

Coffee Pot Talk



NDIAA Newsletter

November 2021 21B Trolley Square Wilmington, DE 19806 302-655-5113

NDINEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM



Nothing changes if nothing changes...

Hey family!!!! It's been a couple of months since the last newsletter and I would like to apologize for that. I have had some big things happening in my life. First off, I married the love of my life Meg. It was a wild ride but it came together exactly as my Higher Power wanted it to. We also decided to move to Maine next year. It has been a dream of mine for many years to become a New Englander and finally, I've decided to take a leap of faith and just do it! That being said, I am going to be very busy planning my move and unfortunately, will not have the ability to keep up with the newsletter. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to be of service. This has been the best service position I have held in the 9 years I have been service. I got to have the experience of interviewing local longtimers and reporting on their experience, strength and hope. I was able to work with the three constant figures in the newsletter – Maria M, Sheila D and Brendon M. They were all so influential in my program. I want to thank all of the readers for their feedback, submissions and loyalty.

I'm not leaving you hangin' though. I asked my dear friend Monica to step in and take the newsletter to a whole new level. She is a good, sober woman with a strong program and is very dedicated to service so I know she won't let ya down - plus I know her sponsor and she ain't no joke! Just kidding...seriously, this chick walks the talk and I am excited for all of the

amazing things she is going to bring to this fellowship. I wish you all the gift of sobriety – one day at a time.

In love and service,

Emmy

Every one of us is a straight up MIRACLE!!!!!

Passing the baton...

Hello family,

One of the first things I learned when coming into the program of Alcoholics Anonymous was that when offered a service opportunity that you should not say "no". I also was taught that "no" was a one word sentence. It took me some time to realize that "No is a one word sentence" does not apply to service work. If available and able – you should always be ready to be of service to the program or an individual within the program.

That being said; I happily said "Yes" when asked to start compiling the newsletter. I am happy to be of service through this opportunity and hope that you enjoy the newsletter just as you always have. I am open to new ideas, suggestions, or feature articles and would love any feedback. Progress not perfection will come into play as I transition into this role. Emmy has paved quite a yellow brick road for me to continue on and I am grateful for her service and her efforts.

If you don't personally know me; I hope to get to know you as I continue my journey of sobriety. I can most often be found at my home group – Dawn Patrol – which meets every morning at 7am at Westminster House in Newark, DE.

Yours in Service, Monica C





Our Principals

Step 11

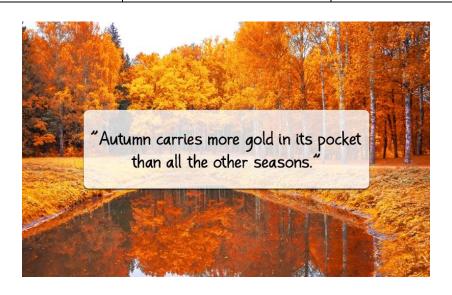
"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Tradition 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." Al-Anon includes the addition, "We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members."

Concept 11

While the trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.







Literature Spotlight

Regardless of our native tongue, we, the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, know and understand one another, because we speak "the language of the heart". The phrase, "the language of a heart", is drawn from the title of a book which is the subject of this month's Spotlight on Literature review.

From 1944 to 1970 Bill W. wrote more than 150 Grapevine articles and in 1988 they were compiled into the book, <u>The Language Of The Heart.</u> Following a forward by Bill's beloved wife, Lois, and an introduction from the editor, the book is divided by years into three parts: PART ONE: 1944-1950, PART TWO: 1950-1958, and PART THREE: 1958-1970. Memorial Articles and Articles About the Grapevine conclude the text.

However, one of the most valuable aspects of the book is the **Index** at the rear. The **Index** contains a comprehensive list of names, places, phrases, publications, topics and historical events of interest to anyone concerned about alcoholism and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. My well-worn copy printed in 1997 has been a reliable source of information to which I have referred on numerous occasions.

