

November 3, 2010

Dear Friends,

In June of 2010, our Delegate, Patty L. requested that the Area 16 Communications Committee develop a survey to assess attitudes and opinions regarding anonymity and social media including Facebook, MySpace and Twitter in our Area. Copies of the attached survey regarding Anonymity and Social Media were distributed to DCMs in June. Over the past six months, we have accumulated 227 responses from members.

The responses are compiled in the attached document. Every effort has been made to preserve the exact wording of each response. In some cases duplicate responses have been consolidated.

Also included are minutes from a Round Table Discussion on Anonymity and Social Media held during our September 2010 State Service Assembly, and a motion presented by an anonymous member regarding amending the 11th Tradition.

The responses speak for themselves, but I did observe two main points that I think are worth addressing. First, many members believe that social media sites could be a valuable Public Information outlet if properly utilized and hope that we can possibly put them to use in the future to assist with our 5th Tradition work. And second, there appears to be some confusion over the public vs. private nature of Facebook. Many believe that if their profile is only viewable by their “friends” (even if they have 400 “friends”) then it is still private and therefore it is acceptable to break one’s anonymity. If new literature or guidelines are developed for social media usage, it might be beneficial to further clarify what is considered “public” and what is “private.”

For questions or further clarification, I may be reached at communications@aageorgia.org.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service. It is a great honor to participate in the gathering of information from our Fellowship which may influence the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In love and service,

Shari M.
Area 16 Communications Chair

Area 16 Anonymity and Social Media Survey 2010

1. Do you have a “social media” (Facebook, MySpace or Twitter account)?

191___Yes 36___No

“But I am familiar with Facebook – other family members and friends use it – a lot. Please see my notes below as well. – Thanks for letting me share!!”

2. Do you consider social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter to be public or private in nature?

185___Public 27___Private 6___Both

“Both, depends on how they’re used and the person using them.”
“Few people even know how to adjust their acct. settings and privacy correctly!”

“Both, messages can be private”

“My privacy is set to friends only”

“Depends on individual privacy settings.”

“Both depending on personal settings, but the Net is so public so...”

“FB settings can prevent everyone from seeing your profile wall.”

3. Do you post that you are a member of Alcoholics Anonymous on your Facebook or MySpace profile?

13___Yes 193___No

“N/A but I wouldn’t.”

“Yes, to people that know who Bill W. is.”

“No, but I make references to such.”

4. Are you a member of or have you seen any groups on Facebook or MySpace who represent themselves as AA groups?

17___I'm a member of an AA group on Facebook or MySpace

68___I have seen groups who represent themselves as AA on Facebook or MySpace

*"I and other AAs have a message grouping not visible to the public."
"I am not a member of an AA group on Facebook or MySpace and have not explored these groups."*

5. Do you post quotations from the Big Book (not necessarily attributed to the Big Book) or other AA slogans (without attributing them to AA) on your social media profile? (eg. Shari is "happy, joyous and free today!")

69___Yes 135___No

"Allergic to alcohol."

"Speaking codes of encouragement, non-AAs just think they are clever spiritual phrases, new to them!"

"Every now and then"

"Never attributed"

"Rarely"

6. Do you think it is okay to state that you are celebrating an AA birthday without actually referring to AA itself on your profile? (eg. "Shari has 4 years today!")

124___Yes 98___No

"As long as no names are shown on the page."

"I don't but I think it is okay."

"Up to person celebrating."

"I keep my personal information and photos private except for 'friends' on FB and I do not put up a photo of myself for my profile photo. Most of my friends are AA members."

"No, unless their wall is carefully set to private to select members."

"NO, because it implies what a lot of people understand is a typical marker for sobriety or "drug-free."

“Unless a private message – it’s the individual’s choice but I don’t want anyone commenting on mine!”

“As long as AA is not mentioned.”

“No, there’s no point if AA is not directly referred to.”

“Yes if it is MY birthday.”

“If you manage the account properly, you can categorize AA group members into a folder and when you post, only those people see these particular posts (or can those friends see the post? To be emailed?)”

7. If you do these things, do friends who are non-AA members ever comment and ask what you are referring to? How do you respond?

9___No 9___N/A

“I am open about being a member of AA to friends, family, and co-workers”

“Family and friends especially from out of town congratulate me”

“Yes, tell them I am in the program”

“They may, but no pictures of other people”

“Yes and I tell my story”

“I do not but would answer clean and sober 4 years today”

“Yes if they ask I will tell them but only post about me not anyone else”

“Have not seen non AA members respond”

“They will ask-4 year what B-Day , what is that”

“Posted picture of 30 day chip- got congratulations from other AA people”

“Yes, I sent a thank you”

“Haven’t made comments”

“No, all my friends know I’m in recovery, whether they understand it or not. They are all happy for me”

“No, because 99% of people know I am sober in a 12 step recovery program, note not AA or Alcoholics Anonymous”

“Yes- respond in a general way” Fellowship Group” or offline one on one conversation”

“I ignore the question”

“My friends are in AA. I only have close personal friends on Facebook”

“Yes”

“No, they don’t comment”

“They know”

“I generally do not respond or am vague about their meanings”

“THEY NEVER HAVE BUT IF THEY DID I WOULD TELL THEM IT IS PERSONAL”

“Yes (once), I said I’m sober.”

“Rarely, I simply explain.”

“I do not post my sobriety.”

“Most of my friends know and they respond positively.”

“Never a problem or a question.”

“I usually see it by others. Rarely does anyone ask. Most AAs have friends and family who understand code. If others ask, I would just respond it is a spiritual milestone in my life.”

“None of my friends who are non-AA members comment (except to say congratulations on whatever you are celebrating.”

“Yes and that’s why I don’t encourage this in my Facebook page.”

“No. If they do I’d tell them personally, not publicly.”

“No usually they say they like my post.”

“IDK, ask them.”

“I tell them I have been sober that long.”

“Friends know I’m an alcoholic. I once posted that I was looking forward to a celebration at my home group, referring to it simply as the “XXXX Club.” When a non-AA friend asked about the club I explained it was my AA home group. The experience caused me to think about what I’d done and to refrain from doing so going forward.”

“I have never had any non-AA members ask questions or make comments. I have, however, found out that old friends with whom I’ve just reunited on FB are “friends of Bill” because they are the only

people who understand the veiled references. I have had them contact me through the private messaging function of FB and ask if I'm in recovery."

"I want to respond to this and by doing so it may eliminate my survey responses from the compilation of data – sorry – but just last night I attended a going-away party for one of our members who is moving – the host took lots of pictures, as did others. One of the guests asked me if I minded her posting a picture taken of me and several other AA members—I said I did not mind, but then I said I would mind if it were posted such that anyone who was able to access her Facebook could view it – that I understood that you can select certain parts of your Facebook account to be privy to only those who are "requested" by you to view – not sure if she did this or not, but today, another member said he went onto his Facebook and there – on his main page, was a posting of pictures and a caption that read " (name of AA member) 's AA Peeps Going-Away Party" I personally find this to be totally in violation of the 11th Tradition and of my right to anonymity as per the AA principles and traditions. I hope GSO can provide guidelines for groups to discuss etc. I believe this is a really huge issue that will only become more problematic....but that is just my opinion!"

"At least talked to about our Traditions. Some folks are excited about being sober and rightfully so. But not educated about our way of living."

"Only other people in AA have asked on the few occasions that I've said anything that might hint that I'm in AA. The majority of the people I am connected to on Facebook know very well that I am in AA. I keep my profile very private."

"One member – each situation is treated individually – depends who is asking."

"Haven't had a drink in that many years."

"Most friends who are non-AAs know what I am referring to. Those who do not know I tell them (haven't had a drink in X years)."

"Never been asked. If asked I would reply in message (semi-private)

the same way I would handle face to face.”

“I do not speak about AA on Facebook. When I was searching for a job last year I attended many job network meetings. They said that most employers are looking at FB profiles. My company does not know I’m in recovery.”

“Occasionally. If asked I might send them a personal message, depending on how well I know and trust that person.”

“I have responded to one person who had an AA saying on her Facebook.”

“Yes, usually in a congratulatory manner.”

“No one has ever asked.”

“If they comment off-line it (the response is a purely individual matter. It should be noted that much AA phraseology has entered public discourse (ministers, counselors, etc.)”

