**AREA 8 CHAIR REPORT**

JANUARY 2015

I don’t always look at the New Year as a time for resolutions or reflections but this year’s hectic end left me wanting less chaos for 2015. I began by cleaning up my office. Over the course of a year as a public school teacher and an area officer my weekly tasks tend to overtake my office. I have a large desk, file cabinet, book shelves and closet—all filled to capacity. I wanted to do this last summer but it never happened and even this holiday break left me only two days to tackle the heap of papers accumulated through my sober life: lesson plans, agendas, flyers, motions, articles, newspapers, magazines, photos, letters and cards. I am sure when these items made it to the “pile” they were important enough for me to bring them to the office. As I flipped through the preponderance of papers this notion became somewhat cloudy. I am pleased to report that I managed to fill a large outdoor waste can with my throwaways, but more remarkably—I found things I didn’t know I was missing. I found pictures of friends, an issue of the Grapevine I never read, 3 gift cards I hadn’t used—from 2 years ago, recipes I never made and a jacket I can fit into. These “finds” made the job worthwhile. It didn’t make the job easier or more fun, but more worthwhile.

I think every job –and every service commitment—should be worthwhile. The service commitment you provide for a meeting, another alcoholic, a group, a district or an area should make you feel like you are doing something valuable. When you are new this concept is foreign. I could not understand why my sponsor had me do seeming unrelated things, calling it “service”. She asked that I go to a woman’s house early, before a sobriety celebration, to help her set up things and keep her company until the party goers arrived. I was not thrilled with this suggestion but I went early and all I had to do was set out a few cookies and stir the punch but the woman talked to me about her own struggles with sobriety and how she was not very active in the AA program or the fellowship and she impressed upon me the importance of being a part of something that would enhance my sobriety. Later, my sponsored thanked me for my early arrival and I said, “No worries,” and I meant it. I got something out of listening to this woman’s difficulties and I wasn’t sure what it was but it felt meaningful. This was the beginning of my enchantment in AA.

Many AAs embark on a journey in sobriety that leads up a well-worn path towards General Service. Some of you will find the work worthwhile and it will enrich your existence in meaningful ways. Others will marvel at how a GSR ever figures out where to be and what to do. They will think that an Area Assembly is a dreadful way to spend a Saturday. My hope is that every alcoholic who seeks a way of life that is spoken of in the Big Book, and is laid out in the 12 steps and 12 traditions, will continue to trudge and pursue a worthwhile service commitment--not one that is easy or requires less effort but one that is put in your path by a power greater than yourself. As a GSR you really become the voice of AA. There is no greater calling than to speak for others on their behalf and becoming the “collective conscience” of our whole fellowship.

If you are batting around some ideas for making 2015 the year of change and growth, be sure to allow your time in General Service to be worthwhile as you chase your dreams and craft your sober life. Experience tells me that once my General Service commitment is fulfilled there is always another one on the line. Remember, you can fulfill a commitment but in reality the commitment fulfills you.

I will surely meet some of you as we trudge this Road of Happy Destiny.

Roxane R.

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