

The TRIBUTARY

Area 76 Newsletter

Fall 2017

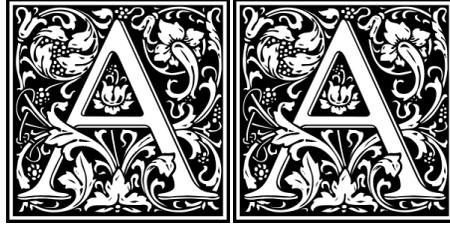


... we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Our experience has shown that, providentially it would seem, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the world-wide good will which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

From "Twelve Concepts For World Service,"

Concept Twelve , by Bill W., 1962.

In The A.A. Service Manual.



From Our Area Chair:

This will be my final submission for the Tributary as your Area Chairman . You need to all know how grateful I am for the opportunity and privilege to have served all of you in this capacity. As with any service position I have ever had I have been required to learn on the job, and as my term ends I am confident that I'm way better at it now than when I started.

I have been part of the continued progress of the service structure in Area 76 from a position of support and encouragement to others who actually do the work that is required to make sure that our primary purpose is carried out to the best of our ability. I've made mistakes, I've been wrong, and there have been times when I wanted a do over. You all have afforded me the space and patience to make corrections and to grow and get better as a servant to all of you.

I have been in the presence of the grace of a loving God who has expressed himself in our collective group conscience even when all of us were not necessarily behaving well. Me included! I have been told that I was calm and grounded as we battled our way through difficult issues. Sometimes this came as news to me. When the timid minority opinion is allowed to be heard and then becomes the voice of the prevailing side, it proves that we are not alone in the rooms when we do business on behalf of Area 76.

Wherever I go in Wyoming I leave knowing that if I needed the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous because I was in a state of hopeless desperation, I would be afforded the opportunity to change my life through the program no matter where in Area 76 I was. The law of supply and demand dictates

that there will always be a supply of hopeless drunks as long as there is booze, and this will require us to be in the best possible position to carry our message.

There are many of you that step up and serve because you desire to give back to this thing of ours. There are those of us you who are really sick and still stand for elected office. I want to make sure that I sincerely thank all of you who answered the request to serve as a committee chairperson. You were not actively seeking a service position, but when I asked, you responded and then did your job to the best of your ability.

The desire to serve beyond the group level is not prevalent in all of us, and our fellowship is structured to afford opportunities to serve in all kinds of ways, with the most important service being in your home group. Please know that service beyond the home group is very vital to the survival of Alcoholics Anonymous. I don't know how much I need to give back to maintain my sobriety, but I do know that I must stay engaged and willing to live a spiritual and principled life, and this requires me to serve others.

There are no finer examples of God's creatures than sober drunks. From a disgusting and horrible existence to a life that includes a desire to do the next right thing, reaching out to those that still suffer, and a relationship with a higher power that when relied upon guides us through each day. I live today because of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, the people in it, and a loving God who guides me.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve all of you,

Mel W.

Area 76 Chairman



THE PRINCIPLE OF ROTATION

I'd like to start off by thanking the 12x12 Group (Cheyenne), for the opportunity to serve as the General Service Representative (G.S.R.) from 2014 to 2015. It helped prepare me to stand and serve as District 12 District Committee Member (D.C.M.). It has been not only an honor and privilege to serve in these capacities, but I believe it was a responsibility too. I'm a creature of habit and I LOVE to do what is comfortable. Both of these service commitments were out of my comfort zone. I don't mind being on committees, taking minutes, making coffee, and most of all being behind the scenes. Speaking in front of groups, leading a business meeting, and having to bring up things that the majority would rather not hear about, now that is tough. I've had a few challenges in each of these roles. Ultimately, I had to seek God in each, put aside my personality, not be so sensitive, and seek more knowledge and understanding of our Three Legacies.

