"We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free."  p133 Big Book

Dr. Silkworth authored the “Doctor’s Opinion” which appears in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Ebby Thacher had carried the message of the Oxford Group to Bill Wilson.

Nite & Day Club
22771 Shore Center Dr.
Euclid, OH 44123
216 261-9682
www.niteandayclub.org
Every Sunday @ 6:30 PM

For more information, contact: Mike M.  (216) 619-6587
Listen / Download mp3 CD’S --> www.spiritualsteps.com
June 11, 2006
Friend.of.Bill.W@Juno.com
Welcome to Back to Basics Beginners Big Book meeting.
We meet at the Nite and Day Club every Sunday at 6:30 pm.

Recreating the Beginners meetings used in ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in the 1940’s and 1950’s when the success rate for recovering from alcoholism was over 75%.

We will actually work the 12 steps in the next four weeks using a cd each week to lead us.

We begin with Step 1 the first Sunday of every month. Every newcomer who wants to TAKE THE 12 STEPS OF AA is assigned a temporary sharing partner for the next 4 weeks.

This is a WE program. If you’d like to make Back to Basics Beginners Big Book you’re home group, please see our Secretary Mike M. or Treasurer Lisa B. and they will sign you up. The CD is approximately 75 minutes long.

Mike M (216) 619-6587
Friend.of.Bill.W@Juno.com
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www.niteandayclub.org

Newcomers & Sharing Partners

Sharing Partner
Your time commitment to the Newcomer is 4-5 weeks.

After that both you and the Newcomer will be expected to help other Newcomers through the sessions as Sharing Partners.

During the next month, call or visit the Newcomer frequently to see how he or she is doing and to offer encouragement and moral support.

Make sure you and the Newcomer attend all the sessions together.

Offer to help the Newcomer with his or her fourth step. If necessary, write the inventory based on what the Newcomer tells you.

Remember, the Newcomer is still very sick and may not be able to complete the inventory without your assistance.

Make yourself available to answer any questions the Newcomer may have about the A.A. program.

The Newcomer
Your primary obligation is to be here every week. If you do not have transportation, your sharing partner will help you get arrangements.

We realize some of you are in no condition to read the Big Book at this time; therefore, we will read the appropriate parts of the Big book to you.

For those of you who have brought your Big Book and are able to follow along, please do so.

We will announce each passage by page number and paragraph before we read it. If you are unable to read the book, please participate by listening.

Keep in mind if you do what we ask you to do which is to take the steps as described in the Big Book, you will recover from alcoholism.

Although a written inventory is part of the fourth step, that doesn’t mean you have to do the writing.

The person who is your Sharing Partner in these sessions can either help you write your inventory or he or she can write it for you.
Step 1
We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.

We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics.

Set Aside Prayer
"God, please set aside everything that we think we know about ourselves, the book, sobriety, the 12 Steps, and you God.

God please help each and everyone of us to have an open mind so we may have a new experience, and discover the truth."

Founder of A.A.
As we looked back over those early scenes in New York, we saw often in the midst of them the benign little doctor who loved drunks, William Duncan Silkworth, then Physician-in-Chief of the Charles B. Towns Hospital in New York, a man very much a founder of A.A.

From him we learned the nature of our illness. He supplied us with the tools with which to puncture the toughest alcoholic ego, those shattering phrases by which he described our illness: the obsession of the mind that compels us to drink and the allergy of the body that that condemns us to go mad or die. These were indispensable passwords.

(Bill Wilson, from the book - Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age pg. 13)

Serenity Prayer
God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

How to determine if your alcoholic...
We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and NEVER occurs in the average temperate drinker.

Dr. William Duncan Silkworth has probably treated more alcoholics then any other physician in history, (40,000). Dr. Silkworth authored the “Doctor’s Opinion” which appears in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Awesome website dedicated to Dr. Silkworth ---> www.silkworth.net
Dr. Silkworth’s Rx for Sobriety
www.silkworth.net/silkworth/txsobriety.html
### AA 4 Standards - Four Absolutes

#### The 4 absolutes are in the Big Book!

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#### AA 4 Standards vs. God’s Will

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Before we begin, **we ask God to direct our thinking**, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. p86

Please take 5 minutes for quiet time. **Ask God to direct your thinking**, listen and write down the thoughts.

---

Much of the spiritual principles that Alcoholics Anonymous we have today came from the Oxford Group.

Meditation or being in the presence of God was practiced to establish that relationship with God.