“No, all of the ‘friends’ I have on Facebook are actually people I know and who know I’m in recovery.”

“Many do to congratulate or support. I do not respond.”

“Most people know. If I mention AA I’ll do it in a private message.”

“I haven’t done that.”

“I had a friend post “20 years ago I walked in to my first church basement.” One person asked what it meant.”

“Sometimes. If it is about me I will be honest that it is an “AA thing.” If it is about someone else, I will just tell them it’s an inside joke.”

“With questions – call me”

“I am relatively new to FB so I have not had anyone ask this type of question of me yet.”

“I do not do these things.”

“No, but if yes I said it is from NA or AA.”

“I’ve noticed that the people who incorporate AA into their profiles the most usually have a majority of AA ‘friends’...I don’t think they worry too much about outsiders input.”

“No.”

“No one other than my family and friends in AA ever responds to such posts.”

“The things I put out of the Big Book refers to life in general and being a better person.”

“No, but if such occurs I will respond by saying it is “a new age thang.”

“I am aware of the popularity of such sites but because of my need to be so accessible with work issues, sales etc. I value the times I’m unreachable.”

“Yes.”

“I don’t post that way so I have never been asked.”

“I do not open up my contacts to people I don’t really know. I do try not to present anything that would identify me as an AA member, because this is a public domain site. However, as stated above, if someone knows some of the slogans or prayers or words of AA they may recognize me as a member. I have not had any questions to date about anything i have posted.”

“Individual members.”

“Don’t post AA topics.”

“3rd Tradition. 6th Tradition. 9th Tradition.”

“Most don’t comment.”

“My friends know what I am referring to.”

“No but if they did I’d tell them.”

“Yes I tell sometimes through a personal message depending upon the person. It is necessary to keep my anonymity in some situations.”

“Give credit to AA if appropriate.”

“My friends know already.”

“My friends know.”

“My FB friends know what I am referring to.”

“Haven’t run into that yet.”

“So far none have asked. If they did I would tell them the same thing I would tell anyone, that I am an alcoholic and member of a 12-step program.”

“I refer to it as an anniversary or birthday and don’t put a number on it. I have never been questioned.”

“Sometimes people ask me questions, I usually email them or send a

private message to answer and explain my comments.”

“Never posted.”

“Don’t do it myself.”

“My friends pretty much know.”

“Yes, I tell them the truth. That is part of my personal life experience and it often helps others open up to me.”

8. Do you think it is okay to post photos taken at AA events on Facebook or MySpace, even if there is no reference to the fact that it is an AA event?

62___Yes 160___No

“Probably not. We used to not allow cameras in AA, right? Cell phones changed all that. I’ve seen my home group wall in photos.”

“It depends on whether it's an true AA sanctioned event like Unity Weekend, for example, or whether it's our group's Christmas party or just some of getting together for an extracurricular event.”

“Not without permission”

“Of myself only, no other people see them”

“This one is a tricky question -- I think I would have to say “NO” in order to protect those who are very very protective of their anonymity. If, say, it was a wedding of an AA member and there were non-alcoholics present, or a district picnic, maybe not – but I would err on the side of precaution and not think that posting such pictures would be wise or in keeping with the traditions.”

“Never taken a photo at an event.”

“Yes, if someone in the photo objects it is easy to take it down.”

“Yes but with permission from everyone and nothing in the pic that shows it’s AA.”

“Only if there is no evidence of AA.”

“I did until I really thought about it, and I removed all pics in any way related.”

No unless everyone photographed has been informed previously and given their permission for the post."

9. Do you see your Facebook or MySpace friends post about AA on their profiles?

103__Yes 103__No

"They say 'I love AA' or 'AA gave me a new life.' Not often, but a few have done this."

"I saw one friend post "We miss you at Gratitude" (our group) on another friend's page."

"But without reference to AA"

"Not AA but sobriety"

"Events, not pictures, always with respect to others anonymity"

10. When this happens, what do you do?

17__Nothing 4__(N/A)

"That is their choice"

"Depends on the posting – discuss it one on one, remind of the Traditions."

"Nothing, I don't know what is right to do. I do not like those things on Facebook."

"I pray for them."

"Send a private message – are you sure you want to break your anonymity?"

"Nothing, unless they break my anonymity. Then I ask them not to do that or unfriend them."

"None of my AA friends says AA, they just speak in code, like 'I need a meeting.' I would either speak to them privately or speak in code on FB, to be more careful."

"Well, one time I got so fed up with one person I de-friended them and explained to all of my sponsees that it is inappropriate to announce AA events on Facebook."

“I have not seen it.”

“I have seen posts about AA without referring to AA. In this case I do nothing. If AA is referenced, I will tell them not to do that and talk to them about anonymity.”

“Let it go.”

“Treat it like any other post.”

“Not anything yet but I plan to talk to my group about this.”

“I have made comments in the past but it does not seem to be effective. A large number of the individuals continue to post. I leave them alone now and accept them as social media exhibitionist. I realized they won't listen at least to me.”

“No one (my friends) 460 something ever say ‘AA’ they make references as like ‘my sober people,’ ‘my friends of Bill’, etc.”

“That I haven't, I can only say what I would do. I'd relate my above stated experience, privately, and how it informed/reminded me that the 12th tradition is for our fellowship and that as a member of that fellowship, I have a responsibility to respect it. I'd add that when I experience a desire to share my AA experience with one outside the fellowship who hasn't expressed a desire to stop drinking, while my doing so only serves my own self interest at that moment, and when I stop and think about it, it never serves the fellowship.”

“Nothing. Mostly the comments are similar to those in #6. However, I have seen friends be more specific. I leave it up to them if they wish to break their anonymity. I have been uncomfortable in the past when I was "gifted" a "gift of recovery" which was publically posted. I figured if anyone realized what it was, maybe God needed for them to know for His own reasons, so I just let it go.”

“Please see # 7 above—If it gets verified that the person who posted the pictures with that caption is one of my sponsees (and I think it was), then I am going to talk with that person—especially since we talked about this very issue over a year ago.....I feel responsible in doing that and in fact, we are going to discuss it at our next group conscience, as per our district meeting discussion today (I am GSR for my home group)”

"Nothing, no response, but if I need to address it, if it pertained to me, I would."

"Nothing, for what I was taught might not be the same belief for someone else."

"Each individual would handle it as needed. Each member is responsible."

"I ask them to stop."

"I have spoken to them in person and expressed my concerns."

"I generally don't comment as long as they aren't breaking my anonymity or someone else's."

"Never happened."

"Pray for them."

"If I know them I send email expressing my belief that this is a breach of anonymity."

"Nothing, it's their business."

"Like' it most times or thank them for the post."

"I am sending this survey to sponsees."

"Usually nothing unless it's a sponsee."

"I made a mental note to never 'friend' that person on FB! My membership in AA is my business and I do not feel anyone else should refer to it in reference to me EVER."

"Comment just as I would any other post."

"Send them a private message and discuss the Traditions and why we don't do this."

"I don't DO anything. However if something is on my profile via wall post I delete it."

"Have seen people actually refer to certain AA groups or meetings, usually unfavorably or critically."

"Okay by me, just hope they respect others (and my) anonymity."

"Make a comment, always positive to comment not to AA itself."

"Feel proud of them."

"Go the other way."

"All lines are crossed now, I accept the loss of the sanctity of certain things, but prefer not to participate."

“Cringe.”

“This wrong.”

“Am unable to process your question.”

“I have removed most program friends from my Friends list. I am a professional musician and I don’t want to break my anonymity or anyone else’s.”

“Usually delete them so my anonymity is not broken due to my profession.”

“Nothing, I do not comment on the post.”

“Usually nothing, may leave a ‘non-AA’ comment.”

“I did not do anything. This has been discussed in our district PI/CPC meeting concerning other individuals.”

“I don’t comment but am not concerned. That’s their business.”

“Nothing. I see it as their personal choice.”

“It doesn’t bother me, it is their page and their choice what they post.”

“Ignore it – not my place.”

“I speak with them privately that it might be a bad idea.”

“Comment freely.”

“Read it.”

“Nothing I don’t comment.”

“I hide it from access through my FB account.”

“Tell them to read the Traditions.”

“Nothing because I just started on FB.”

“I have not seen anyone post anything specifically mentioning AA. But I would remind them of Traditions 11 and 12.”