Perhaps you are aware that Bill W introduced the Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in his Grapevine articles. Those articles are found in <u>The Language Of The Heart</u>, PART ONE: 1944-1950, Segment 1: The Shaping of the Traditions. Over three years, beginning with the August 1945 issue of the Grapevine and culminating with the November 1948 issue, Bill related the experiences of the early years of A.A.'s development and concluded with the Traditions as we know them today. Originally titled: "Twelve Points to Assure Our Future, an Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition of Relations", the Traditions evolved from the long version to the short version, both of which remain in publication.

At the conclusion of Bill's article titled *Tradition Twelve* in the November 1948 edition of the Grapevine he states: "Our A.A. Traditions are, we trust, securely

anchored in those wise precepts: charity, gratitude, and humility. Nor have we forgotten *prudence*. May these virtues ever stand clear before us in our meditations; may Alcoholics Anonymous serve God in happy unison for so long as he may need us." Segment 2 of PART ONE: 1944-1950, *Additional Writings from This Period*, contains articles with some very interesting titles such as, *A Date with Destiny, October 1944; Letter to the Mother of an Alcoholic, December 1944; and, Those "Goof Balls" November 1945.* (Bill named popular narcotics of the era "Goof Balls".)

PART TWO: 1950-1958 Contains three segments: *AA Grows to Maturity, Let's Be Friendly with Our Friends and Additional Writings from this Period.* Among the fourteen articles in *Segment 1: AA Grows to Maturity*, is a Grapevine September 1950 article titled, *We Came of Age.* Here Bill outlines in great detail the 1950 Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous held in St. Louis Missouri, July 1950. It was at this conference that, sadly, Dr. Bob gave his final address to the fellowship. *Your Third Legacy, How AA's World Services Grew,* and *Guardian of A.A.: Our General Service Conference*, other topics in *Segment 1*, emphasize the role that service to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous plays in the sobriety of the individual. Bill wrote, "...the great event of 1955 will be our decision to make this newborn General Service Conference a permanent part of AA's life. This irrevocable step will mark the full completion of AA's structure -- Recovery, Unity, and now Service. It will mark that day when, before God and the world, we declare ourselves fully responsible and come of age."

Segment 2: Let's Be Friendly with Our Friends is comprised of five articles referring to professionals: The Psychiatrists; The Physicians; The Clergy; Press, Radio, Television; and, On the Alcoholism Front. Segment 3: contains nine articles, some with familiar topics such as, Why Alcoholism Anonymous is Anonymous and Problems Other Than Alcohol in addition to Let's Make Practical and Spiritual Sense. It also highlights a Salute to Canada; A Fragment of History: Origin of the Twelve Steps and Another Fragment of History: Sister Ignatia and Dr. Bob.

In PART THREE: 1958-1970 we read that during Bill's final talk to the 1961 General Service Conference he announced that he would step down as a leader. He highlighted the spirit of rotation and noted that the individual group's informed conscience would guide the fellowship forward. However Bill stated that he would continue to publish his writings in the Grapevine which he did through December, 1970. Bill died on January 24, 1971

Segment 1. PART THREE, In All Our Affairs, contains a number of articles which were later published in a book: The Best of Bill, including: The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety; This Matter of Honesty; and Humility for Today. Segment 2: Looking Toward the Future, contains 14 articles, one of which is titled First World Service Meeting. The first World Service Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous was held over three days in New York City, October 1969. It was attended by 26 delegates from 12 countries. Currently, the "World Service Meeting alternates biennially between New York and other locations around the globe, and has convened in such diverse cities as Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; Oviedo, Spain; Malahide, Ireland; Mexico City, Mexico; and Warsaw, Poland." (aa.org)

"The objectives of the World Service Meeting are: 1.) to consider the future development of world services; 2.) to strengthen general service work already existing abroad; 3.) to increase the number of service centers; 4.) to provide for them an orderly plan of evolution; 5.) to assist in strengthening their self support".

