan S., CPC Chair

*Images used with the permission of those photographed

LONERS INTERNATIONAL MEETING

Why I Joined

During my first year of sobriety, I required some orthopedic surgery and inability to attend live meetings. (no Zoom, then). I was fortified with the Big Book and issues of the Grapevine, but I was looking for more connection. I thought there had to be a written way to contact members. And lo and behold, there was! See the next two pages. It was the yellow LIM, historically serving sailors, remote areas, and the homebound.

I joined and received my first meeting by US mail and wrote to several AAs who shared worldwide! I also wrote some general shares to be published for the hundreds worldwide who are receiving it. It is coordinated through the General Service office. I may have worked the 12 Steps via US mail.

Read the history and help others through your share!

Grateful,
Susan H.



LONERS-INTERNATIONALISTS MEETING (LIM)

CORRESPONDENCE SERVICE

The Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM) is a confidential bimonthly bulletin sent to Loners, Homers, Internationalists, Port Contacts, and Loner Sponsors. The bulletin contains excerpts from LIM members' letters sent to the General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous. The bulletin includes full names and addresses. LIM is distributed only to the members described below who appreciate the need for confidentiality of personal sharing with one another through correspondence.

To participate, an A.A. member needs to: 1) read and write English; 2) provide a stable email and/or mailing address; and, 3) be willing to share experience, strength, and hope via correspondence. Many LIM members communicate via email, while some utilize postal mail.

A G.S.O. staff member coordinates the Loners, Homers, and Internationalists correspondence service, which is open to A.A. members who fit one of the categories listed below:

- Loner: An A.A. member who cannot attend meetings regularly because there is no A.A. meeting near where he or she lives.
- Homer: An A.A. member who cannot attend A.A. meetings because of physical incapacity.
- Internationalist: An A.A. member working on a seagoing vessel for long periods.
- Port Contact: An A.A. member serving as a contact for Internationalists when in port.

Loner Sponsor: An A.A. member active in local A.A. meetings who shares his or her experiences and group activity with Loners, Homers, and Internationalists through correspondence. A Loner Sponsor is not a "Loner" or a "sponsor" in the traditional A.A. sense.

(Because more Loner Sponsors participate in the LIM service than Loners, Homers, and Internationalists combined; new Loner Sponsors are not currently being added.)

Loners, Homers, and Internationalists receive bimonthly copies of the confidential bulletin *Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM)* and *Box 4-5-9*, a newsletter published by G.S.O. The *Loners-Internationalists & Homers Directory* is printed annually and lists all active LIM members.

To participate, an A.A. member needs to be able to read and write in English.

A.A. members who fit a LIM category may contact: Loners Assignment, c/o General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; or email: lim@aa.org.

Please print or type information requested and return this form or information to G.S.O.:

Yes, I want to join (check ONE only): Loner ___ Homer ___ Internationalist ___ Port Contact ___

Full Name _____

Mailing address _____

City, State/Province, Postal Code, Country _____

Email address _____

Telephone number _____

Overview of *LIM* History

The first *LIM* bulletin, printed in 1949 as *The Internationalists Round Robin*, was a few pages of excerpts from letters received at G.S.O. and mailed to a small band of Internationalists determined to stay sober no matter how isolated they were.

By 1963, the bulletin consisted of five or six one-sided pages, mimeographed on blue paper. In 1976, an A.A. *Loners* meeting merged with the original *Internationalists* meeting. Since the March-April 1980 issue, *LIM* has been printed on the familiar yellow pages.

LIM began through the efforts of Captain Jack S., a sailor who found sobriety in A.A. and understood that to maintain sobriety, he needed to reach out to other members through correspondence.