I've always been one to be involved and want others to be involved as well. My experience is that we are all at different places at different times and we each need something different. To allow others to grow in their own way has been a blessing. My family has always been very supportive of anything I wanted or needed to do in Alcoholics Anonymous. We've made sacrifices as a family, so I could attend certain activities, such as the 2015 International Convention in Atlanta. I bring this up because not everyone has the support I do. Others may struggle financially and we have been there too. Though some service commitments are financially offset by the group, district, or area (for certain travel expenses), we all have to make sacrifices. I'm reminded of the line on Page 97, in the chapter Working With Others, from our book Alcoholics Anonymous, "It

may mean the loss of many nights' sleep, great interference with your pleasures, interruptions to your business."

When I came to Alcoholics Anonymous I mostly thought about myself, my wants, or my needs. I thought about you, when it would benefit me. Service work in Alcoholics Anonymous has been a gift because today, I think about you more than I do about me. I want to be able to give back what has been freely given to me. In order for me to do that there is action I must take. I can share my gratitude by being willing to make these sacrifices and stand for various positions.

"Traditionally, rotation ensures that service positions, like nearly everything else in AA, are passed around for all to share. Many positions have alternates who can step into the service positions if needed.

To step out of an AA office we love can be hard. If we have been doing a good job, if we honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if our friends agree, it is especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth - a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity.

Among other things, anonymity in the Fellowship means that we forgo personal prestige for any A.A. work we do to help alcoholics. And, in the spirit of Tradition Twelve, it ever reminds us 'to place principles before personalities.'

Many outgoing service position holders find it rewarding to take time to share their experience with the incoming person. Rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no AA 'status' at stake, we needn't compete for titles or praise - we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed".

Each opportunity I've had to serve at the group, district, or area level has been a blessing. It's rewarding to know that I can be a part of something much larger than me or my home group. I can encourage others to get involved. I know a loving God is in control and I can rotate when I have fulfilled my commitments, so someone else may be given the blessings I've received. Thank you, God, for the many gifts.

Mary M.

District 12, D.C.M



MUSINGS ON THE A.A. SPIRIT OF ROTATION

Rotate out? Who me? C'mon man, very few in my group even show up for our business meetings, and most of them are more than happy to "just let John do it", and besides I have the time and pretty much know what's going on now, so what is this "rotate out" stuff anyway?

Once again I see a principle that runs against the grain (my grain anyway). Who ever heard of voluntarily stepping aside just when I have a real good grasp of what's going on in my group, district, and at the Area Assemblies. Well, it turns out that maybe my humility isn't really in working order. Once again I am faced with going along with agreed upon AA service principles, or making a decision based on my own bright guiding light. Whew, this is kind of hard because honestly almost no one in our group is willing to

actually do some of the General Service jobs that are in place in the AA world.

Well...TOUGH. As a member who has participated, who has taken on service commitments when eligible and asked to stand, and who has quite a bit of time spent in rotating through many service positions in our group, district, and Area service structure, I will speak to a principle that is unspoken. That principle is that of stepping back and creating a vacuum.

I discovered this principle when our group first moved into its own private space and began to have more than one meeting per week. As our group's indispensable coffee maker, I felt duty bound to show up and make the coffee every time the door was open. (This was many years ago, and coffee was made in a 100 cup urn, and required an hour to perk. And, as we all know, if the coffee wasn't ready at meeting time, there was hell to pay.) Bitterness set in at the lack of another volunteer or two to step up and help out. I whined in the meetings and was given some sympathy, but no help was forthcoming.

Having reached a familiar spot, approaching the "wall" at warp speed, I reached out to an AA friend in another city. He suggested that I just step back and create a vacuum; that the choice the rest of the group faced wasn't really to snipe at the sorry coffee maker but to accept no coffee or step up and do the job. It worked...not without some pain and griping, but it worked. Spiritual pressure did the trick where whining, promoting, and conniving with resentment wouldn't prevail. The coffee duties were picked up and taken care of by several members, and have been ever since.

A funny thing happened after that. Other opportunities opened up and I became involved in some different areas of AA service. It has been experience which has been the source of many blessings and growth in

my spiritual life. I am glad that I do not operate in a vacuum as an AA member. My fellow AAs are critical to my well-being, whether they choose to “serve” or not. My job is to do my part to help insure that there is a place for them to serve if they are willing.