Ten **Memorial Articles** follow in PART THREE. Bill wrote these over a number of years as tributes to some very special friends of A.A: *Anne S.; Dr. Bob: A Tribute; He Kept the Faith (Bill D.) [Bill D. was* AA number three]; *Dr. A. Weiss Hammer; To Father Ed—Godspeed!; In Remembrance of Ebby; In Memory of Harry [Dr. Harry Tiebout]; For Sister Ignacia; "I Stand by the Door" (Samuel Shoemaker)* and *Bernard B. Smith.*

Articles About the Grapevine concludes the text. In *An Anniversary Letter*, June 1959, Bill writes about the anniversary of the founding of the Grapevine Magazine 15 years prior. He notes that the Grapevine"... is a great means of inter-communications: a magic carpet on which each of you can ride to the more distant riches and watch new brothers and sisters emerge from darkness into light."

Bill's closing statement in $\underline{\text{The Language Of The Heart}}$: " May God prosper the Grapevine always."

Note: All of the above Grapevine articles highlighted in italics can be read in their entirety at: aagrapevine.org

Love and support in service,

Sheila D







In this article, we will discuss the A.A. Tradition and Concept of the month. The main hope is to help us all, myself included, grow in "Understanding and Effectiveness." As the writer of this article, I feel it necessary to clarify that I am by no means an expert in our Traditions and Concepts. All that I have to share is my own experience and the literature that has helped me. I eagerly suggest reading up and discussing anything with your sponsor that you feel does not reconcile with our literature. I will do my utmost to make sure I note any A.A. Conference Approved Literature that I reference.

Tradition 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."

When discussing Tradition 11 a lot of times members will refer to it as our anonymity tradition, which while it does involve aspects of anonymity, the main focus of this tradition is how we of A.A. relate to the public. *This tradition protects A.A. from me.* It reminds us to sacrifice our desire to be the super promoter or the public voice box of Alcoholics Anonymous. It also guides us to avoid sensational advertising as is mentioned in the long form of the tradition.

From "The A.A. Group...where it all begins"; p8: "Maintaining Anonymity at the Public Level: When appearing on radio, television, film or on the Internet as A.A. members, we refrain from showing our faces or revealing our last names. In printed articles, on websites or email, we are identified by our first names and last initials only."

In the age of information where social media is readily available to all as a means of sharing great news with the world it is ever so easy to justify the need to share the good news of our sobriety in A.A. with all, with the seeming good intention of reaching the still suffering one. Nevertheless, no matter how good the intention we are advised against doing so. Countless times over it's history A.A. members have gone and revealed their membership publicly under the good motive of spreading the message to the still suffering alcoholic; actors, sports figures, musicians etc. have many times announced their membership in A.A. and then had very public relapses. While we of A.A. know it was not a sign that the program does not work, those out there in the public, who do not understand the way our program works, do not.

"The Twelve Traditions Illustrated": "For we are not selling personalities-we are explaining A.A. Personal anonymity breaks in the public media not only may discourage timid prospects; they may threaten the anonymity breaker's own sobriety, by violating the spirit of the A.A. program and Traditions..."

Make no mistake I was quite vocal about my A.A. membership in my first years of sobriety. However, after watching situations play out time and time again, and growing in understanding of the principle of this tradition I have done all I can to remove any publicly visible mention of my membership and refrain from mentioning my membership unless I am speaking directly to the non-member (alcoholic, friend, my personal doctor, employer or coworker) with whom I am trying to help, not on a full publicly visible level. A.A. has a public information committee and a cooperation with the professional community committee, it does not need me to be the super promoter. I am fallible and would not want my faults to detract any still suffering alcoholic from trying our program. My best way of promoting A.A. is through my consistent actions that demonstrate that of a person who has been transformed. My family, friends, past employers and acquaintances who knew me as an active alcoholic are able to see that I am on an entirely different footing. That visible example is louder than any public promotion I myself am capable of. For me it is a small sacrifice to take to try and do my part to ensure our unity and to protect my own sobriety.

"The Twelve Traditions Illustrated": "Alcoholics will not be attracted to A.A. if they don't know that it exists or they have distorted, unfavorable impressions of its members or its program."