“Remind them of anonymity at the level of press, radio and film.”

“Talk to them or nothing. But I don’t like it. If they do it more than once I unfriend them.”

“I respond as a friend of Bill W. I break my anonymity with certain people depending on the situation and what they may need and their motives. I check my own motives as well.”

“Nothing it’s a personal choice.”

“Nothing it’s their prerogative.”

“Discuss.”

"It is usually about an upcoming birthday meeting they are attending or speaking at. Or pics from an event. I usually comment something positive. I am glad they share that part of their life with me. Websites are created FOR that purpose."

"Nothing, I might remind someone about anonymity and traditions"

"Sometimes I will make supportive comments if appropriate-2"

"Delete the post"

"Delete any to my wall, I say nothing about someone else's post-people learn"

"Mind my own business"

"Nothing, or mention it to the person directly"

"Congratulate them or commend them as I feel necessary"

"Sometimes comment"

"Join in if appropriate (assume they are OK with/out the anonymity)"

"No"

"Accept"

"If it is an obvious breach of anonymity I remind them of Bill W's point of view"

"Talk with them privately"

"I block, hide or unfriend them"

"Depends on if it is something I am involved in"

"Delete it from my profile- what they choose to post is none of my business"

"Nothing, it is their page, I will un-tag myself"

"Privately email or talk to them"

"Seldom use it, don't like my info shared"

"Do not respond"

11. Whose responsibility do you think it is to monitor anonymity breaks on social media? (eg. individual members' (the Fellowship at large), GSRs', DCMs', our Delegate's, GSO's)

1___GSR 72___Individual Members 25___Fellowship at Large
6___GSO 7___Unsure

"No one to "monitor"; all to be informed and take responsibility"

"DON'T HAVE A CLUE"

"I think it is every member's individual responsibility. No one can 'police' anonymity breaks but we can as individuals make our groups/friends in AA aware of this problem."

"Individual members. It's their individual program, not mine."

"This is the responsibility of the individual member. AA does not monitor members. If it is severe (like a press, radio or film issue) a letter may be sent, but this media is too large to police."

"All"

"God"

"Self"

"Individuals, those of us with 'more time.' It can't be monitored – impossible, except by AA friends looking out for each other, and cautioning people to watch what is typed, ie., be careful."

"Each member's responsibility to not break anonymity."

"Individual members and sponsors. Reminders from GSRs, DCMs, Delegates and GSO are very appropriate, but responsibility always lies with the individual and sponsors."

"No one's"

"Individuals and the Fellowship at large. We are responsible for maintaining the anonymity of all members on behalf of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous."

"Depends on who is having their anonymity broken and if it affects AA the fellowship at large. I respect other AA's preference for anonymity."

"All of the above."

"It is a personal thing and should be covered by sponsorship."

“The Fellowship at large, including GSRs, DCMs, Delegate’s and GSO.”

“Not sure if it is anyone’s responsibility to monitor, but AA does need to be aware so they can communicate concerns to members.”

“Individual members’ (the Fellowship at large) but I think a statement from GSO would be helpful. Then they don't just say it is just that individuals opinion.”

“Member and sponsor”

“Everyone is responsible to tell one another but it would be nice if Delegates took it to GSO.”

“Individual members if it is a blantant break of anonymity.”

“Good question. I'm not sure I believe it's anyone's responsibility to monitor anonymity breaks on social media, unless it's your own. If it's my own anonymity that's broken, I think I would handle it with a personal request explaining why a certain comment or post made me uncomfortable and perhaps asking for its removal.”

“All of the above.”

“The Fellowship at large and GSRs.”

“AA doesn’t monitor its members. Up to individual and perhaps the Traditions need to be amended to include modern communications.”

“All of the above.”

“Not sure it’s possible to monitor.”

“Individual member responsibility – just like many meetings or newcomer issues.”

“Who is responsible for ANY breaks in personal anonymity?”

“Invitation to join AA police?”

“Everyone’s responsibility.”

“Members, friends sponsors, etc. If it involves a HG perhaps the GSR? AA does not police personal anonymity, we offer guidelines and suggestions.”

“None of the above.”

“Each member is responsible for their behavior!”

“Individuals, as in all breaches of anonymity, the individual is responsible for adherence to the Traditions.”

“AA members should be aware of anonymity; however, with so many participating in Internet social media communication sites, this is very easy to forget. It should be up to the individual, however, we must also remember AA is not about ‘policing’ how each individual member breaks their anonymity. Where the problem comes in is when someone else is involved, whether that person is aware of it or not.”

“No monitors or AA police needed. Just spread the word as possible through GSRs.”

“I guess any member who sees another member break anonymity at the level of press, radio, and TV (Internet) might mention it. This is a fellowship, not an organization. No one is particularly responsible.”

“It should be handled at the lowest possible level as a ‘suggestion’”

“All of the above”

“Individual members with sponsor’s help”

“Sponsorship families.”

“Individuals, sponsors, GSRs”

“It is the individual’s responsibility to maintain their personal and others’ anonymity.”

“God Himself.”

“Only individuals can do it, since social media are for individual members.”

“Anybody.”

“I have not thought about it previously. Perhaps it should be a responsibility of AA’s.”

“Not sure how to answer this. I have personally addressed this.”

“I think it really depends. A lot of people know that I’m an alcoholic and that I go to AA meetings. I think it’s okay to have an online group provided that it is closed to the larger social media site. I do not ever try to give the impression that I represent AA and I therefore do not explicitly state this on my FB page.”

“Only the individual can monitor and affect his/her conduct. I feel any new ideas that may come down in regard to social media virtually unenforceable and out of the dictates of the traditions.”

“I’ll have to think about that one.”

"All of us. I should take a stand on this."

"Yes it's not right to post anything on FB about AA."

"Individual members. People can post themselves if they wish but not others."

"Stay away from all of them – concentrate on more meetings of AA!"

"Individual members mostly, maybe GSO can update the Internet guidelines."

"? This is a new issue."

"Our Delegate's or GSO's."

"The person who speaks has freedom of speech. It is their responsibility to respect principles we have no control."

"All of the above."

"Fellowship at large because it is too much for a GSR, DCM etc. to have to do."

"Conscience of individual"

"Everyone should try to educate others on our Traditions."

"Individual members, elder statesmen, sponsors."

"AA should have no comments on outside issues."

"I guess individual members. I do not see how GSRs etc. could keep track."

"Individuals, no AA monitors, that breaks the Traditions and the Concepts."

"Sponsors, fellowship."

"Individual members because each profile is a representation of an individual's life."

"All the above"

"Nip it in the bud before it is too late"

"Fellowship at large through individual AA's, GSR's, DCM's"

"Delegates - trusted servants through education"

"However in needs to be known that it is not OK"

"All members when it comes to breaking someone else's anonymity. I feel that it is OK to others to break theirs"

"Individual members and their sponsors" (2)

"No one" (2)

"US Government should help citizens"

"Up to the individual, some may see it as 12 stepping"

"Self"

12. What action do you think the above should take if they spot an anonymity break on a social media site?

13___Unsure

"Confront the person breaking anonymity"

"I can say I am an alcoholic addict. If someone were to say that about me, I would delete the post and talk to the person"

"Handle personally case by case"

"Notify the person" (2)

"Up to the conference"

"Simply mention it to the person"

"Email the violator asking it to be deleted"

"Nothing"

"Reply with issue"

"Send a reminder"

"Immediately bring it to the attention of the person breaking it"

"Have a sit down with the member involved"

"Bring it up at a business meeting"

"Reminder discussion with the individual re anonymity"

"Talk privately pointing out relevant handouts and literature-2"

"None- God and the steps are our guides"

"Say something if it was my anonymity"

"Contact the person quietly and address it"

"Practice love and tolerance and let them learn their own lessons, and they will. Live on Spiritual principles or else"

"Gentle tsk-tsking"

"N/A"

"Depends – mostly, get over it. We don't need "anonymity police."

"Monitor themselves"

“Email privately the person breaking anonymity”

“Sorry for the political view, FB and my space keep our info on file”

“Send a private message”

“Quietly, personally suggest to the individual(s) that it may/is an anonymity concern”

“If it is an issue that affects AA at large at a District or Area level or other groups trusted servants might speak to the person directly about Traditions.”

