

Chair's Report to the ACM – August 2017

My name is Colin and I'm an Alcoholic. Since we last convened in July, a number of important workshops and meetings have been held in the Area and we have a couple more coming up, specifically our Unity Day event this Saturday and our annual Sponsorship Workshop next weekend. We will hear more about them later tonight. The initial meeting of the Structure and Guidelines Ad-hoc committee was held earlier this month and the Chair Ginger will have a report of their progress tonight. The Area Inventory Workshop was held on August 5th, was well attended – by my count – and was a very productive structured process that will give us some new ideas to forge our direction for Panel 68. Our friends in East County held a successful and well-attended Relationship Workshop last Saturday.

I invited myself last month to one of the planning meetings for the SOCALYPAA Conference which will be held at the Hilton Mission Valley in late October this year. I took advantage of my time with them to mention the importance of both our Seniors and young people and the epidemic of addiction among both groups which afflicts us today. I invited them to continue to forge a closer relation with our Area and our Committees. We need more, young GSRs as well as committee members to provide the young alcoholic's perspective of recovery. Rodrigo is with us tonight to speak about it.

More improvements have been made to our website. At Linda R's suggestion, we have added some new information to the left side of the home page of our Area 8 website. The title is "Where to Send Contributions". There have also been a chain of emails regarding the contact information for our districts. There is still some missing district information that needs to be added. If you haven't already done so, please get it to both Monty and to the Finance Committee. The IT Committee is sponsoring a hands-on Web Workshop scheduled for October. Stay tuned for more information from Bill, the IT Chair. Also, Archiving work has begun on the website and will continue through the end of the year so that we are better prepared for our new panel and the 2018 submissions that will follow. Lastly, we will soon have a preview of the Spanish Translation capability which will eliminate the outdated Spanish site and will take the English site and convert it to Spanish when the Spanish button is clicked.

I'm finding that the upcoming September election has brought with it some thoughts about the future – always dangerous territory for an alcoholic like me, and I assume – others who are thinking about standing. — The fear of the future is offset by the promise of potential new challenges for the Area, opportunities for our own growth and the growth of our Area and larger fellowship. I have shared from this podium that my experience is that we're not a well-oiled machine, that often personalities can get in the way of our principles, and that – thank God – that future continues to be in His hands – Its his plan not ours. That's a familiar theme in my life and has been throughout this year. So I again invite those of you who are eligible to carefully consider making yourself available by attending our Election Assembly on September 23rd.

And finally, my higher power, touched me in a very special way last weekend. After the Relationship Workshop I stopped in to visit a former work colleague who I had not seen for at least 5 years. He was the Sales Guy at a company where I used to work. Long story short – while helping him get his computer to behave, a middle aged man I didn't know walked in on us. It turned out to be his only son. When we spoke he said something about there being no coincidences. I looked at him curiously and said quietly are you a friend of Bills. His eyes lit up as he nodded. We shook hands. He shared that he had just gotten out of rehab the previous week. Later, while sitting together at lunch with them my friend's middle aged daughter said – while we're all being so honest I want to say that I think I'm an alcoholic.

What can I do? My friend and his two children knew nothing previously about my alcoholism or membership in the fellowship. He had called me to catch-up, but also get me to fix his computer. It was a rare opportunity to break my anonymity. Whew! And His son called me later and asked me to be his sponsor. I just continue to be blown away by the things that God puts into to our lives each day. There are no coincidences.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve our Area.

Colin M - Chair