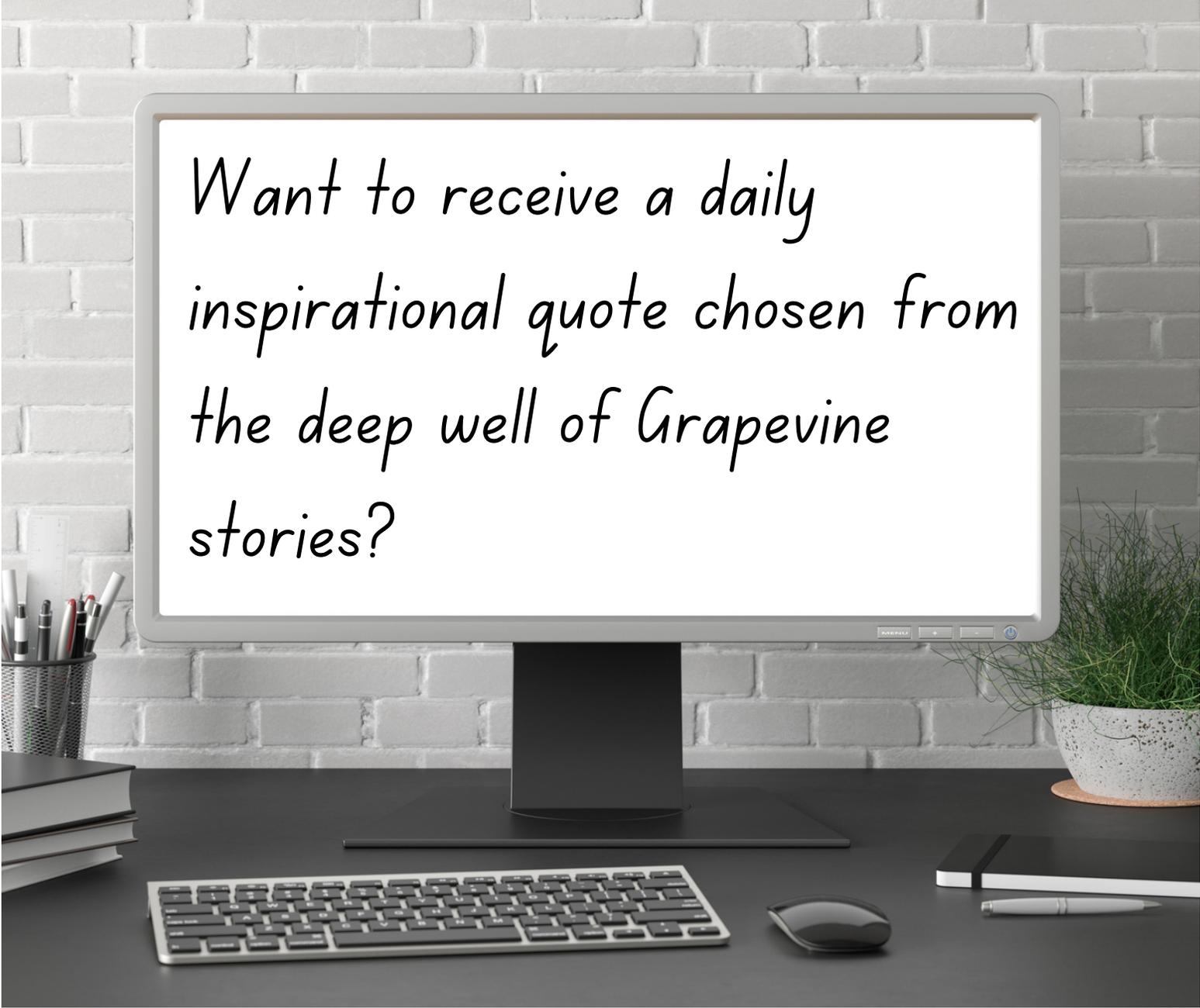
Initially, Captain Jack was looking for A.A. contacts in port cities when he wrote a letter to G.S.O. dated March 28, 1946. Captain Jack requested information on A.A. contacts because he was “. . . still at sea on oil tankers, on which I have served for ten years. I have few contacts ashore with A.A. and must rely on the Book and the guy upstairs.” A G.S.O. staff member provided Captain Jack with the names of A.A. contacts in port cities and encouraged him to write to other seagoing members, which he did.