“Same action that should be taken regarding other public breaks of anonymity. Confronting the person on the social media site is a secondary anonymity break, correct?”

“Send a message. None of us post 12-step comments on other’s walls.”

“Discuss the Traditions.”

“Discuss with the individual the Tradition that is being violated and what they should do in the future.”

“Speak opinion and concern to individual if and only if it can be supported by the traditions.”

“Contact them and send 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.”

“DON’T KNOW – NEED GUIDANCE. PERSONALLY I WOULD LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING TO THESE BOYS THAT POSTED PICTURES OF THEMSELVES WITH AA SIGNS EVERYWHERE. IT MAKES ME ABSOLUTELY SICK.”

“Talk to the person if possible. Let their group/district know that Facebook/MySpace is a public forum.”

“None. The individual must decide for themselves.”

“Who knows? People seem to do what they want.”

“They should update the Big Book.”

“We should have a page on www.aa.org that we can email anonymity breaks to. We can try to tell the person in question that we can’t break anonymity. We could say please.”

“See 10 – all.”

“Address it immediately.”

“Whatever they need to do. I think other members should be discussing anonymity in meetings and with sponsees.”

“Call, write or meet with the offender. Explain the person is jeopardizing other people’s anonymity as well as his/her own.”

“Personal message.”

“I think there should be some literature on it. Also we should bring up the topic at the Assembly in a Q and A panel.”

“A sponsor should bring it up to those that violate this Tradition.”

“Contact individual or sponsor if possible.”

“Send the person a private message asking him/her to refrain.”

“Educate the offender and ask them to discontinue whatever they were doing.”

“Nothing.”

“Someone should speak to the guilty party.”

“First, do not participate in it myself. Second, enlarge the 12th Tradition to include “press, radio, films, and social media.” Common sense tells me this is part of that tradition; not all people are thinking it through.”

“Handle it one on one with the person.”

“Talk to the offender.”

“Every member who spots the break should contact the person who committed the break, preferably in person after a meeting.”

“Tough question. My gut response is nothing.”

“Send email /private message but preferably approach privately in person.”

“Call AA police immediately!”

“Discuss with person.”

“Counsel the person responsible about our tradition of anonymity.”

“Send them a private message reiterating the principles of anonymity. But keep it light because drama usually proceeds this.”

“I believe the answer might be to either revise the Big Book section on How It Works and the 12th tradition to include specific reference to social media. Social networks have become so common place,

particularly to younger members, that, perhaps, the terms, "...press, media and film...", while relevant at the time they were first written, are worthy of revision to make them more relevant to life in the third millennium. That way, we'll be reminded of it every time we close every meeting."

"Please see # 10 above—also I think is GSO would put out suggestions as to how to use these social medias without breaking anonymity etc. that would be great (realizing that alcoholics don't like to be told how to do things, but there are members who, if guided, will follow such precautions...)"

"Contact the source of the break."

"Personal contact for member to discuss issue with sponsor and explain Traditions. Be sure to do this privately as further breaches could occur accidentally."

"Depends on a case by case basis."

"Send a private message to the other party or speak to them."

"At least talked to about our Traditions. Some folks are excited about being sober and rightfully so. But not educated about our way of living."

"Talk to the person that is responsible."

"Individuals need to monitor themselves and if they break their anonymity or anyone else's then a few other individuals who know them should say something to them and point out that it violates the 11th tradition."

"Let the individual member member know you think it is wrong."

"One on one – individual member responsibility."

"Remind that person about Tradition 11."

"Contact the member privately and straighten them out."

"Explain the situation and ask the person to stop."

"Opportunity for grace – not my business."

"Hold workshops, make announcements to groups and group consciences, speak to the individual personally."

"None, if it involves another person, that person should address it, otherwise a friend or sponsor could offer some guidance."

“Private message the offender.”

“Contact the individual on a personal level and let them know about the possible Tradition infraction.”

“Warn.”

“Communicate the importance of anonymity.”

“Speak or write privately to persons you know. Groups may have discussions of the Traditions.”

“Nothing! There should not be any anonymity police!”

“Casually mention it to them.”

“Remind member of the Tradition.”

“Easy does it.”

“1. Point it out to the poster. 2. Send info to GSO for cataloging.”

“Alert Central Office.”

“Have a candid discussion with the breaker.”

“Send a private message explaining it.”

“Bring it to their attention and ask them to consider making changes.”

“Talk to my sponsor first.”

“Tell them not to do it again, if they continue, go to a higher source.”

“Talk to the person that did it.”

“New pamphlet?”

“Email the person whose anonymity is being broken, inform them about the situation, and if they are not comfortable with it, they can ask whomever it may be to correct.”

“Ignore it.”

“Again try to contact the person privately and discuss the Traditions.”

“Not sure but definitely not condone such breaks in anonymity.”

“Give the person a gentle reminder.”

“Contact the person who caused the break.”

“Warn them.”

“Talk with the breakers of anonymity about what they’ve done and why it’s (potentially) harmful. If they don’t take the post, picture, etc. down report them to FB.”

“Anonymity breaks should be pulled.”

“Send a private reminder via IM or email.”

“Do God’s will.”

“Remind ‘breakers’ in a private message the policy of anonymity at the level of press radio and films.”

“Confront person(s) responsible.”

“What can they do? Are such individuals meant to police and censor as part of their elected position? I spend a TON of time online, as a 25 year-old, and have never noticed any such break. I don’t see what the big deal is.”

“Confront the person via email or face to face.”

“It is a personal preference to break one’s anonymity. As an AA I would not bring any attention to the matter.”

“None.”

“Ask that person responsible for the break of anonymity to clear it up.”

“Tell them to stop.”

“Tell the person to ‘cease’.”

“Group discussion.”

“Talk to them and explain the Traditions without being judgmental.”

“I think the first action should a warning to person who's anonymity may have been broken without his/her knowledge. The person making the posting/break should be informed of how this may have affected another member. I believe frequent reminders to the organization members would be in order to prevent accidental lapses.”

“Let it to the group.”

“Ask the person to remove it.”

“I think it should be a higher larger group’s decision.”

“Flogging.”

“Pray.”

“We should politely remind people.”

“Talk to the member and talk to their own sponsor.”

“Stop it.”

“Contact the individual if you feel strongly about the breach.”

“Individual case study.”

“Discuss the occasion at meetings.”

“Talk to who broke the anonymity and let them know our 12th Tradition.”

“Tough question.”

“Report to group.”

“None. It is up to the individual to police him/herself.”

“Mention anonymity Traditions to friends, group members, sponsees.”

“Speak face to face with person.”

“Refer the person to the 11th and 12th Tradition and stress the importance of understanding anonymity as an AA member.”

“Contact that person off the social media site and make aware of anonymity break.”

“Contact the individual and deal with this on a case-by-case basis.”

“Speak with the individual.”

“Talk to that person if they are an acquaintance but only if they breaking someone ELSE’s anonymity.”

“Private message the person posting.”

“Contact the individual breaking anonymity.”

“Politely ask it be taken down.”

“Talk to the individual.”

“Speak with the offender privately.”

“Notify the person breaking it.”

“Talk with the person.”

“Traditions education.”

“Members should encourage members not to do it!”

“Tell the offender to stop.”

“Speak with the members and share experience, strength, hope in a kind and loving way.”

“Inform the member of the meaning of Tradition 11 and explain how social media is similar to other forms of media.”

“Counsel the person doing the anonymity break in a manner becoming AA.”

“Address it directly though discreetly.”

“All you can do is bring it to the attention of the offending party and

ask for removal or the practice to stop.”

“Speak to the person and help educate them as to anonymity and the Traditions.”

“Who is the AA police? ☺”

“Alert the offending party using a non-public communication.”

“Inform individual breaking it.”

“Call it to their attention.”

“None, it’s an individual’s responsibility. The group can educate by discussing these issues at meetings.”

“Bring attention to the problem as a whole at Conference and GSR meetings etc.”

“The person or group whose anonymity is violated should speak out.”

“Only if it applies to you that person should confront with love and tolerance.”

“Deploy snipers.”

“Discuss it with the individual.”

13. Clearly, this issue is much larger than the occasional anonymity break on television, radio or in the press. Do you have any ideas on how AA should handle such a broad issue?