The 4 absolutes was considered God’s will when the Oxford Group practiced morning quiet time. The 4 spiritual principles of surrender, sharing, restitution and guidance came from the Oxford group.

The AA pioneers practice daily written meditation or quiet time. When you practice quiet time, be quiet, still, relax and listen. Write down the thoughts that come.

Test each thought using the 4 absolutes. Use the 4 absolutes to separate God thoughts from self thoughts.

**God thoughts in guidance is that passes the “test” of the 4 absolutes. Is it PURE? is it LOVE?**

We share what we have written that has come from God, NOT from you (self will) to demonstrate that God does “disclose Himself to us” and because sometimes the guidance we receive isn’t for us but for someone else.
Step 2
Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. - “Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?”
P47 Bigbook

When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crises we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?  
P53 Bigbook

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

(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.  
(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.  
(c) That God could and would if He were sought.  
P60 Bigbook

“God, I offer myself to Thee — to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!”
P63 Bigbook

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

Resentment
For resentment, do the following for each resentment:

1. What is the resentment?  
2. What is the reason I have it?  
3. What’s my part in the resentment?  
4. Look for underlying fear.  
5. What is it that I am expecting from that person?

Fear
For fear, make a list of your fears.

For each liability below (except resentment and fear), ask the following questions:

1. Do you have any ________ (example: self-pity)?  
2. Who was effected by ________ (example: by self-pity)?

Dishonesty False Pride Envy
Laziness Procrastination Greed Intolerance
Impatience Hate Jealousy Insincerity
Self-Pity Self-Justification Self-Importance Self-Condensation Criticizing Negative Thinking Vulgar, Immoral Thinking
FOURTH STEP LIABILITIES

Resentment (Anger) – Hanging on to injury or anger; Refusing to accept what has already been done.

Fear – Holds us back from doing worthwhile things. Healthy fear helps avoid danger. Courage is fear that has said its prayers. Everything we do is done out of love or fear. (Love is positive things; fear is negative things.)

Dishonesty (Lying & Evasiveness) – To others and to ourselves. Stealing or cheating. Pretending that things are different than they are; this keeps us from coping with life (unrealistic).

Selfishness – stinginess resulting from a concern for your own welfare and a disregard of others.

Hate – Continued anger, murderous feeling toward someone. Extremely strong dislike toward someone. Prejudice or hate for a group. Continued resentment leads to hate.

Greed (Gluttony) – Wanting more than our share. A selfish motive. We can deceive ourselves into thinking we are doing a service rather than doing it for ourselves.

Self-Pity – “Poor me” attitude; Thinking like a victim. Holds us back from doing something positive about our situation, like taking the Steps today.


Self-Importance (Egotism) – Putting ourselves first. Self-centeredness. Sometimes shyness comes out of it because we are focused on ourselves rather than others.

Self-Condemnation (Guilt) – Putting ourselves down; Condemning what God has made. Bad self talk.

Laziness – unwilling to work. Undisciplined.

Procrastination – Putting things off. Leaves the burdens on others. Energy drain.

Impatience – Wanting what I want when I want it; expecting too much too soon. Refusal to surrender self-will (impatience with others). Remember how long it took us to get this way.

False Pride (Phoniness & Denial) – Doing things for appearance rather than effectiveness. Trying to make other people think we are better than we are. Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?

Won’t ask for help. Pride is a character defect that causes shame because we are ashamed of how things are. Pride causes self-condemnation. Pride causes feelings of guilt. Either feeling better than or less than someone else.

Jealousy – Fear of losing someone or something. Leads to anger or hatred toward anyone who threatens our claim to someone or something. Jealousy is related to fear.

Envy – Wanting what someone else has and thinking how to get it. Envy is related to greed.

Insincerity – Putting up false front; People pleasing. Two-faced and deceitful. Hypocritical; Acting like we care when we don’t.

Negative Thinking – Dwelling on why things can’t work. Pessimistic attitude. Discouraging others.

Vulgar, Immoral Thinking – Sexual fantasies, thoughts of violence (waiting for someone with a baseball bat/fantasizing about causing harm to others).

Intolerance (Perfectionism) – Never being satisfied with a result (nothing is ever good enough). Expecting too much of others and of ourselves.

Criticizing and Gossip (Loose Talk) – A fault-finding attitude. Repeating criticism of others. Malicious or careless gossip.
Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Set Aside Prayer

"God, please set aside everything that we think we know about ourselves, the book, sobriety, the 12 Steps, and you God.

God please help each and everyone of us to have an open mind so we may have a new experience, and discover the truth."

