

Area 8 / San Diego-Imperial Area
Chair Report to Area Committee Meeting
February 16, 2012

Group Visitations our Responsibility in Concept II

One of the recently-rotated DCMs gave me a plastic crate of meeting materials that belonged to a meeting that folded. He told me it was given to him to decide what to do with the contents. He passed it on to me to bring to the ACM for a decision on what to do with the meeting's materials and, most importantly, its money. The past DCM was absolutely right when he described the crate as a highly-symbolic, sad visual. I've looked at the meeting's materials every day for about two months. It is a haunting thought that the meeting is no longer alive.

Every time I look at the crate I wonder what could have caused the meeting to go dark. How many sobriety relationships were fragmented as the members went to different meetings? Did everyone stay sober? How many new or old members went to the meeting and found it dark? Did it suddenly die; was it a group conscience; or did the facility become unavailable to the group? Did they have a problem they didn't know how to solve?

The question I present to you as the Area Committee is: "Are we doing enough to extend the hand of General Service to provide the help any meeting in our Area may require?" Are there meetings that are in danger of going dark that can be saved with the help of what we have to offer?

I thought again about this meeting and what it represents while attending the February 11 DCM Sharing Session. The opening speaker set our focus on group visits and they were mentioned countless times during the day's discussions. He said that visits to dark meetings, groups without a GSR, is a General Service responsibility according to Concept II and Tradition Two. The speaker explained how these principles identify our responsibility to actively visit groups to invite them to send a representative of their group's conscience.

I did need to read Tradition 2 in the Twelve and Twelve (Page 132) and Concept II in the Twelve Concepts for World Service (Page 10 - [Combined With] the A.A. Service Manual, 2009-2010 Edition). The answer is a short read in the first two paragraphs on page 10. The wording clearly indicates the power of the groups and members as "virtually supreme" in steering the service structure. It also defines the need for the group to be represented in order for its voice to be heard in the decision-making process of the General Service Conference. I can see cases when the group's active GSR may be the lifeblood of the meeting.

The handout from the sharing session indicates Area 8 has 964 groups with 27,625 members. We need to look at the number of GSR attending the January 2012 Area Assembly and ask if this is the ideal for our fellowship? To fail to extend the hand to each of our groups leaves us at risk to limit "God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." Our decisions will be determined by only those groups who know about and desire to use their supreme power. This could leave us vulnerable to the views of only a common few.

The practice of continuously extending the invitation for all groups to participate helps to ensure we are practicing God's will, not self will. Calling on the dark groups is asking the minority opinion to speak. This practice of inclusion has been invaluable to the decision-making of our fellowship. We may also want to think of the group visit as a 12-Step call on the meeting. These visits may extend a life line to a group that is struggling to stay alive.

Just thinking and talking about group visits is not practicing our principles be they a Concept or a Tradition. Principles are only practiced when applied in our actions. Acting according to our principles leads us to realize our ideals. Without action, the principles are purely fantasy.

UPDATES

The DCM/Committee Chair Workshop was held on January 28, 2012. A list of comments to Stop, Start and Continue practicing at the ACM was collected. The listing of items was turned over to the Agenda Committee for next steps. I am distributing copies of the submitted suggestions at tonight's meeting.

The Four-Area DCM Sharing Session was held in Tarzana on February 11, 2012. This was a highly informative day of conversation. I expect to receive the notes from the roundtables in about three weeks. I will distribute them upon receipt.

There are no reports from the CEC or the Area Inventory Ad hoc Committees.

PLEASE TAKE TO YOUR GSRs:

1. Discuss with your GSRs how we should dissolve the materials and finances of the folded meeting. Bring back their decision for the roundtable discussion at the March ACM.

List of Materials from Folded Meeting

- A bag of tokens - 24-hour, 30-, 60-day, etc.
- A bag of "birthday" tokens for years 1-10 with the exception of the 8-year token.
- A bunch of ink pens.
- Books: Daily Reflections, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (2 copies), Living Sober (with a tablet stuck to it), and Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Secretary's binder with scripts, newcomer packet, phone list, and readings.
- Collection can holding \$28.00 in cash.
- A key.
- Several receipts and a piece of scratch paper listing collections of 14 weeks.

There are a few receipts in the secretary's bag that let us know that the meeting was alive in at least the years 2006 and 2007. I don't know if that is the time when the meeting ended, but the receipts indicate they were trying to catch up on their rent. The really interesting item is there is also \$28.00 in cash that was abandoned.

There are two rent receipts: One is dated 1-2-2007 and notes the payment for rent from 7-11-2006 to 9-26-2006; the other is dated 2-20-2007 and indicates it is for rent from 10-3-2006 to 11-29-2006. If the meeting ended shortly after that, then they were very close to getting caught up on the rent.

There is a December 22, 2006 receipt for \$50 worth of pizza. It could be that the pizza was a holidays celebration. Maybe the pizza receipt just happened to be in the bag and the meeting's money wasn't used to buy it. Or, maybe that they were really close to getting caught up on the rent and opted to spend their money on pizza because they had already decided to fold the meeting. Did they ever catch up on the rent? Did they leave the facility owing money for rent? Did they fold for some other reason? The point is, we cannot get anything from an empty room. For me, that is what this crate represents.

2. Continuing Needs of:

- ASL Interpreters
- Spanish Interpreters
- Volunteers to the Translation Committee - English to Spanish

Our Area has continues to seek American Sign Language and Spanish Interpreters to add to our availability list. There is also a continuing need for volunteers to participate in translating written documents from English to Spanish. Please ask interest individuals to contact the Area Chair at chair@area8aa.org.

Area Committee Meeting

The Area Committee meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 7 PM to 10 PM. The location is 2650 Melbourne, San Diego, CA. All AA members are welcome to attend. To get an item on the agenda, please contact chair@area8aa.org to begin the process. If required, your specific request or proposal will be directed to the assistance of one or more of our Area's standing committees.

The Area Committee meeting and all other General Service meetings are open to all AA members.