The final aspect which absolutely deserves noting is the suggestion to avoid sensational advertising. It is not by mistake that any public advertisement for Alcoholics Anonymous is very bland and straight to the point. We do not have billboards that show a horrific DUI crash or a battered spouse and children that says A.A. can help. Our billboards or signs that we do have are very simple and usually say something to the affect of "Have a drinking problem? A.A. 24 hours a day" with the local #. That is because overly sensational or graphic promotions can actually hinder our ability to reach the alcoholic that still suffers. If an alcoholic has never had a DUI or dysfunctional family life they may disqualify themselves after seeing such a sign, so we keep it simple and to the point as a way to keep the doors open as wide as possible. Another small yet ever so worthwhile sacrifice for the greater good of carrying out our primary purpose.

Concept 11: "While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of

their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern."

Our second to last concept is also our second longest concept and while very wordy, there are three main focal points that are easy to derive. These would be, the need for the best possible people working for Alcoholics Anonymous, the outline of the General Service Board Committees and the way our workers are compensated and involved in their respective positions.

The same mindset from Bill W's essay about leadership in Concept 9 extends to our committees, corporate directors, executives, staff and consultants. We need good leadership in all of these roles and only people of the best possible qualifications. The business of Alcoholics Anonymous is a business that has played a part in transforming so many lives and God willing many more to come. So it is of absolute necessity that we do our upmost to find and select the very best people in their fields to do this work. Simply put sacrificing quality to save money or to just fill a position will no do. These people will have the most exposure to and contact with people seeking A.A.'s World Services, whether it be our own members or the outside world that are seeking them, and they should undoubtedly be a qualified and respectable representation.

"Twelve Concepts for Wold Service" p46: "Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our final dependency on them will always be great" "Because this group will form the visible image of world service, most A.A's will measure our service values by what they see and feel in them."

The next point of interest worth noting is the standing committees of the General Service Board which are as follows: The Nominating Committee which is how the best possible people are selected to fill the roles of future Trustees and Non-Trustee workers; The Finance and Budgetary Committee which is pretty self explanatory but absolutely vital to ensure the business of A.A. continues with fluidity; The Public Information Committee which ensures that A.A. builds and maintains the best possible with relations with not only the general public but the medical field, media, governments and religions; The Literature Committee which handles the great task of updating our literature, making sure our pamphlets are clear in representing the best possible view of A.A. in the written form; and then we have the General Sharing Session, which took place of what used to be known as The General Policy Committee, which is responsible for long range plans and topics of special interest. I note these because it is important to know what these boards do to appreciate their necessity.

The final point of discussion is about the workers, their compensation and their involvement. This concept points out the need to ensure our workers are being paid respectfully. If we want the best work we should be sure that the people that are doing the work know they are appreciated and compensated to the same extent as they would be at any other good organization in their field. Just because A.A. takes the stance of corporate poverty does not mean our workers have to sacrifice their financial well being. In addition, they also are given full right to participate not only in voting but in the discussion about matters effecting their position. They have a voice that speaks from experience of doing the job and in A.A. we know that their voice should be heard. And lastly, just as our service roles in A.A. have the spirit of rotation, as discussed in tradition 9, so do the workers. Every two years their works roles are rotated to ensure no one person gets to possessive of a position and also as a means to minimize any type of politicking in the office.

"Twelve Concepts for World Service" p57: "In our A.A. Structure of Service we therefore must do more than give our paid workers a place at the A.A. council table. We ought to treat them in all respects as we would volunteers, people who are our friends and co-workers. so long as they work well, the fact that they are dependent upon the money they receive should never, consciously or unconsciously, be used as a lever against them. They must be made to feel that they are on the team."

Brendon M Sobriety Date: 02/25/2011 Member at Large, NDIAA

Literature for reference: Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book); A.A. Comes of Age; 12 Steps and 12 Traditions; The A.A. Service Manual 2018-2020 Edition; The Twelve Traditions Illustrated (P-43); The Twelve Concepts for World Service illustrated (P-8); The A.A. Group...Where it All Begins (P-16); A.A. Tradition, How it Developed (P-17); Concepts Checklist (SMF-91);



Stone Cold Sober...