4___ “Pamphlet”

10___ No

“Attraction rather than promotion, remind people about traditions”

“Remind people of the 7th tradition and that it means I can say I am an alcoholic but cannot say that about anyone else”

“Have a clear policy”

“Up to the conference”

“I have not seen this issue in my circle but then I am conscience about who I am linked to on these sites. The power of AA is in the groups. The General Service Board should assist in educating groups via service structure on this issue and recommend what as individuals our practice should be and why it is important. AA members will decide to conform or likely drink. Policing member activities is a violation of Trad 9.”

"A publication"

"Discourage the picture"

"Anonymity break is wrong but what can you do?"

"Not sure"

"Clearly state that no one person represents AA"

"Have GSR's discuss w/ the group members the importance of anonymity and monitor at all levels of the media"

"Reach out; keep members involved"

"Internet is uncontrollable"

"Education both inside and outside AA"

"Pamphlets and educate people"

"I cannot tell another how to handle their anonymity, just how to respect mine"

"Should not get involved"

"As long as I am saying that I am an alcoholic and not pointing to anyone else or mentioning AA; I don't see a problem"

"No clue"

"Raise attention in meetings"

"Up to individual"

"No, God will take care of it"

"No, it is a touchy issue, kind of an individual basis"

"Informing the fellowship through standard means such as a new brochure, discussions at committee, district, group meetings."

"No, sorry."

"WE OLD TIMERS AND NEW ONES ALIKE NEED TO GROW A SET OF ** AND TEACH THESE YOUNGSTERS WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO. THAT'S HOW WE LEARNED IT!"***

"Pamphlet, info. on website (aa.org or state website) addressing this."

"Do nothing for now."

"Nothing, maybe a polite reminder."

"It is not AA's issue. It is each member's decision."

"Express and talk more about anonymity in meetings."

"Keep telling groups this breaks anonymity."

"See above (update the Big Book)"

“Strictly adhere to the 12 Traditions. I think (as described above) we should hold individuals responsible for their actions. We have to keep in mind we’re powerless, the more we gripe and worry about it, the more power we give it. I still think a form letter and a page on www.aa.org would be our best bet.”

“Not at this time – too big an issue.”

“Education.”

“Start talking about it! This survey is well-done. It will spread to Group Conscience, closed discussion meetings, more Traditions meetings! GSO can foster more internal discussion. Problem will never go AWAY now, just manage it.”

“Discussion.”

“We need to educate members more.”

“No.”

“Prayer, meditation, publish literature on the 11th Tradition as it applies to social media. Use this to encourage discussion at the group, district and cluster level.”

“The issue on personally breaking anonymity in the media is a personal decision. I don’t think we can do anything to stop an individual from breaking his/her personal anonymity. As much as we would like to stop a person from violating the 11th Tradition, we are ‘powerless’ over his/her actions. I would suggest adding ‘maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and Internet.’ While I’m on the subject, I would also suggest adding television back into the 11th Tradition. Being a broadcaster myself, there is a difference between television and films. Films are movies, documentaries, etc. Television is broadcast over the airwaves via analog transmitter, satellite, HD transmitters, etc.”

“Education of members, develop a guideline or expand on existing one addressing social media specifically.”

“Small issue.”

“Talk to the guilty party.”

“Strong suggestion/recommendation from the GSO. Social media is very different than attending an AA meeting on-line. What do our non-alcoholic trustees have to say in this matter?”

“AA is powerless – Step One.”

“Cover it in Guidelines.”

“This is still fairly new but it is on the level of things that had to be addressed by means of creating the Traditions, I think that social media should be added to the Traditions after it has been hashed out fully.”

“Do the best you can to educate the members.”

“We need a statement from GSO and then it will be hard for some to follow.”

“Grapevine articles, mention at every function, other articles.”

“It needs to come from GSO.”

“If a person chooses to break their own anonymity on Facebook, so be it, but they should not break the anonymity of others.”

“It is 2010 and impossible to ‘control’ people being open about this part of their lives. We tell them over and over so we are doing our part in that aspect.”

“Addendum to Traditions with wide distribution of change to all groups, internationally. In the meantime, NY office could distribute a letter to each group cautioning members. Most people don’t think that employers, strangers, etc can hurt them with info gained on FB, etc. Group Secretaries would be asked to read letter every day for a month then monthly until Tradition is amended.”

“Ya know, I’m torn at times. People need to know about recovery. Some folks know where to go, some don’t. This is a hard question to answer.”

“More emphasis and education on the Traditions.”

“I have no idea but I don’t think that making statements with AA slogans or references to things that only AA people would get is not an anonymity break.”

“Suggest they not do it.”

“Stay out of it. Let members deal with it.”

“Pamphlet – information on how to conduct ourselves when involved with social media.”

“Prepare a pamphlet about the situation.”

“The exact same way as AA (GSO, etc.) has always handled this, with grace.”

“Develop literature focusing on this form of press. Have them on the tables at clubhouses, meetings, conventions and workshops.”

“Offer guidelines and suggestions and leave it alone.”

“National should pass ideas from surveys to state to state and local groups.”

“Rely on the individuals to handle it to the best of their abilities.”

“We have no opinion on such outside issues.”

“Same as it always has, in our experience.”

“Flyers, brochures, website posting on aa.org, letters to GSRs, Box 459 article.”

“Remind members of the tradition, then quit trying to manage other people’s behavior. Quit being the director.”

“The new Internet pamphlet is a start.”

“1. New pamphlet. 2. Workshops”

“A general disclaimer based on Traditions connected with 12 steps and AA literature.”

“Education. GSRS and Intergroup reps should have something to bring to group conscience.”

“Change the wording of the Tradition to include the Internet.”

“We need to be discussing this (as we are) in Groups, Conferences, Area Assemblies.”

“People who use FB or other medias should always assume what they write or post will be made public. I’m not sure why someone would post pictures of anyone else or make comments about anyone else in the Fellowship. In my opinion that is a violation of privacy. I would not want to attend a group where such people are present.”

“I think it should be added to the Traditions (press, radio, films and “technology” or “social media.” People should be asked not to post pictures of someone without their permission.”

“Ignore the idiocy of even being concerned about this. Much ado about nothing.”

“Rely on the members. Revise the Traditions.”

“More literature. Pamphlet on the Internet.”

“Stay out of it. The Traditions covers this territory already.”

“Educate the members.”

“Can only educate/caution AA members.”

“No idea, put it on Facebook.”

“First educate members. A lot of people don’t realize what they’re doing or that others on FB or Myspace can view it.”

“It should be up to an individual if they want to share their anonymity.”

“A statement or pamphlet giving guidelines for social media sharing info.”

“Anonymity is a spiritual tradition. God is the ultimate authority. Pray. Group conscience at GSO and let trusted servants decide.”

“Remind GSRs to share the 11th Tradition with groups and the importance.”

“Keep reminding at meetings.”

“Discussions/panels at area assemblies, conventions, etc.”

“Don’t do it.”

“Not overreact and firmly remind those responsible of the principle of anonymity, it is our spiritual foundation. Also remembering the rest of the Traditions.”

“Leave it alone.”

“Think ahead and be ready with detailed suggestions. This is a great topic for workshops.”

“Should make and publish a statement.”

“No comment as usual.”

“Add a comment to beginning of meetings as a reminder not to mention AA on social media sites.”

“Focus more on the importance of anonymity. Workshops etc.”

“Request that individuals take responsibility for anonymity in social media.”

“Copyrighted literature should be kept from public media except as

approved by Central Office. Individual members will probably be impossible to stop."

"There should be a 'Guidance Statement' from World Services."

"Stop any member."

"Talk at group conscience."

"Public execution by hanging from the gallows."

"Eliminate and denounce all breaks at AA meetings."

"I think a statement should be put out to TV radio and press explaining what anonymity means to AA and when it is broke what it can do to people."

"Ban AA affiliations on all social networking sites. Stick to the Traditions."

"Bill W. once said to not be 'too anonymous.' This is not a black and white issue. Disclosing one's own membership should be one's own decision."

"I believe this is the same as any other media."

"Continue educating members with the guidelines and literature."

"Don't know what policy should be, this is a new issue."

"I believe it is up to the Fellowship. We can only suggest. More conversation on the issue."

"We need to include FB, MySpace, and Twitter under press, radio and film!"

"Contact FB, MySpace or Twitter administrators."

"Case by case, too big to stop or address as a whole."

