

KENTUCKIANA NEWS

BLOOM!

Artwork by Mike C.



We planted our seeds of sobriety and service work. Like a farmer who tills the soil and plants his or her corn. And here we are, living in a day of opportunity, hope, love, and sunshine; a full crop of blessings!

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Life Blooms Through Service!

When the authors of the Big Book wrote the words, “This is an experience you must not miss,” to describe twelfth step work, general service did not yet exist. As the fellowship has grown and evolved, (to paraphrase Bill W.) general service has taken an important and exhilarating part in the lives and identities of AAs. How does service to fellowship give life?

Andrew came to service accidentally. He volunteered to be his homegroup’s GSR because he was looking for ways to give back to the people around him. He had experienced the wonder of participating in the spiritual awakening of a new member through one-to-one sponsorship, but general service opened his eyes to a new world. His personal interests and career outside of AA gave him a love of organizational systems, so he was excited to participate in an Area election in the first months of his GSR experience. “I had no idea what was going on. I voted for everybody that my table told me to, because I had no idea who anyone was, and now I’m friends with them all.”

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He enjoys the indirect type of helping that general service requires. Sponsorship is very personal and relies on two people participating in each other's lives. Though he is an active sponsor and sponsee, he believes that there is a great personal benefit and spiritual benefit to General Service as well. "The removal of face-to-face to the more indirect responsibilities of general service makes me more part of the whole."

He hesitated, before he claimed that it completely removes ego from the equation, but didn't hesitate to discuss the spiritual nature of general service. He said that even though there can be significant, "struggle and conflict in the debates, the minority opinion, everyone expressing their opinion and the different ways that god speaks to people, but eventually the room as a unified body comes to an agreement. Which in itself is another act of god."

Nina's first homegroup knew that she needed some extra help, so they created a service position for her, the alternate to the alternate GSR. She had no real duties, but they took her to district meetings so that she could listen and learn. Nina's life was given direction via the words of the AA Responsibility Statement. Where some AA communities reserve the statement for official AA General Service activities, the statement is commonly heard in meetings in the community where she got sober. It formed in her the awareness that AA was bigger than the meetings she attended, and that it took human work to make it all happen. She discovered that behind AA's curtain, "We, the people, are the Wizard of OZ," and that she had a responsibility to make sure that continued. I've heard AA's say that they thought they were in the "middle of the boat," before they started doing general service, and that general service work gave new meaning to the idea of being, "in the middle."

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Nina's experience moving to a new service area and AA community backs that up. When she moved to her current community and discovered the local fellowship to have a different approach to general service than she was used to, she found familiar community through service work. She was given life with the "enjoyment of helping with workshops and participating in the district workshops," and the fact that she felt "welcomed and accepted in the district meetings." She made a life for herself in the new community by seeking out an opportunity to serve in general service.

Those who have served will recognize the experiences of Nina and Andrew; they are not uncommon. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to encourage other members to have life giving, spirituality enriching experiences in service to fellowship. It may be a newcomer who is learning to build her faith with action. It could be our own sponsor, sober for decades, who is masterful at guiding drunks through the Big Book but has never seen a service manual. It could be a member who has bright, wild, and wacky ideas of how AA needs to be improved. All will be welcome in service, all can learn a new perspective, all can contribute their experience, and all can gain new life.

Ian H.

From Area 26 Archives, no date



The Ask It Basket

Q: Dr. Bob was asked by a fellow member of AA towards the end of his life when he was ill with cancer, "Do you have to go to all these meetings? Why don't you stay home and conserve your strength?"

A: Dr. Bob replied, "The first reason is that this way is working so well. Why should I take a chance on any other way? The second reason is that I don't want to deprive myself of the privilege of meeting, greeting and visiting with fellow alcoholics. It is a pleasure to me. And the third reason is the most important. I belong at that meeting for the sake of the new man or woman who might walk through that door. I am living proof that AA will work as long as I work AA. and I owe it to the new person to be there. I am the living example."

Q: Why the Responsibility Statement?

A: It was the declaration of the 30th Anniversary of the International Convention in 1965. Bill writes, "The members of our trusteeship-the General Service Board of AA-will, in the future, be our primary leaders in all of our world affairs. This high responsibility has long since been delegated to them; they are the successors in world service to Dr. Bob and to me, and they are directly accountable to AA as a whole. This is the legacy of world service responsibility we vanishing old timers are leaving to you, the AA's of today and tomorrow. We know that you will guard, support, and cherish this world legacy as the greatest collective responsibility that AA has or ever can have."