I asked the new *Coffeepot Talk* editor for a topic idea and she mentioned Zoom. At first, I was hesitant. Is this becoming a dividing factor in our program? Then I remembered how we used to have smoking vs. nonsmoking meetings - and when smoking was banned everywhere some of our Chicken Little AA's skies began to fall. I've seen meetings fall apart over issues like the Lord's Prayer - and so this topic scared me. But then I went to the literature, the *Big Book* which is my life's guide and found, in the *Forward to Fourth Edition p.xxiv*. Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, AA members with computers can participate in meetings online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country or around the world." This is not a dividing line between Zoom and in-person meetings, it is a gift, and opportunity to broaden our circle and help more alcoholics who still suffer.

I learned a lot of things about myself when my AA meetings went to Zoom. I am impatient and easily tempted. How easy it is, during long silent pauses, to log onto Candy Crush. No one would know if, while the same person went on and about the same thing for the zillionth time, that I slipped onto Amazon. But I would know. It raises my character defects of wanting what I want now, being intolerant, and when it's too quiet, how uncomfortable I am with that silent intimacy (intimacy = into me I see???) Zoom is helping me be still, and stay focused, and keep my eye on what is important.

I also learned that I am an eye-roller - a really bad eye-roller!!! I had no idea, until I watched myself on the screen, how often I roll my eyes or smirk when someone else is speaking. How embarrassing! It was not intentional, something I was completely unaware of, but I am so grateful for the computer screen calling me out! After a year on zoom, I no longer roll my eyes, ever! But, I am saddened that I must have sat in AA meetings for decades doing this, to the detriment and, I imagine, hurt feelings of others. Here is where I must ask my higher power for forgiveness, for everything harmful I have done, both intentionally and unintentionally. My motives do not matter, my actions do. Watch me on Zoom now, my eyes are steady.

Lastly, Zoom has brought up that temptation to gossip or to poke fun. It's one thing in a meeting to shoot a knowing look at another member, but oh, how easy it is to send a text when another person is talking. I admit, I have sent texts, and I have also received texts - some of which have been very funny - but none of which have been appropriate. So now, I try to keep my phone in another room when I am on a meeting. We are here to share our experience, strength, and hope. We are here to help keep each other from the pits of alcoholism. I can restrain from texing - or being funny or inappropriate - for one hour. Now, a year into Zoom - whenever I am tempted to do something, I ask myself, "Is this the behavior of a sober person?"

I've also learned a lot about my fellows from Zoom. I was sure no one would be able to find new sobriety online - and boy, was I wrong. Almost every week there is a first-timer at one of my meetings - and some of them are now celebrating 1 year sober without having ever been in an AA meeting room sitting in a circle of charis. They have benefitted from our experience, strength and hope without hugs. They have embraced the 12 steps without hearing our laughter. Are hugs and laughter important, of course! But, this has taught me the spiritual tenets of this program, and the act of one alcoholic helping another, transcends the physical limitations of both AA meeting rooms and Zoom screens. Our message is there, our fellowship is strong, and happy 1st anniversary to our "Zoom Babies." (I heard that term on an international meeting and love it!) Welcome to our world, however you got here!

One night, at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, I saw a woman I knew outside of the rooms on a Zoom meeting. I contacted her afterwards and learned she had a month sober (I had not known she had a problem with alcohol). I told her I was so sorry she could not experience the "real" AA. She told me she had avoided AA for years because she was too uncomfortable and nervous to attend meetings. Zoom gave her the courage to put her toe in the AA waters from the safety of her home. She has never been to a physical meeting, nor does she plan to attend one. She has found what works for her. She has a sponsor and a year under her belt, and through our fellowship and her computer screen, the promises are coming true in her life!