"Guidelines."

"Bring it up at Assemblies."

"Make an announcement and try to incorporate it into local AA groups."

"Print more information to all outlets."

"Stress the Traditions in meetings."

"Those injured should tell the offender to stop. This is a grass roots thing."

"GSO to State Assembly to DCMs to GSRs to groups. Perhaps a pamphlet."

“Change the 11th Tradition to include all media including social media.”

“Spread the word at meetings and to members individually via email.”

“Just like this. Talk about it and educate in regard to the Traditions. They still work even though the Internet didn’t exist then.”

“Maybe FB and others could provide space for AA members.”

“With no way to legislate behavior, our only recourse is to develop and publish guidelines and educate our members.”

“Discuss the issue in the Grapevine and make a statement in keeping with the Traditions.”

“Group conscience awareness.”

“If individual’s anonymity is broken they can talk and communicate about this between them. If it affects other levels of AA, GSRs, DCMs, Delegates could talk with the individual and request it to cease.”

“Start adding social networks to anonymity statement.”

“Explain what anonymity means and how it should be used in relationship to social media groups.”

“With love and tolerance.”

“Remind its members of ? of social media and why anonymity at that level is important.”

“As long as we’re generally keeping “principles before personalities,” let individual members decide, as far as their individual anonymity is concerned, but make it clear they should NOT assume everyone is OK allowing their identity to be known. The way it’s done elsewhere.”

“Unsure”

“Not really, unrestricted forum.”

“Create a guideline.”

14. Should we provide Facebook and MySpace administrators a copy of our anonymity letter “To the Media?”

140___Yes 53___No 2___Not Sure

“Sure, why not? But what do you expect them to do?”

“Maybe, if it is deemed public”

“Would they care”

“Yes, but it is not their responsibility.”

“It’s the members, not the administrators.”

“No, for Facebook, but doesn’t the media already know about anonymity and be careful when reporting?”

“Yes, but they are in it to obtain info for marketing.”

“I’m not sure this would be helpful. I doubt the administrators would take the time to police this matter.”

“It never hurts to try to educate.”

“Not sure what they would/could do.”

“The administrators are not responsible for our personal activities.”

“It’s up to individual AAs to break their own anonymity.”

“Don’t know what ‘To the Media’ actually states.”

“What can they do about it? It’s the individual’s responsibility.”

15. Should we ask Facebook and MySpace to create a blanket policy that no one can use the name Alcoholics Anonymous?

78___Yes 117___No 3___Unsure

“No, AA does not govern the world.”

“We can try, but I don’t think we can force them to do anything, since we have no control over what people post. Is it a violation if people decide to use coded references to AA?”

“Wouldn’t that be an opinion on an outside issue?”

“How much would they charge for ad space?”

“Impossible, even foul words are not blocked now.”

“No, we need to address this issue from inside Alcoholics Anonymous.”

“Undecided.”

“Members may want to state an event as AA.”

“Yes (but we can’t tell them what to do it isn’t our business maybe if it was clear in a letter and they choose to do it).”

“Would this really be enforceable? If so, perhaps.”

“Good luck.”

“I’m not sure this would be helpful. I doubt the administrators would take the time to police this matter.”

“Unless it’s set up as a group.”

“Free speech 1st Amendment.”

“I am a proud member of AA and I feel I, and others like me, should be allowed to share about our AA accomplishments as long as no one else’s anonymity is broken in the process.”

“No! Have we never heard of the First Amendment?”

“But they probably won’t comply since they publish disclaimers.”

“Come on, really??”

“1st Amendment issues”

16. Should GSO get its own Facebook page, thereby providing accurate information, and possibly discouraging unauthorized usage of the name Alcoholics Anonymous?

109___Yes 85___No 5___Unsure

“Yes, no pictures.”

“Face may possibly fade, what is next?”

“Maybe, if someone wants to”

“Undecided”

“Never”

“Definitely not.”

“I would agree to that.”

“It should be discussed and voted on at group and Area levels. This issue should be handled on a case by case basis leaving groups to be able to be autonomous. These networking sites allow members to be in contact and communicate to give and receive support from other members.”

“Don’t know enough to answer.”

“People commenting or liking would be breaking anonymity.”

“Maybe – this could be discussed. Could it be done as Attraction, no

Promotion? Keep members secret, no list, not allow members to post on that page, teach AA anonymity and Facebook etiquette, discourage using AA sayings and code phrases. Fact is, we haven't controlled unauthorized usage in years! Phone books are full of "AA" treatment centers. We stopped protecting our circle and triangle in 1993! "

"Try it and see what happens."

"Members who join or like would be subject to first and last names being posted, and this would clearly be an anonymity issue that AA would actually be participating in."

"Facebook without faces?"

"No one would use it."

"If it's okay for some to use Alcoholics Anonymous on FB, it opens the door for others to."

"I think this is by FAR the best idea!"

"Yes, but don't know if it would help!"

"AA has no opinion, it is what it is."

"Only if it is an anonymous page with no admins listed."

"Do or don't, the social networks are here to stay, use it if you can."

"Yes, with proper security settings."

17. Should we add more literature (a pamphlet, etc.) that directly addresses Anonymity and Social Media? Or is the General Social Networking section in the AA Internet Guidelines and "Understanding Anonymity" pamphlet enough? Is there anything you would add to this section?

50__ Yes (more literature) 8__ No (no new literature) 12__ new pamphlet specifically

"Yes – internet guidelines not sufficient"

"Covers it well."

"YES, WE NEED TO ADD MORE UP TO DATE AND RELATIVE INFORMATION ABOUT IT AND BE SPECIFIC, FOR INSTANCE, TELL PEOPLE NOT TO SAY "THEY ARE GOING TO A MEETING"

ON THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE. EVERYBODY KNOWS WHAT THAT MEANS AND THAT PERSON AT THAT VERY MOMENT BECOMES A REPRESENTATIVE OF AA AND THEREFORE PLACES AA IN VERY GRAVE DANGER!"

"A pamphlet is a good idea but not be time effective and relevant, I think this issue is a 'lead by example' opportunity."

"I doubt if it would be read by the people you are trying to teach. They don't read books or pamphlets, they read on Kindle and iPad."

"Not sure, pretty large question."

"Sound like it might be valuable; I'm not really familiar w/content of these other pamphlets."

"Perhaps a new pamphlet once it's approved by GSO."

"We should add some modern literature to promote this modern dilemma. And now is the time to address it."

"The world doesn't care if the average John Q. says he is an alcoholic."

"Yes. Emphasize education and Tradition discussion in AA. Emphasize self-responsibility."

"A more specific pamphlet."

"Info is good, more is good!"

"Yes, I do, but aren't we still waiting for the pamphlet on the Internet?"

"Separate pamphlet would bring emphasis to an important issue. This needs to be in the group consciousness of AA."

"I have not seen the AA Internet Guidelines, so I don't know."

"Yes – guidelines."

"I am embarassed to say I am unfamiliar with the pamphlet. We do need some direction for Alcoholics Anonymous members in pamphlet/literature. The world has evolved into a different place over 75 years."

"Understanding Anonymity covers it but the only people that read these pamphlets are not the people breaking anonymity."

"I feel that literature should be added to address social media, but I am not certain what content should be added. We can expect growing problems until some more concrete policies can be

determined.”

“I need to read.”

“Yes, it’s probably time for a new pamphlet or update of the old ones re: anonymity.”

“We have enough literature.”

“Lets enough people/members know!”

“Revise the pamphlets to include specific reference to social networking etiquette as it relates to the 12th tradition.”

“Adding more literature, like a pamphlet that directly addresses Anonymity and Social Media, is a great idea!”

“I think in this case, more information is needed – other than my comments above, I am not sure what else is needed but I would suggest getting people who actively use Facebook etc. to help provide reasonable and readily user-friendly techniques to protecting anonymity -- one’s own and that of others—“

“I’ve been an AA member for 21yrs and have no knowledge of a pamphlet that says anything about Social Networking or the AA Internet Guidelines. I have never recommended any changes in our literature but believe that this issue is big enough and will get bigger over time, to necessitate a change in a Tradition. Please note I was raised on the Traditions by my old sponsor. That sponsor was a member of AA for 42 years until her death. I don’t make this recommendation lightly.”

“I think social media needs to be addressed specifically.”