What? You say you never in all your years as a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous heard of “creating a vacuum”? Well, try “attraction rather than promotion”.

John S., Cody WY



A View of Rotation Through All 3 Legacies

The spirit of rotation, the spiritual essence of anonymity. There is no ownership of an A.A. service position. I am not defined as any service position in Alcoholics Anonymous. My job is to fulfill the duties of the position as best I can, then allow someone else the opportunity to grow and be of service.

The 3rd Legacy of Service. In the A.A. Service Manual (pgS11) in the section Birth of the Conference, it is stated “To give the Conference continuity, delegates could be divided into panels. An odd-numbered panel (Panel One), elected for two years, would be invited for 1951, the first year. An even-numbered panel (Panel Two), elected for two years, would be seated in 1952. Thereafter, one panel would be elected and one would be retired yearly. This would cause the Conference to rotate, while maintaining some continuity.” As we finished the 67th Annual Conference this past April, A.A. has had 67 rotations of newly elected delegates to serve as the collective conscience of the fellowship.

The A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service 2016-2018 Edition – (pgS24), The Principle of Rotation: “Traditionally, rotation ensures that service positions, like nearly everything else in A.A., are passed around for all to share...To step out of an A.A. office we love can be hard...But it can be a real step forward to growth – a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity.”

In Bill W.’s writings on the Traditions - the 2nd Legacy of Unity - he tells us what we get and what we give up on each of the Traditions. In Tradition 9 we give up politics and domination, but get rotation and servant leadership. Tradition 9 Long Form: “...Rotating leadership is the best...All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.”

Tradition 2 Short Form: “for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” Tradition 2 (Twelve Steps and 12 Traditions, pg135) speaks of A.A. leadership; “Ultimately, they divide into two classes known in A.A. slang as ‘elder statesmen’ and ‘bleeding deacons.’ The elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group’s decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgement, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments. The bleeding deacon is one who is just as surely convinced that the group cannot get along without him, who constantly connives for reelection to office, and who continues to be consumed with self-pity.”

My experience with many service positions in Alcoholics Anonymous has shown me that rotation is a chance to allow another member of Alcoholics Anonymous the opportunity to grow in the 3rd Legacy of Service. I can also apply Tradition 4 to the principle of rotation when I feel myself getting a critical, elitist, judgmental thought process engaging. When I see in Tradition 4 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg147) “Sobriety had to be its sole objective. In all other respects there was perfect freedom of will and action. Every group had the right to be wrong,” I can ask myself, if a person who is new to a position is trying their best and they are staying sober, then I need to let them learn the hard way sometimes – like I did from my mistakes - and to be tolerant and loving about it. Part of maintaining the continuity of any service position is that I share my experience having done that position with the newly elected person. Freely share what was freely given to me, specifically in the Legacy of Service.

The rotation also allows me a chance to continue to practice the spiritual principles of the 1st Legacy of Recovery. I have listed below some of them as I have continued over the years to do a daily Step 10 inventory and occasionally back to a Step 4 inventory when the situation demands more enlightenment on my part.

Step 2 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg33): “True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every A.A. meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him.” I need to remember that God is in charge. I am not God, nor is anyone else in A.A. When my soundness of mind has escaped for a time and the critical eye has returned, I need to reconnect to my Higher Power through prayer and meditation.

Step 3 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg37): “Besides, we think, there is no one we can surely trust. We are certain that our intelligence,

backed by willpower, can rightly control our inner lives and guarantee us success in the world we live in. This brave philosophy, wherein each man plays God, sounds good in the speaking, but it still had to meet the acid test: how well does it actually work?" Does my ego say – They are not doing it right! I can't trust them to do the job like I did, or would. Ego again wants to edge God out.

Step 4 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg53): "When we habitually try to manipulate others to our own willful desires, they revolt, and resist us heavily." Oh yes, I have driven the bulldozer of manipulation with the best of intentions, when I am of the mindset that the group, the district, the area or A.A. as a whole needs to understand the issue as I think, and wonder how I can go about presenting the case. Back up, Jack! My group has a GSR. We have business meetings, we discuss topics. As part of rotation I need to allow the two way communication through the conference process, ask questions, get all the information possible and not push my way with partial information or misinformation.