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

The Newcomer
Your primary obligation is to be here every week. Keep in mind if you do what we ask you to do which is to take the steps as described in the Big Book, you will recover from alcoholism. Although a written inventory is part of the fourth step, that doesn’t mean you have to do the writing. The person who is your Sharing Partner in these sessions can either help you write your inventory or he or she can write it for you.

Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.

p77 Big Book

Easy does it
This too shall pass
Live and let Live

Sharing Partner
Your time commitment to the Newcomer is 4-5 weeks. After that both you and the Newcomer will be expected to help other Newcomers through the sessions as Sharing Partners. Offer to help the Newcomer with his or her fourth step. If necessary, write the inventory based on what the Newcomer tells you.

5th Step Promises

Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease.

Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience.

The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

p75 Big Book

Your 5th step...
Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better.

p75 Big Book
Step 6
Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand? If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six.

We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all — every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

p76 Bigbook

Step 7
Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Now we need more action, without which we find that “Faith without works is dead.” Let’s look at Steps Eight and Nine.

We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.

We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.

p76 Bigbook

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

But our man is sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong.

Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.

p80 Big Book

Step 9
Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God.

p29 Big Book

9th Step Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us — sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

p83/84 Big Book

Practice 11th Step -
Please practice quiet time and write down the guidance from God to share next week!

Start making your amends!

Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking....

MORNING MEDITATION

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day.

Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.

Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use.

Our thought life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives. p86 Big Book

"We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free."

p133 Big Book

But for the Grace of God. First. Live.
How To Listen to God
By John E. Batterson

These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself the most important and practical thing any human being can ever learn how to be in touch with God. All that is needed is the willingness to try it honestly.

Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works. Before you begin, look over these fundamental points. They are true and are based on the experience of thousands of people.

1. God is alive. He always has been and He always will be.

2. God knows everything.

3. God can do anything.

4. God can be everywhere—all at the same time.

(These are the important differences between God and us human beings.)

5. God is invisible—we can't see Him or touch Him—but God is here. He is with you now. He is beside you. He surrounds you. He fills the room or the whole place where you are right now. He is in you now. He is in your heart.

6. God cares very much for you. He is interested in you. He has a plan for your life. He has an answer for every need and problem you face.

7. God will tell you all that you need to know. He will not always tell you all that you want to know.

8. God will help you do anything that He asks you to do.

9. Anyone can be in touch with God, anywhere and at any time, if conditions are obeyed.

These are the conditions:
- To be quiet and still
- To listen
- To be honest about every thought that comes
- To test the thoughts to be sure that they come from God
- To obey

So, with these basic elements as a background, here are specific suggestions on how to listen to God:

1. Take Time. Find some place and time where you can be alone, quiet and undisturbed. Most people have found that the early morning is the best time. Have with you some paper and pen or pencil.

2. Relax. Sit in a comfortable position. Consciously relax all your muscles. Be loose. There is no hurry. There needs to be no strain during these minutes. God cannot get through to us if we are tense and anxious about later responsibilities.

3. Tune In. Open your heart to God. Either silently or aloud, just say to God in a natural way that you would like to find His plan for your life—you want His answer to the problem or situation that you are facing just now. Be definite and specific in your request.

4. Listen. Just be still, quiet, relaxed and open. Let your mind go "loose." Let God do the talking. Thoughts, ideas, and impressions will begin to come into your mind and heart. Be alert and aware and open to every one.

5. Write! Here is the important key to the whole process. Write down everything that comes into your mind. Everything. Writing is simply a means of recording so that you can remember later. Don't sort out or edit your thoughts at this point.

Don't say to yourself
This thought isn't important
This is just an ordinary thought
This can't be guidance
This isn't nice
This can't be from God
This is just me thinking, etc

Write down everything that passes through your mind.
Names of people
Things to do
Things to say
Things that are wrong and need to be made right
Write down everything
Good thoughts—bad thoughts
Comfortable thoughts—uncomfortable thoughts
"Holy" thoughts—"unholy" thoughts
Sensible thoughts—"crazy" thoughts
Be Honest! Write down everything
A thought comes quickly, and it escapes even more quickly unless it is captured and put down
6. Test. When the flow of thoughts slows down, stop. Take a good look at what you have written. Not every thought we have comes from God. So we need to test our thoughts. Here is where the written record helps us to be able to look at them.

A) Are these thoughts completely honest, pure, unselfish and loving?

B) Are these thoughts in line with our duties to our family, to our country?

C) Are these thoughts in line with our understanding of the teachings found in our spiritual literature?