I do not need to tout the benefits of in-person AA meetings. There is nothing like the raucous laughter of our fellows, the passing of a kleenex, the hugs, the smell of coffee, offers of literature and ability to chip in by setting up tables and chairs. There is no place, on this earth, that I feel more comfortable or at home. But I have learned there are many benefits to Zoom meetings that I was not able to see. or was too scared to acknowledge. at the beginning of all this. Zoom meetings allow hard of hearing individuals to turn up the volume on their computer and to read lips (which they cannot do if chairs are in rows). Zoom allows immunocompromised persons the ability to be in fellowship while protecting their health. Zoom has allowed people who struggle with mobility or transportation, the chance to attend a multitude of meetings. It lets people with small children or those who are caretakers to be "a part of" without having to leave their responsibilities. It allowed older members a chance to attend a meeting, when they are afraid to walk out on icy roads. What a gift.

Zoom has opened my AA horizons. I have been to meetings in Ireland, New Zealand, England, Oregan, and California - all from my couch. Since every region and meeting has its own flavor, this has really expanded my AA toolbox and repertoire. My homegroup now has members from the midwest, Florida, and California - and hence, it has been voted that when we return in person, we will go hybrid, so our new fellows do not lose their first and only homegroup.

So, much like everything else in AA, I hope we are able to allow everyone to work their own program and keep this from being a divisive issue within our groups. We will always have in-person meetings, but we are blessed to live in a time when there are other options, for us to reach out the hand of AA to more people, and isn't that what it's all about. As our pledge says, we are responsible to be the hand of AA - and now we just are able to reach out and be there in a fuller sense. There are more opportunities to be responsible and responsive, and that is our job.

As always, this is just one alcoholics experience, strength, and hope. Take what you like and leave the rest.

As always, I wish you faith and patience, faith that it works and the patience to let it.

In fellowship and service, Maria

November challenge

I realize this is coming at the end of gratitude month, but I challenge you to text 3-5 people from the program and tell them five things you are grateful for. Ask them to do the same in response to you.

I am grateful for...

- 1.) My ability to be of service
- 2.) My ability to be a sober daughter who can help my dad (and family) after his recent stroke
- 3.) A sponsor that supports and listens to me
- 4.) An able body
- 5.) True friends in the program





Anniversary Club

Jaime B 8/8/04

Ken H 11/4/97

Bill C 5/2/78 Ken P 9/20/83
Bob A 7/9/90 Kerry O 4/20/08
Bob M 1/17/83 Laura R 6/21/95
Brendan D 5/3/09 Leslie D 2/20/90
Brenda A 2/23/85 Liza F 1/20/05
Carel B 4/26/04 Marilyn M 6/26/99
Carolyn W 7/15/82 Marie R 9/6/83

Christopher K 1/03 Mary Ellen S 1/24/10
David C 2/1/94 Melissa S 6/23/08
David G 7/6/99 Mike M 4/20/91

David F 11/23/07 Nancy V 2/21/05 (deceased)

David K 12/3/72 Patricia K 12/17/87 Debbie H 3/16/91 Patsy M 1/6/88 Doris S 4/80 Phyllis M 3/9/88 Doug W 2/28/91 Sally C 10/15/95 Ed H 1/28/96 Shirley U 3/19/76 Franny C 5/7/96 Stanley B 3/5/79 Suzanne M 4/4 Fred M 5/5/90 Gail R 6/4/92 Tenney W 5/15/82

 Jaffrey H 11/24/96
 Tom McD 1/16/96

 Janice S 12/25/10
 Tracy D 2/28/13

 Jason B 4/20/09
 Valerie S 2/3/89

 Jim S 4/10/88
 Walt A 1/94

 Kara G 11/8/12
 Wes J 4/21/75

 Kathy O 6/11/97
 Wes M 2/1/94

*** Would you like to celebrate your anniversary, show your fellows how the program works and contribute to your Northern Delaware Intergroup at the same time? The anniversary club is easy to join, Here's how it works... you can email the information below to intergroup at <a href="mailto:mailto

Tom H 7/2/04

date printed in the newsletter every month for a whole year. ***