“In meetings, getting people a little more aware of this issue. Breakdown comes from a lack of communication.”

“Pamphlet would be good and info online.”

“More literature directly focusing on the Internet situation.”

“Yes more literature or a flyer make sure people announce these things at meetings, Roundups, conventions, workshops, etc.”

“Excellent idea!”

“Ambivalent about another pamphlet.”

“Yes, Internet and Social Media Guidelines for AA members, should address online meetings and chatrooms as well!”

"We don't need a posse of rabid AA police running around. Leave this matter to the Trustees and the appropriate committee (Trustees Committee on Public Information).

"More literature. Highlight bad experiences."

"Enough."

"A pamphlet might be better than a guideline so that it could be offered to the group. I didn't know about guidelines till I volunteered at central office."

"I feel there should be another piece of literature on this topic.

Facebook is huge and affects many as far as anonymity breaks and AA's image in the public eye."

"Yes to literature."

"It's not just media that does it. Half the people in my group use their last names during introductions and I feel that is inappropriate as well."

"More literature, more announcements during meetings. I honestly didn't know there was an 'AA Internet Guidelines' pamphlet!

"No more literature to lend credence to this non-event."

"Yes, I do believe a pamphlet, etc. should be added which directly addresses anonymity and the social media.

Unfortunately, too many people do not agree with anonymity and believe it is their right to not only disclose themselves, but others."

"Yes and need an email version."

"Awareness of this issue should be publicized more to new AA members.

"Updated literature would be nice."

"Tradition breaks are inevitable. If a group or page addresses 'recovery' v. AA, a reminder that we keep AA out of media promotion."

"Yes, maybe that it be read in meetings, like the Steps."

"Please keep all anonymity w/ press, radio, film or Internet."

"I've never seen or heard of this pamphlet/section. I supposed one could."

"Perhaps updating any media addressing to the new social

platforms.”

“Remind that people’s livelihood is a concern.”

“I think that a pamphlet on social anonymity would only address today’s issues, not tomorrow’s. I think a new pamphlet would be helpful, but it would be best if could go beyond today’s issues and be general enough to cover whatever the future brings.”

“I just read current information on anonymity. I just think we need to get the groups to make more announcements at meetings. Weekly or monthly.”

“Not sure.”

“Not at this time. Keep up the good work!”

“Social media should be addressed specifically in existing publications. Regional service bodies should hold informational meetings and incorporate guidance into newsletters, Grapevine, etc.”

“Education can’t hurt.”

“Yes because people need to understand that anonymity is important to people and jobs and life.”

“Current pamphlet enough.”

“It wouldn’t hurt to add section to ‘Understanding Anonymity’ devoted to social networking.”

“I think literature is the way to go.”

“I think a new section dealing with social networking sites should be added to the ‘Understanding Anonymity’ pamphlet.”

“Need more specific guidelines.”

“It’s enough – nothing to add.”

“Yes, enough.”

“Add more literature. Most newer members won’t see the AA Internet Guidelines for awhile after joining, they don’t connect Anonymity and Social media, it’s not something that “connects” for many so the “Understanding Anonymity” pamphlet won’t necessarily come to mind when sharing on MySpace, FB, etc.”

“I have been a part of AA for 2 years and did not know there was Internet Guidelines.”

“Yes, I think we should somehow create a social web page for people

of AA to have an open forum for discussion like FB.”

“Should add more literature at meetings and via email.”

“Another pamphlet directly related would probably help. We can’t have too much instruction since we rarely listen to 50% of it!”

“We should add more literature based on our ever-changing world.”

“We don’t need another pamphlet or other literature which attempts to regulate this.”

“Yes, enough.”

“Yes, it should be discussed at all meetings.”

“Pamphlet yes, have never seen the Internet Guidelines!”

“AA should have a presence on the internet”

“Create a pamphlet”

“Post it on AA Face book page”

“Literature would be helpful to clarify expectations”

“Work in this area is a good idea, remember these are policies, not laws that are supposed to punish or create authority”

“Would be helpful to clarify where AA stands on this”

“The network/computer social media is capitalistic in nature so they set the rules”

“Not sure”

“Address it at meetings and assemblies”

“Yes- cross reference two pieces of literature”

“Yes- Keep it simple, like a cartoon so people will read it”

“Own pamphlet- this will be a growing segment about AA”

“Definitely a pamphlet we could put in newcomers packet”

“Enough available- people need to use it”

“Understanding anonymity”

Please feel free to add any additional comments or questions below:

“Also this issue could be alleviated with information distribution at the group, district, Area levels and above. This issue has reached me through announcement at district meetings and area committee meetings.”

“This issue needs to be addressed in a VERY BALANCED manner and there should be no attitude of punishment or black and white thinking. Individuals or groups who choose to break their anonymity should not be regulated. We need to ask H.P. for the intuitive thought or decision to deal in a sober restrained tolerant manner to instances of breaking the 12th Tradition. There are different types of anonymity and we have to also keep in mind that this may be an ‘outside issue.’ We always need to keep in mind our ‘attraction rather than promotion’ and if we are presenting a negative image of AA.”

“Thank you for asking our input.”

“Slogan: Think Before You Post.”

“Think about creating an AA group to go on FB, Twitter, MySpace etc.”

“There are all kinds of recovery pages on FB. AA should have a presence in some form.”

“I have, by using language such as described in No. 5, gotten private message from a Facebook “friend” asking if I’m a 12-step program. That opened a door for me to share, and I see no problem with that. I have many friends who, beyond social media, see no problem with sharing their last name, etc., with a newcomer as a part of their 12th step work. It varies for everyone. I’ll be open about my AA association in a lot of settings (such as church, where I’ve helped get some folks to meetings) but, for obvious (probably a bit selfish) reasons, I keep my AA role anonymous at work.”

“Each of us has the right to learn from our own experience. We have the right to be wrong. I hope that all of us, eventually, come to a place where we conform to the AA Traditions because we want to, not because we have been forced to.”

“As far as anonymity is concerned when found guilty send them to me and I will handle it.”

“Eliminate all contact or references to non-AA subjects.”

“Speaking for myself, I have a Facebook account but rarely visit it. I probably forgot the password. The foundation I work for has a Facebook page. We have 2 employees with over 10 years sobriety.

I have a little over 3 years sober. So we monitor our foundation Facebook account daily. No breaks in anonymity. It's all about accountability and responsibility and integrity."

"Difficult issue in complex times. I do not have a solution but I will follow the collective conscience"

"I truly believe that all these Internet sites should fall under..."

"Don't criticize social media or people who use social media as a whole. Sometimes this discussion of anonymity on social media comes off feeling like a personal attack."

"The problem is: people love the codes and inside phrases, speaking to one another while other readers are clueless. Some is immaturity, some is simply human nature. I even see AA ministers do the 'inside phrases.' We got these surveys at our home group Group Conscience in District 16E, good job!"

"I think, like many other issues in AA, that if sponsors had a working knowledge of the Steps AND Traditions AND Concepts, much of the confusion in AA today would not be there."

"This questionnaire is a good start. It is always easier to err on this side of anonymity, when a question arises. The problem is to remind us all to ask questions."

"Interesting issue. "

"Please send a letter to the TV show 'Intervention.' If people see AA exposed on TV they think that it is okay on social media."

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

"Good job! Thank you for your hard work to address this issue! 😊"

"I know an AA member who broke the anonymity of several members of a particular AA group that had their own page on Facebook or MySpace. They were banned from attending meetings at that group (they have their own clubhouse)."

"We were not anonymous in our drinking and using so – my opinion – we should be glad we're getting the name of AA out there!"

"I think what AAs do between each other privately is their own business. As social networking sites have privacy controls for use at

the discretion of the user, it's imperative for AAs to understand that while what they may do on line may not fall under the description of press, radio or film, per se, according to their understanding of the terms, the underlying principal of the 12th tradition relates to information that is published, i.e., made public. Also, given the number of times privacy and security controls have either failed or been unwittingly incorrectly applied, the most prudent personal policy is simply to avoid any risk of on-line disclosure. In closing, this survey has heightened my awareness of the importance of practicing the 12th tradition and I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to both think more about these things, and share. Thanks!"

"The world is inevitably changing – when Bill and Bob first met, a long distance phone call was not only a luxury but a rare event seldom experienced by ordinary people."

