

This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature

# The A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print



*ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*® is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.
- A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.
- Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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Revised per 2004 Conference

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Grapevine: [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)

## **The A.A. Grapevine Statement of Purpose**

The A.A. Grapevine is the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. Written, edited, illustrated, and read by A.A. members and others interested in the A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism, the Grapevine is a lifeline linking one alcoholic to another.

Widely known as a “meeting in print,” the A.A. Grapevine communicates the experience, strength, and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience with recovery, unity, and service. Founded in 1944, the Grapevine does not receive group contributions, but is supported entirely through magazine subscription sales and additional income derived from the sale of related items.

The awareness that every A.A. member has an individual way of working the program permeates the pages of the Grapevine, and throughout its history the magazine has been a forum for the varied and often divergent opinions of A.A.s around the world. Articles are not intended to be statements of A.A. policy, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or the Grapevine.

As Bill W. expressed it in 1946, “The Grapevine will be the voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement. Its editors and staff will be primarily accountable to the A.A. movement as a whole . . . . Within the bounds of friendliness and good taste, the Grapevine will enjoy perfect freedom of speech on all matters directly pertaining to Alcoholic Anonymous . . . . Like the Alcoholics Anonymous movement it is to mirror, there will be but one central purpose: The Grapevine will try to carry the A.A. message to alcoholics and practice the A.A. principles in all its affairs.”

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## **La Viña Statement of Purpose**

La Viña is “our meeting in print” for Spanish-speaking members of A.A. and contains stories, interviews and articles written in Spanish, as well as some writings taken from the A.A. Grapevine. Written, edited, illustrated and read by A.A. members and others interested in the A.A. program of recovery from alcoholism, La Viña is a lifeline linking one alcoholic to another.

La Viña communicates the experience, strength and hope of its contributors and reflects a broad geographic spectrum of current A.A. experience with recovery, unity, and service.

The awareness that every A.A. member has an individual way of working his or her program permeates the pages of La Viña and the magazine is a forum for the varied and often divergent opinions of A.A.s around the world. Articles are not intended to be statements of A.A. policy, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or La Viña.

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## **The A.A. Grapevine and La Viña: Our Meetings in Print**

*The A.A. Grapevine is A.A.'s "meeting in print," a monthly collection of articles written by A.A. members from around the world. As an integral part of Alcoholics Anonymous for 60 years, the Grapevine publishes articles that reflect the full diversity of experience and thought found within the A.A. Fellowship, as does La Viña, its bimonthly Spanish-language magazine, first published in 1996. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates their pages, and in determining content, the editorial staff relies on the principles of the Twelve Traditions. Each issue carries a statement of purpose, which states a fundamental truth about the Grapevine and La Viña, that each is "a lifeline linking one suffering alcoholic to another."*

### ***A mirror of the Fellowship***

From its beginning, in June of 1944, the Grapevine's history has run parallel to that of A.A. as a whole, and many of the critical events in the evolution of the Fellowship have been chronicled in the pages of the Grapevine. The Twelve Traditions were first presented to the Fellowship by Bill W. in an April 1946 article entitled "Twelve Suggested Points for A.A. Tradition." The A.A. Preamble was written by one of the Grapevine's first editors, based on the Foreword to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and was published in the June 1947 Grapevine. Throughout the years many nonalcoholic friends of A.A. have shared their experience and insight with the Fellowship through the Grapevine — such friends as Sister Ignatia, Rev. Sam Shoemaker, Dr. William Silkworth, and others.

Today, the Grapevine and La Viña reach an A.A. population that's dramatically different from the population of the early 1940s. (Indeed, La

Viña grew out of the Grapevine's endeavor to meet the needs of the growing Spanish-speaking membership of A.A.) There are many more young people now; the number of women has increased considerably; and more minority groups and language groups are represented throughout Alcoholics Anonymous. These changes all point to an ongoing need for increased communication between different segments of the A.A. community, and that's just what readers find in the Grapevine and La Viña.

### ***The Grapevine and Conference approval***

A question often asked about the Grapevine is whether or not it is "Conference-approved." General Service Conference approval is a lengthy review process, and Conference-approved literature represents the widest possible consensus of A.A. experience. The process can take years for longer projects, with several stages of committee evaluation along the way. Ultimately, the General Service Conference as a whole must approve the final product before it can be published with the "Conference-approved" statement.

