

December 14, 2013

REPORT OF THE ALTERNATE DELEGATE

Greetings and salutations to everyone!

Doesn't it seem like only yesterday we were starting out this rotation? And do any of the rest of you feel like you didn't get done half of the things you had hoped? I don't think I am unique in that I come to my service with the idea that I would like to make things better, to do my part to insure that the doors of AA stand open and ready when the next drunk walks toward them. We must be doing something right as they are still finding their way. A question might be; are we doing enough? Is there more we can do to help the man or woman who still suffers? Obviously the answer is yes, there is always more. As long as people continue to die from this dreadful disease, there will always be more we can do.

Since our last Assembly in September I have been very busy. First and foremost, I have been working with Rich and Kelly to try and make our rotation changes as easy as possible. I have met with several of our NIA past Delegates to get their thoughts on what it means to be a Delegate and to represent not just NIA, but AA as a whole. We in Northern Illinois are blessed with people who have stayed active and accessible for those of us who are walking the path behind them.

The newly elected Panel 64 officers have met to discuss what we can do to better support the Service Chairs, DCMs and GSRs in our Area. We will continue to meet regularly throughout the coming rotation to help us help you. Of note, these are not official meetings in any way. They are simply our way to bring unity to the officers and find ways to better serve within the Area. There will be no voting on any matters regarding the Area, nor discussion of what motions should or should not be brought to the Area. There are other Areas which have these types of meetings, and we thought we would give it a try and see if it brings any benefit to us.

In terms of "what I did on my summer vacation" ... Since our last Committee Meeting I was asked to say a few words at the District 10 & 12 Fall Breakfast since Rich was not able to attend. I attended the East Central Regional Forum in Fort Wayne and had a wonderful time. And I recently returned from a Concept's Retreat held north of Madison. The retreat was wonderful, although the trip back in the snow storm left me a bit exhausted. We made it home with only a slight delay in Janesville. Unlike our Regional Trustee who didn't get home until Tuesday. Luckily it was car trouble and they weren't in any of the accidents that happened that day.

While at the Forum I was invited to attend dinner with the currently seated and newly elected Delegates. As in our "normal" meeting after the meeting in AA, I learned much around the table. How to get around, what to pack, what to expect in terms of sleep (very little) and other things that I wouldn't even think of. While I know many of them from various other Regional events, it was good to sit and talk about the GSC. I would be lying if I didn't admit that it seems

a bit overwhelming and that I don't have at least a few fears in stepping up to this next adventure. But I know that I have some great people to help me on this path.

Among the tidbits I picked up at the Forum... I clarified in my own mind who the 135 voting members of the General Service Conference are. I had figured out most of them from the Service Manual, but had a couple holes. I learned that when the staff at GSO rotates, they create a rotation memo for the next person. Makes good sense to me, and I think it's something we should define how to do in our Area. I found out that in 1958 the GSC voted to remove the word "honest" from the Preamble... as in "an honest desire to stop drinking." One of the things I've received so far for my new role is a copy of the Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1951-2012 where I looked up this action. I found the notation under Literature. One other note I made is regarding the ability to make on-line contributions to AA. It seems that many groups and members aren't aware of this yet. Additionally, the web site donation ability has freed up one staff person to do other work.

And in my spare time, I have some light reading to attend to. I recently finished reading AA Comes of Age which was recommended by a past Delegate as being an important piece to read in preparation to being a Delegate. Fascinating stuff, but you need to persevere to get through it at points. I think my favorite part was some sharings from one of the early Class A Trustees (non-alcoholic) and Chairman, Bernard Smith. That a non-alcoholic could care so much about our fellowship when his own life doesn't depend on it leaves me in awe. Next up is to reread Language of the Heart, again recommended by a past Delegate. My e-mail box and snail mail box are starting to become active with all types of items. Of course I'm reading the 2013 Conference Report like all of you are, right? I was copied on the meeting minutes from the Board Meeting in New York from November. Interesting stuff there, as I'm sure Rich will be reporting. Plus I've been invited to participate in the monthly conference call for the Regional Delegates and our Trustee, Bill Farnsworth. This time I just listened, but my guess is I won't stay quiet for long... as you all well know.

It has been an honor to serve you as Alternate Delegate. I have to admit, it's been one of the easier "jobs" I've had in the Area. It was wonderful leading the DCM break-out meeting and getting to know some of you better. As I finish up this rotation, I know that I have done my best, and I look forward to continue to serve you as Delegate. What an awesome privilege you have granted me.

Service? WooHoo!

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl V.
NIA Alternate Delegate
Panel 62 / Area 20