

January 2018 Orientation Assembly Delegate's Report

My service in Alcoholics Anonymous took me by train out of town recently. Delegates from other areas are often invited to participate in Third Legacy Elections in neighboring areas. We try to reciprocate so elections can be facilitated by members who do not have a vested interest in the outcome. Like many experiences in A.A., there is always something to learn.

Disembarking the train, I ordered an Uber on my phone and in short time I was headed to my hotel. The Uber driver was friendly and talkative during the 30 min drive. Like many trips I've been on in the past, each encounter with people outside of AA, while you are in the service of A.A., comes with its own set of circumstances and questions. "What brings you to town?" "What's going on this weekend?" These questions can stump many A.A. members. While we practice a program of anonymity, we don't lie or deceive. I flail on the innumerable things I could say. "Visiting friends," which would not be a lie, or "It's just business," might also work. But what usually comes out is, "An Alcoholics Anonymous assembly event that includes an election, where I will participate by helping to conduct the election." I clearly state this, careful not to mumble, then I wait. There is usually a pause, but I'm never uncomfortable. The reply is often automatic. "That's cool," or "You don't say?" On rare occasions the stranger will admit their own membership in a 12 step program or their previous membership. A few will recall a relative who was "in A.A." It is during the pause that I still my motive. I believe we find ourselves in these moments for a reason and I always think of my own relationship with A.A.

I knew nothing about A.A.'s program of recovery. It would surprise you that my grandfather had been sober in the 1950s but I had no knowledge of this piece of family history before I sobered up. I know my introduction was no coincidence. I needed only to know that a place existed that might help me remedy my misery and once that happened, I became wild so quickly that my path in A.A. was destined to include service. I knew my primary purpose before I ever knew the 6th Tradition.

I became an ardent recruiter of young people in and out of meetings. I was focused on finding ways to draw young people to rooms through creative coercion. This, in time, led to active service in YMAA groups. I was headed for General Service and I didn't yet know what it was. When I talked about A.A., I talk in terms of furthering our cause. My futuristic outlook had its beginnings in Y.P.A.A. when I just wanted A.A. to be here for me "and countless others." But as my tenure in the program increased, so did the widening wake of tragedy and trauma that befall all of us. I was going to be given the keys to the kingdom but I did not know it would be through General Service.

The first stage was to begin growing up emotionally. Adhering to the principles of A.A. began to take on new meaning. No matter what, I stuck to the principles. I bore children who were to test the very boundaries of my sanity and sobriety, forcing my self-centeredness and local view of the world to evolve, forcing concentric circles sitting outward, enlarging my perspective and opening my mind. It was no longer just about