Since the Grapevine comes out 12 times a year, and the Conference meets only once a year, the magazine would never come off the press if it had to go through the Conference review process. However, the Conference has always supported the concept of the Grapevine and, in 1986, a Conference Advisory Action specifically addressed the issue of Conference approval for the first time with the following statement: "Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the Conference-approval process, the Conference recognizes the Grapevine as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous." In addition, the Conference Charter guarantees the right of the Grapevine editor to accept or reject material for publication; there is a Conference Committee on the Grapevine, formed in 1954; and any Grapevine or La Viña matter of importance to the Fellowship as a whole is brought to the Conference through that committee. Over the years a number of Conference Advisory Actions have encouraged use of the Grapevine and endorsed questions of corporate or editorial policy.

So, while each issue of the magazine cannot be individually approved, the concept of the Grapevine has been endorsed by the Conference as a whole and the use of the Grapevine and its publications as recovery tools has been encouraged throughout the Fellowship year after year.

### ***La Viña and Conference approval***

The Conference also has been behind La Viña from the beginning. It supported the idea of publishing a Spanish-language article in the Grapevine in 1991. Then in 1995, the General Service Conference endorsed the idea of a Spanish-language edition of the Grapevine and asked the General Service Board to undertake the financing of this project for an experimental period not to exceed five years. After reviewing a business plan presented by A.A. Grapevine management, the trustees approved the project, and the Grapevine published the first bimonthly edition of La Viña in 1996.

Many subscriptions were received from Spanish-language groups as well as from correctional and treatment facilities committees, and the magazine was well received throughout the Fellowship. Mindful of this and of the magazine's effectiveness as a Twelfth Step tool, the 2001 General Service Conference recommended that "La Viña continue to be published by the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and supported by the General Service Board as a service to the Fellowship." Still a bimonthly magazine, La Viña publishes mostly original articles in Spanish and some translations from the Grapevine, which A.A.s have found helpful for encouraging newcomers, supporting Spanish groups in their areas, and for working with A.A. service committees on cooperation with professional communities, public information, treatment, and correctional facilities.

### ***Structure and finance***

The Grapevine is incorporated as one of the two independent arms of A.A.'s General Service Board, with its own corporate board, staff, and financial operation separate from that of the

General Service Office. Grapevine staff, directors, and trustees are voting members of the General Service Conference, and there is a Conference Committee on the Grapevine. A volunteer Editorial Advisory Board is also an important part of the Grapevine structure. Its members, A.A.s with expertise in publishing, communications, and the arts, act in an advisory capacity to the staff.

Financially, the Grapevine is supported entirely through sales of the magazine and related items. Individuals and groups may contribute gift or “carry-the-message” subscriptions to individuals, groups, hospitals, correctional facilities, or other institutions. In contrast to G.S.O., which receives group contributions to support group services, the Grapevine does not accept contributions from the Fellowship. Grapevine finances are reviewed by the trustees’ Finance Committee, and on an annual basis funds in excess of current operating needs are transferred and invested with the General Service Board Reserve Fund.

### ***Editorial selection***

All articles for the magazine are contributed by A.A. members, with the exception of a few by nonalcoholics who know and love the Fellowship. Articles are evaluated by A.A. members on the editorial staff, and while some editing is done for purposes of clarity, styling, and length, the editors encourage all writers to express their own experience in their own unique way. Articles are selected for publication only after discussion and the consensus of the editorial staff, and when needed, the Editorial Advisory Board.

The A.A. Grapevine receives several hundred submissions a month while La Viña receives about fifty, and every contributor receives a reply from the editorial department, whether or not the work is published.

### ***www.aa.grapevine.org*** ***The A.A. Grapevine Web site***

Like the magazine, the A.A. Grapevine Web site, [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org), is a lifeline linking one alcoholic to another and a source of information for A.A.’s many friends. The Grapevine began

reaching out to alcoholics on-line in 1998 with a description of the magazine. The Web site now carries the message of A.A. by offering current Grapevine articles, an archive of past articles, cartoons, an audio version of the magazine (in downloadable MP3 format), and A.A. topics for discussion on a moderated bulletin board called i-Say. In addition, the Web site provides information for Grapevine representatives, information about submitting work to the magazine, a calendar of events, a sobriety clock, a catalog, and links to the A.A.W.S. Web site and the Grapevine office. The Grapevine Web site includes a Spanish-language section, featuring articles from La Viña, as well.