Step 6 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg67): "Self-righteous anger also can be very enjoyable. In a perverse way we can actually take satisfaction from the fact that many people annoy us, for it brings a comfortable feeling of superiority. Gossip barbed with our anger, a polite form of murder by character assassination, has its satisfactions for us, too. Here we are not trying to help those we criticize; we are trying to proclaim our own righteousness." The critical, judgmental, self-righteous attitude again has no part in maintaining Unity after a rotation - or ever, in fact.

Step Ten (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg90): "It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter that the cause, there is something wrong with us." Also, (pg94) "There are cases where our ancient enemy, rationalization, has stepped in and has justified conduct which was really wrong. The temptation here is to imagine that we had

good motives and reasons when we really didn't." Once again Step 10, interwoven with Step 11, will guide me to the direction of aligning my will with God's will, to be of maximum service. Rotation allows me to grow in acceptance, love and tolerance of the new servants.

From the A.A. Service Manual (pgS46) 2016-2018 Edition: "A.A. has in past delegates a wealth of experience, which is sometimes used and sometimes not. The A.A. practice of rotation prevents delegates from succeeding themselves or from returning later as delegates, but a role for past delegates is gradually emerging that involves them in area activities and gives the area the benefit of their experience with worldwide A.A., but leaves area committees and new delegates free to run their own show." I firmly believe when the spirit of rotation and the act of rotation at all levels - from the group to the district to the area to the conference - does not happen, the entire service structure is being undermined and weakened.

Each service position I have held and then rotated out from prepared me for the next service position I was to have and learn through. Just as my sobriety could get stagnant if not always applying the spiritual principles of the Steps, my service work could get stagnant if I refuse to rotate at the end of any term of service at any service position.

Freely give away what was freely given, then rotate. Again the HOW of the program is available: honest, open minded and willing applies even to rotation.

Kathi C.,

Alternate Delegate



A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to AA.'s future: to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.



Greetings from the Area 76 Guidelines Report and Charter Committee!

First, I want to thank Mel W. for asking me to act as interim chair for the past several months and Brenda J. for appointing me for the upcoming rotation. It's an honor and privilege to serve Area 76 in this capacity. This team represents a nice cross-section of alcoholics in our state with voices from Evanston, Jackson, Lander, Rock Springs, and Sheridan. Posting an article in the Tributary is a great opportunity to share what we've done in the recent past, are doing at the present time and plan to accomplish in the near future.

At the Winter '17 Assembly in Green River, the committee agreed to meet once a month via teleconference to "tackle" the Guidelines, one by one, since most hadn't been updated for a few years. I am happy to report we've been doing just that for the past six months. Between that Winter Assembly and this past Spring Assembly, the committee decided on several changes, updates and edits to the Assembly Guidelines which

were discussed at length and voted on by the Assembly in Evanston this past August. Between that face-to-face meeting and our most recent meeting on October 3rd, we ensured the final Assembly Guidelines were posted on the Area 76 website. Additionally, we completed a final draft of the Convention Guidelines that will be on the agenda at the Winter Assembly in Douglas in April '18. On our last call, we decided to begin the task of updating the Service and Procedure Manual. So, stay tuned!

If you're so inclined, feel free to join us on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. MST. For instructions on accessing the meeting, simply call or text me at 307-699-2351.

Yours in service,

Kristi S.

Primary Purpose Group, Jackson



To submit an article, story, joke, or cartoon to the Tributary, email to area76tributary@aa-wyoming.org

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



2017

Nov 3-5 **Fall Convention**, Gillette

2018

Mar 2-4 **2018 WCRAASC Service Conference**, West Des Moines IA

April 6-8 **2018 Winter Assembly**, Douglas

May 18-20 **2018 Spring Convention**, Riverton

Jul 20-22 **2018 Summer Assembly**, Torrington

Jul 20-22 **2018 Summer Assembly**, Torrington

Oct-Nov **2018 Fall Convention**, Cheyenne