After the publication of a three-part article, “A ‘Loner’ at Sea,” by Captain Jack in the October, November, and December 1948 issues of the A.A. *Grapevine*, plans began to take shape to start an Internationalists meeting-by-mail. Letters responding to that *Grapevine* article prompted another G.S.O. staff member to suggest to Captain Jack that he consider starting a “Round Robin Meeting” via letters. Captain Jack responded positively and suggested the name be “The Far East Internationalist Group.” He said that name “. . . would leave it open to lone members stationed ashore in the Far East and also to men who sail these waters under flags of different nations.”

Captain Jack died in December 1988 at age 91, a few months after celebrating his 42nd A.A. anniversary. He had remained active in the Fellowship, seeking newcomers in Portland, Maine – where he had retired – while continuing to answer the many letters that he received.

A.A.’s phenomenal worldwide growth is attributed in part to Captain Jack and hundreds of Internationalists like him who, sailing the seven seas, carried the message wherever they dropped anchor.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER



*Want to receive a daily
inspirational quote chosen from
the deep well of Grapevine
stories?*

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/share> emails

*Please let your friends know and pass it on. We also have
options for weekly and monthly.*

GRAPEVINE EDITORIAL CALENDAR 2024

- JAN **Emotional Sobriety** (stories due July 15, 2023)
Over time, how have you learned to use the tools of AA to gain serenity and peace? How has your life changed? Share some examples of emotional sobriety in your life today.
- FEB **Getting Through Tough Times** (stories due Aug 15, 2023)
A serious illness, divorce, the death of a loved one, a house fire, loss of a job, bankruptcy...How have you stayed sober through adversity? Tell us how the program and fellowship helped you.
- MARCH **Spanish-Speaking AA Members** (stories due Sept. 15, 2023)
This month we celebrate our Spanish-speaking AA members by translating and sharing some of the very best La Vina stories! We're also looking for stories of those doing service to reach out to our Spanish-speaking members in meetings, districts, areas or at events.
- APRIL **Favorite Big Book Stories** (stories due Oct. 15, 2023)
Grapevine celebrates 85 wonderful years of our beloved Big Book! What are your favorite Big Book stories or memories? What are your favorite chapters or passages and why? How did it help you as a newcomer? Feel free to include a photo of your well-worn Big Book!
- MAY **How the Steps Change My Life** (stories due Nov. 15, 2023)
Tell us how the Steps have changed your life and enriched your sobriety. Give some examples. What is your favorite Step? Which one surprised you most? Share your stories.
- JUNE **Happy Birthday Grapevine! (80 Wonderful Years!)** (stories due Dec. 15, 2023)
This June, Grapevine turns the big 80! Help us celebrate by sharing your very best memories with Grapevine. Why do you love Grapevine? Was there a story that once helped you? How did being a GV Rep help your sobriety? What did you learn? Share your best Grapevine memories!
- JULY **Annual Prison Issue** (stories due Jan. 15, 2024)
Looking for stories of hope about AA in prisons and jails by incarcerated members and by those who bring meetings to them. Did you find AA in prison? What is sobriety like inside? Are you involved in correspondence service or prison sponsorship? We would love to hear your stories.
- AUG **Dating & Relationships** (stories due Feb. 15, 2024)
Share your experiences learning to date in sobriety. How did it go? What were the challenges? Any sober tips? (Believe me, we all want to know!). Share what you've learned about having sober relationships. How is your marriage different in sobriety than when you were drinking?
- SEPT **Young & Sober (Release of the New GV & LV Apps!)** (stories due March 15, 2024)
Did you come into AA at an early age? What was that like? What were the challenges? Do you go to Young People's AA (YPAA) meetings, dances or conferences? How have they helped you?
- OCT **Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)** (stories due April 15, 2024)
Have you participated in CPC service (providing doctors, therapists, clergy, lawyers, teachers, parole officers and other professionals information about AA)? Did a professional help you find your way to AA because of CPC service work? Are you a professional who found out about AA from members doing CPC work?
- NOV **Classic Grapevine**
Our favorite stories from the AA Grapevine Story Archive.
- DEC **Remote Communities** (stories due June 15, 2024)
Do you live far from AA meetings? Are you a loner? Stationed far away? Do you have a language or cultural barrier? Are you homebound? Do you use online meetings? Is it difficult to find AA meetings where you live? Tell us how you stay sober. Are you involved in Remote Community service?
- Sober Holidays!** (stories due June 15, 2024) December is a great time of year to reach out to alcoholics and help others. What are the ways you stay sane and grateful during the holidays and New Year's? How do you navigate holiday parties and family gatherings? Share your best sober holiday stories!