7. Check. When in doubt and when it is important, what does another person who is living two-way prayer think about this thought or action? More light comes in through two windows than one.

Someone else who also wants God's plan for our lives may help us to see more clearly. Talk over together what you have written. Many people do this.

They tell each other what guidance has come. This is the secret of unity. There are always three sides to every question-your side, my side, and the right side. Guidance shows us which is the right side-not who is right, but what is right.

8. Obey. Carry out the thoughts that have come. You will only be sure of guidance as you go through with it. A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat is moving. As you obey, very often the results will convince you that you are on the right track.

9. Blocks? What if I don't seem to get any definite thoughts? God's guidance is as freely available as the air we breathe. If I am not receiving thoughts when I listen the fault is not God's.

Usually it is because there is something I will not do:

- something wrong in my life that I will not face and make right
- a habit or indulgence I will not give up
- a person I will not forgive
- a wrong relationship in my life I will not give up
- a restitution I will not make
- something God has already told me to do that I will not obey

Check these points and be honest. Then try listening again.

10. Mistakes. Suppose I make a mistake and do something in the name of God that isn't right? Of course we make mistakes. We are humans with many faults. However, God will always honor our sincerity. He will work around and through every honest mistake we make.

He will help us make it right. But remember this - sometimes when we do obey God, someone else may not like it or agree with it. So when there is opposition, it doesn't always mean you have made a mistake.

It can mean that the other person doesn't want to know or to do what is right. Suppose I fail to do something that I have been told and the opportunity to do it passes?

There is only one thing to do. Put it right with God. Tell Him you're sorry. Ask Him to forgive you, then accept His forgiveness and begin again. God is our Father-He is not an impersonal calculator. He understand us far better than we do.

11. Results. We never know what swimming is like until we get down into the water and try. We will never know what this is like until we sincerely try it.

Every person who has tried this honestly finds that a wisdom, not their own, comes into their minds and that Power greater than human power begins to operate in their lives.

It is an endless adventure. There is a way of life, for everyone, everywhere. Anyone can be in touch with the living God, anywhere, anytime, if we fulfill His conditions.

When man listens, God Speaks.
When man obeys, God Acts.

This is the law of Prayer,

God's plan for this world goes forward through the lives of ordinary people who are willing to be governed by Him.

Honesty
Purity
Unselfishness
Love
Step 10

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

Step 10 Question

This thought brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along.

We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness.

This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.

Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.

We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.

p84 Big Book

Set Aside Prayer

"God, please set aside everything that we think we know about ourselves, the book, sobriety, the 12 Steps, and you God. God please help each and everyone of us to have an open mind so we may have a new experience, and discover the truth."

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Four Spiritual Practices.... Watch, Ask, Discuss and Turn

10th Step Promises

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone — even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame.

We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part.

It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality — safe and protected.

We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is how we react so long as we keep in a fit spiritual condition.

p84/85 Big Book
Step 11

**Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking....**

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.

**EVENING REVIEW**

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day.

1. Were we resentful?
2. Were we selfish?
3. Were we dishonest?
4. Were we afraid?
5. Do we owe an apology?
6. Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?
7. Were we kind and loving toward all?
8. What could we have done better?
9. Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time?
10. Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?

But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others.

After making our review we ask God’s forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

**MORNING MEDITATION**

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day.

**Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.**

Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use.

Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

**AFTER MY MORNING MEDITATION - PRAY, MEDITATE AND PRAY**

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take.

Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy.

We don’t struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.

**AFTER MY EVENING REVIEW - PRAY AND MEDITATE**

Note: Not numbered in the Big Book - Excerpt from p86 Big Book

Back to Basic's Beginner's Big Book  www.spiritualsteps.com  6-11-2006  www.niteanddayclub.org
Step 12

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

3 Parts to Step 12

1. Spiritual awakening as the result of these steps.
2. Carry this message to alcoholics.
3. Practice these principles in all our affairs.

A whole chapter is devoted to step 12, Chapter 7
Working with others

What would happen to Alcoholics Anonymous if everyone in AA was doing sobriety the way your doing it today?

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. p89 Big Book

If you are satisfied that he is a real alcoholic, begin to dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady. Show him, from your own experience, how the queer mental condition surrounding that first drink prevents normal functioning of the will power. p92 Big Book

Alcoholics Anonymous
Cleveland Central Office
216 241-7387
1701 East 12th Street
Reserve Square - Lower Commons
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
www.aacleveland.com

Nite and Day Club 216 261-9682
www.Niteandayclub.org
22771 Shore Center Dr
Cleveland, OH 44123