### ***Grapevine items***

Grapevine items, ranging from books of collected articles to an annual trilingual wall calendar featuring member-submitted photographs, are produced from works that have appeared in the A.A. Grapevine magazine or La Viña. Primary among these Grapevine items is the 434-page collection of Bill W.'s work, entitled *The Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings*, along with signs of the Serenity Prayer and the Preamble, which were introduced to the Fellowship in early issues of the magazine. With its recent production of compact disks, the A.A. Grapevine makes significant magazine articles available in audio format to A.A.s who cannot read, who cannot get to meetings, or who simply want a meeting between meetings at home or on the road. The A.A. Grapevine also publishes a Spanish- and French-language translation of *The Language of the Heart*, and has made La Oración de la Serenidad and three Spanish-language CDs from La Viña available as well. (A catalog of Grapevine items is available from the A.A. Grapevine office and on-line at [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org).)

### ***Grapevine and La Viña representatives***

Grapevine representatives (GvRs) and La Viña representatives (RLVs) perform a service for A.A. members, bringing them two vital tools of recov-

ery — the A.A. Grapevine and La Viña. GvRs and RLVs are engaged in practical, hands-on work. Their basic job is to make the magazines available to the group, to encourage A.A.s to read them, subscribe to them, and use them in Twelfth Step work.

A.A. members become Grapevine or La Viña reps by volunteering or being elected to the position by their groups. After election, they register on-line or through the Grapevine office. The position can also be a gateway to wider circles of service, as GvRs and RLVs in many areas meet with district Grapevine/La Viña reps and area coordinators/chairpersons and attend Regional Forums and area assemblies. In some districts, the GvR represents both magazines.

### ***The Grapevine office***

The Grapevine has a paid staff, including an executive editor, senior editor, associate editor, production manager, La Viña editor, circulation manager, controller, office manager, director of Internet operations, and freelance art directors. The work of the Grapevine office is primarily distributed into four departments: 1) editorial; 2) circulation; 3) finances and 4) customer shipping. The executive editor has oversight responsibility for the entire organization and reports directly to the Grapevine's Board of Directors.

### ***How the Grapevine began***

In the spring of 1944, just nine years after the Fellowship's founding, a small group of A.A. members living in and around New York City began an A.A. magazine, with the goal of providing news of A.A. to members hungry for information about the growth of the Fellowship and the A.A. program of recovery. As one of the original editorial staff of the Grapevine recalled, "It's hard to remember that in 1944 A.A.s themselves had little opportunity of communicating with each other outside of their own small groups; that an A.A. group in Arkansas had little idea of how an A.A. group in Ohio or New Jersey conducted its meetings; that many A.A. groups were so small and anonymous they couldn't be found by traveling A.A.s . . . ; that

there were no A.A. publications beyond the Big Book and one or two pamphlets.”

So, with the blessings of A.A.’s co-founder Bill W., the first issue of the Grapevine — whose title was meant to suggest an informal but powerful way to communicate — was published in June 1944 as a large-format newsletter. In an effort to get the newsletter off to a good start, a copy of the first issue was sent to every group (totaling only about 300 at that time), as well as to all known A.A. members in the armed services overseas. It was hoped that a monthly A.A. paper would be especially helpful to these overseas members, as they were usually cut off from group meetings and direct contact with other members. Each month, an entire page was devoted to publishing the letters received from these members, with the heading, “Mail Call for All A.A.s in the Armed Forces,” and they soon began to refer to the Grapevine as their “meeting in print.” This designation has remained over the years, and current issues of the Grapevine and La Viña still carry the words “Our Meeting In Print” on the cover.

### ***How to contact the Grapevine and La Viña***

For editorial correspondence, ordering information, or current subscription information, please write to the Grapevine at: PO Box 1980, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-1980. For assistance in English or Spanish, telephone: (212) 870-3018; or fax: (212) 870-3301. E-mail for submissions: [gveditorial@aagrapevine.org](mailto:gveditorial@aagrapevine.org). You can also visit the Grapevine Web site at: [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org) for additional information and to access the Digital Archive, the Audio-Grapevine, and an on-line catalog.

## THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

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

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

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

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

**A.A. GRAPEVINE PUBLICATIONS** Complete order forms available from the Grapevine, Box 1980, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-1980 or [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)

**AA Grapevine Books** \_\_\_\_\_

*In Our Own Words: Stories of Young AAs in Recovery*  
*Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier*  
*The Language of the Heart: Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings*  
*The Best of Bill: Most frequently requested articles by Bill W.*  
*Spiritual Awakening: Journeys of the Spirit*  
*Thank You for Sharing*  
*The Home Group*  
*AA Around the World: Adventures in Recovery*  
*Best of the Grapevine; Volumes I, II, and III*  
*I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA*

**AA Grapevine CDs** \_\_\_\_\_

*Powers of Example: AAs Talk About Practicing the Principles in Everyday Life*  
*Attitude Adjustment: AA Grapevine Stories About Change*  
*A Lifetime of AA: A Special Collection of Old-Timers' Stories from the AA Grapevine*  
*The Best of Bill: Reflections on Fair, Fear, Honesty, Humility and Love*  
*It Works If We Work It: Practicing the Principles of AA*  
*The Twelve Traditions: What Experience Has Taught Us*  
*What It Was Like: Early AAs Tell Their Stories*  
*The Story of AA: How the Fellowship Began*  
*Partners on the Journey: Sponsorship Stories*  
*Not For Newcomers Only: Basic principles to deal with everyday problems.*  
*Pathways to Spirituality: Varieties of spiritual experience from the pages of The Grapevine*  
*Classic Grapevine: Volumes I, II, and III: Timeless articles from the pages of The Grapevine*

**AA Grapevine Books in Spanish** \_\_\_\_\_

*Lo mejor de La Viña* (The Best of La Viña)  
*El Grupo Base* (The Home Group)  
*El Lenguaje del Corazon* (The Language of the Heart)  
*Lo mejor de Bill* (The Best of Bill)

**AA Grapevine CDS in Spanish** \_\_\_\_\_

*La Historia de AA* (The Story of AA)  
*Historias de La Viña: Volumes I; II, Pasos 1 a 6 (Steps 1 - 6); and III, Pasos 7 a 12 (Steps 7 -12)*

**A.A. PUBLICATIONS** Complete order forms available from  
General Service Office of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS,  
Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

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**BOOKS**

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (*regular, portable, large-print and abridged pocket editions*)  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE  
TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS  
(*regular, soft-cover, large-print, pocket and gift editions*)  
EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE  
AS BILL SEES IT (*regular & soft cover editions*)  
DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS  
"PASS IT ON"  
DAILY REFLECTIONS

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**BOOKLETS**

CAME TO BELIEVE  
LIVING SOBER  
A.A. IN PRISON: INMATE TO INMATE

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**PAMPHLETS**

44 QUESTIONS  
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED  
MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY ASK ABOUT A.A.  
THREE TALKS TO MEDICAL SOCIETIES BY BILL W.  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A RESOURCE FOR  
THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL  
A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY  
IS A.A. FOR YOU?  
IS A.A. FOR ME?  
THIS IS A.A.  
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN THE WORKPLACE?  
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?  
A.A. FOR THE BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP  
A.A. FOR THE WOMAN  
A.A. FOR THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN  
A.A. AND THE GAY/LESBIAN ALCOHOLIC  
A.A. FOR THE OLDER ALCOHOLIC—NEVER TOO LATE  
THE JACK ALEXANDER ARTICLE  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.  
A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES  
THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS  
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?  
INSIDE A.A.  
THE A.A. GROUP  
G.S.R.  
MEMO TO AN INMATE  
THE TWELVE CONCEPTS ILLUSTRATED  
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED  
LET'S BE FRIENDLY WITH OUR FRIENDS  
HOW A.A. MEMBERS COOPERATE  
A.A. IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES  
A MESSAGE TO CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS  
A.A. IN TREATMENT FACILITIES  
BRIDGING THE GAP  
IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL  
A.A. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY  
A MEMBER'S-EYE VIEW OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL  
UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY  
THE CO-FOUNDERS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
SPEAKING AT NON-A.A. MEETINGS  
A BRIEF GUIDE TO A.A.  
A NEWCOMER ASKS  
WHAT HAPPENED TO JOE; IT HAPPENED TO ALICE  
(*Two full-color, comic-book style pamphlets*)  
TOO YOUNG? (*A cartoon pamphlet for teenagers*)  
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL  
(*An Illustrated pamphlet for inmates*)

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**VIDEOS**

A.A.—AN INSIDE VIEW  
A.A.—RAP WITH US  
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL  
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.  
YOUR A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE,  
THE GRAPEVINE AND THE GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

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**PERIODICALS**

THE A.A. GRAPEVINE (monthly)  
LA VIÑA (bimonthly)

## **I am responsible. . .**

When anyone, anywhere,  
reaches out for help, I want  
the hand of A.A. always to be there.  
And for that: I am responsible.

This is A.A. General Service  
Conference-approved literature