Big Book Conference

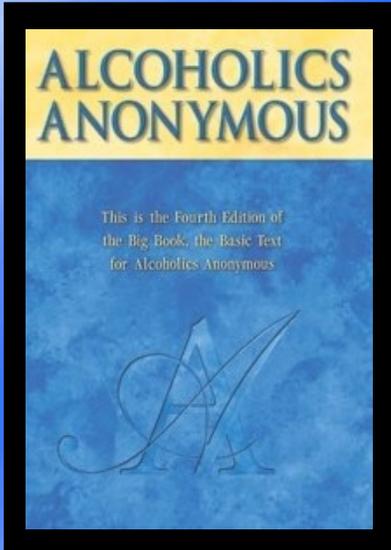
2023

'A Daily Reprieve'

NIA Area 20 hosted by AA District 61



Where? Lord of Life Church, Elburn



Doors open for registration at: 8am

When? Saturday, November 4th, 2023 900a - 315p

Morning Speaker:

David C.

Palatine, IL

General Admission

\$15.00

credit card/cash

Afternoon Speaker:

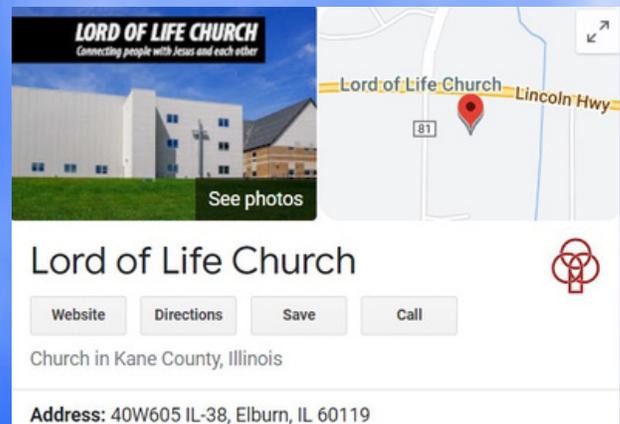
Tina H.

Waukesha, WI

Spanish interpretation available

Lunch available for
purchase of \$15.00
including your choice
of: Chicken kabobs/
Vegetarian plus sides

**Must be pre-ordered by 10/25



-----Register Today-----

www.aa-nia.org/bigbookconference

or via QR code 



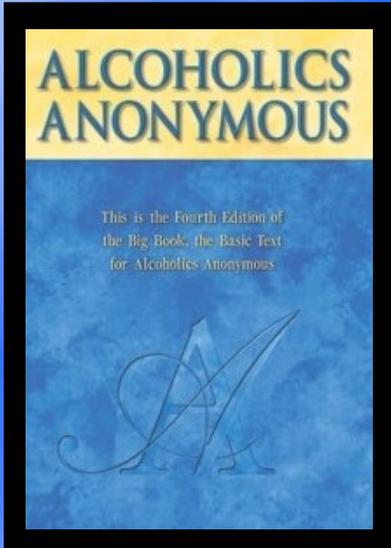
Conferencia del Libro Grande 2023

'Un respiro diario'

AA distrito 61



Dónde? Lord of Life Church, Elburn



Puertas abiertas para inscripciones en: 800am
¿Cuándo? sábado, 4 de noviembre de 2023 900a - 315p

Orador de la mañana
David C.
Palatine, IL

Admisión
general
\$15.00
tarjeta de crédito
dinero

Oradora de la tarde:
Tina H.
Waukesha, WI

Almuerzo disponible por
\$15

Elección de brochetas de
pollo kabobs/vegetariano

***Debe reservar antes
del 25/10



-----Regístrese hoy-----

<http://www.aa-nia.org/bigbookconference>

o a través de