"This is very important. My awareness has been raised as a result of taking this survey. Thank you."

"I do not live in a community with such forgiving and understanding folks as others in my group and therefore I take my anonymity very seriously as well as that of other people."

"I totally agree with Irene's comment below –thanks for taking this on – it is very important to unveil this and have open, honest discussions at all levels, I think."

"We did a group (Richmond Hill 3rd Tradition) during the group business meeting. There were 11 present and only 1 thought AA is asking questions it shouldn't. That person did participate."

"Keep it simple."

"Thank you for being of service."

"This survey has certainly made me think about how much I "talk" about AA through email, I've had to stop and do some very hard thinking here and have realized that I need to change my way of "speaking" over email. Thanks for doing this. As the media becomes greater and more and more people become involved who are in the program of AA, are going to have to rethink how they portray themselves on the www as people in recovery. Will we truly be able

to maintain a program of anonymity, or will this become a thing of the past?"

"I feel that breaking my own anonymity online is okay. Just because someone is online friends with an AA member should not indicate to anyone that their friends are AA members."

"Our present literature is sufficient to address any and all issues."

"Shari – Good luck and God bless with this issue, it's definitely a hot topic in our group! We are excited to see what Communications comes up with ☺. Our group went over the survey together and answered one questionnaire as a group. Hope that helps. Sincerely, 'For the Fun of It' Group, Buford GA."

"The issue of privacy is key. People freely relinquish their privacy for the sake of networking."

"Love AA and NA and live it."

"As a young member I have seen many instances of AA 'stuff' on FB profiles and the like. I find this extremely inappropriate and I also find many young people do not think through posting AA stuff on profiles or other people's walls, etc. A pamphlet is a good way to bring up the issues surrounding social media, anonymity and AA. People are increasingly blurring their public and private lives, so much so that it is 2nd nature. Someone has to bring up the fact that this (AA) is an area that needs to remain private."

"I think it is a great tool to share the message, but not the messengers. I believe it's great to have the AA program available for others to find help."

"Recovery/AA are not the same. If a person on social media does not respect Traditions, promotion and anonymity it really bothers me."

"I love AA. I dislike technology, it is too full of human error."

"We have to keep in mind that Facebook is a social network, not a form of media such as press, radio, film or the world wide web as a whole. I believe there is a difference."

"I feel that we who are conscious of anonymity and continue to fellowship on social media platforms are responsible for not discussing direct contact to AA yet AA is a way of life so principles

are always good to discuss.”

“Remind people what the second A stands for!”

“Don’t drink, go to a meeting.”

“The Traditions are clear about anonymity. Do we really need more rules or just follow the ones we have?”

“AA should put more info on line and join the digital age, doesn’t have to be on social media sites”

“I think it is OK if someone posts about themselves being in the rooms. Pictures without captions or not mentioning is not breaking anonymity”

“People will do whatever they want regardless of other peoples opinion they are selfish and I feel that it is futile”

“We can’t control people in or outside this program”

“Y’all are toying with something that is no one else’s business”

“I have not seen groups belonging to facebook or myspace”

“I don’t believe this is affecting the sanctity of AA as a whole”

“I am not anonymous. I will not break others anonymity, nor am I an AA crusader. But I make no apologies to others and put the info out if it comes up, what and who I am. All who know me, at work, and in my life, know that I am in recovery. That is my boundary and choice. And because of that fact I have been able to help others when they have wanted/needed info about AA. What a blessing. In order to help others I have to put myself in a position to be of maximum service. 5th Tradition”

“Facebook is not inherently public or private. Each individual user controls his/her privacy settings. Default settings limit viewership to confirmed friends. Whether facebook is public or private is not absolute. If anonymity is violated on Facebook at public level, the solution may be to reset privacy restrictions, rather than remove AA altogether.”

“Protect any and all of your info”

End of survey.

AREA 16 COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP – 9/18/2010 – GEORGIA STATE SERVICE ASSEMBLY

Shari M., Chairperson opened workshop with Serenity Prayer. Area 16 Anonymity and Social Media surveys were distributed and attendees filled out surveys. Discussion as follows:

“I consider an anonymity break only when specifically referring to AA.”

“Most important thing is to POLICE OURSELVES.”

“Ought to use the same guidelines that we would for other media.”

“Anonymity is broken usually by newcomers enthusiastic about their sobriety.”

“Education needs to start at the bottom.”

“We should figure out a way to embrace it (social media).”

“Does this affect AA as a whole?”

“Could we use it as a positive thing eg. post open meetings like we do in the newspaper?”

“I have had my anonymity blown on FB by other people – It’s okay to say that you were here, but not okay to say that I was here.”

“The problem with an unrestricted forum is that there is too broad a spectrum.”

Had a number of suggestions for a new pamphlet – colorful, modern, attention-getting

“Nobody knows where something this large is going.”

“Think Before You Post could be a new AA slogan.”

“I think we need a pamphlet and a high level committee to address this at GSO.’

“I envision an AA pamphlet on someone’s iPhone.”

“A candidate for Area Treasurer sent a postcard to me using the Service Directory (found online)”

WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT NOON WITH LORD’S PRAYER

AREA 16 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION – 9/18/2010 – GEORGIA STATE SERVICE ASSEMBLY (MINUTES BY KRISTEN H.)

Shari M. opened with Serenity Prayer. Gave background on discussion on anonymity and social media in response to GSO PI Committee and shared quote from Irene K.

Jimmy: Read FB terms of service. FB can use your info FOREVER publicly. Could be seen as FB endorsing AA.

Vidalia, GA: FB doesn't care and it's not their responsibility to care. Ignorance – not intentional by AA members but it is our understanding that is key. Group education is important – homegroup, Area, District level. FB could be an asset. Need to protect anonymity of AA members.

Lisa: They took survey as a group. Start talking about it, their group is tech-saavy. They felt it is not AA's job to manage. Sponsorship can take care of this. FB can be used as attraction, could be helpful to expose someone to sobriety.

Susie: Stress to sponsees or have a meeting about anonymity. If friend wearing shirt with no picture, don't ask or comment. Going to a meeting? Everything on the Internet is for the world.

Amy: Took survey as a group. Should it be groups or individuals?

Shari: Survey meant to be taken individually

Keith: We did it as a group because more could be taken up

Tom, Area 16 Webmaster: Did a workshop at the Atlanta Roundup on this topic. Real eye-opener. Some people don't consider it as public, consider it as private. Very misleading. Depends on privacy setting just how public. Go back to Traditions and Concepts. Bill W. Language of the Heart, he wrote a lot on anonymity, national policy any event AA attached to their name publicly. Pamphlets? Add info or make a new one. It is only suggested, just a matter of education. How to educate? Not just newcomers but members with years are doing it too. More of a personality type rather than time. Discussed Bill W.'s feeling that anonymity is true humility. Post years on FB sober with a picture of a medallion is just personal glorification. We are not invisible, but anonymous. How can we educate?

Michelle: What is the difference between social media and (AA) bumperstickers? T-shirts? How many sponsors take their sponsees through the Traditions?

Tom, Area 16 Webmaster: Read Internet Guidelines to answer question.

Shari: Surveys show people think if their FB profile is set to 'Friends Only' it isn't really public

Michael: Define terms and clear understanding to FB public? If it is public then we shouldn't do it. Had an epiphany, he broke his anonymity and now sees it was wrong. But needs more education.

Bonnie: Statement from AA about social media. She participates in FB and gets AA stuff sent to her and it is a problem.

Chad: Works for a company in Atlanta that works with social media. Promoting people to connect can be a problem.

Brad: Getting info out is public, never look at terms of service. Example of others and breaking others' anonymity.

Catherine: Survey great stimulation of conversation. Took pics of International but didn't put on AA because it is public. Keep communicating and asking ourselves what is important.

Christopher: Came up in 2007 and prepared suggested 2008. He then read his motion to 2011, basically wants to change Traditions (specifically Tradition 11) to add language specifically to Internet. Asks for 75% of all groups in the world to agree.

Sherri: One alcoholic to another. Person not a member of AA posted a picture. It is our responsibility especially if we want anonymity protected.

Mike: Huge social issue. Terms reminded him of most folks not caring. The so-called right to privacy is a thing of the past. Great discussion, very important.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ADJOURNED AT 5:30 PM WITH LORD'S PRAYER