Q: What year did AA come to Kentucky?

A: 1941. more details next issue!

Peggy S.



Experience with AA Zoom Meetings

The following is the result of interviewing two members of the fellowship.

This is Tom S, 1 month in recovery: I average 5-7 Zoom meetings per week and found them extremely helpful in light of the social distancing/requirement put into place. I have no complaints; these meetings help me to stay in touch and maintain my sanity.

This is Margaret F. with 25 years of sobriety: I've been asked to share my thoughts on the use of Zoom as a substitute for in person AA meetings during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

I attended my first meeting as part of my homegroup on March 23rd, I believe. Initially I was not entirely comfortable with the setup as I'd never used the platform or attended Zoom meetings as part of my work. For me, it seemed very glitchy, lagging at times and no one was really used to the format. As with any new technology, the second meeting was better, and they continued to get smoother as the weeks progressed. I did not visit that many additional meetings so I can't really attest to the quality of those.

I do feel the communication suffered a bit using this method. Depending on how you accessed the rooms, whether it was computer, tablet or phone, reception and continued connectivity were hit or miss. The supportive responses were not received as "uplifting" as they probably were due to limited ability to have a group response. Birthdays were celebrated but not commemorated in the usual fashion, I'm not sure people were comfortable speaking up for fear of talking over someone.

I do feel it was better than no meetings at all and it was nice to see familiar faces. If I was ever faced with the situation again, I'd utilize this platform. That being said, there is still nothing that compares to the feeling you get walking into a room of fellow recovering alcoholics though.

Yours in service, *Curtis O., DCM District 23, Area 26*

We Are Not a Glum Lot

Brian D.

B C O O P E R A T I O N O P L M S F D O
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- ACCESSIBILITIES
- ARCHIVES
- AREA
- ASSEMBLY
- BLOOM
- BUSINESS
- COMMUNITY
- CONCEPTS
- CONFERENCE
- COOPERATION
- CORRECTIONS
- DELEGATE
- DISTRICT
- GENERAL
- GROUP
- GUIDELINE
- INFORMATION
- LEGACY
- LITERATURE
- MANUAL
- MEETING
- OFFICE
- PANEL
- PROFESSIONAL
- PUBLIC
- REGION
- REPRESENTATIVE
- SERVICE
- SPONSOR
- STRUCTURE
- TECHNOLOGY
- THIRD
- TREATMENT
- WORLD

THE HAIRMAN OF A LONG-ESTABLISHED MEETING asked his visiting speaker, "What topic were you thinking of emphasizing?"

"Step Three."

"Might not be such a good idea," counselled the chairman. "If folks hereabouts want to hear about God, they go to church."

"Well, how about taking inventory and making amends?"

"Nah. Folks hereabouts like to feel good. Thinking about character defects and digging up the past and all that only makes 'em blue, and starts spats between husbands and wives."

"Then, what topic can I use?" cried the exasperated speaker. "

Well, we usually just talk about our AA program."

Brenda O'M. is home making dinner, as usual, when Tim F. arrives at her door.

'Brenda, may I come in?' he asks. 'I've somethin' to tell ya'.

'Of course you can come in, you're always welcome, Tim. But where's my husband?'

'That's what I'm here to be telling ya, Brenda. There was an accident down at the Guinness brewery'

'Oh, God no!' cries Brenda. 'Please don't tell me.'

'I must, Brenda. Your husband Shamus is dead and gone. I'm sorry.

Finally, she looked up at Tim. 'How did it happen, Tim?'

'It was terrible, Brenda. He fell into a vat of Guinness Stout, and drowned.'

'Oh my dear Jesus! But you must tell me true, Tim, did he at least go quickly?'

'Well, Brenda, no. In fact, he got out three times to pee.'

A Conversation with our Area 26 Chair

If you've ever heard Roger W. speak at meetings or had a few conversations with him, it doesn't take long to understand what an interesting and committed AA leader he is. He has shared with me and all of us the benefit of his service and personal experiences whenever asked to do so in an open and honest way.

Roger W. got sober on August 13, 1983. He has served in many roles in Alcoholics Anonymous both in the USA and other countries. Last October, Area 26 voted Roger to serve as our Area Chair. Briefly, the role of the Chair is responsible for ensuring area meetings follow bylaws and guidelines, run smoothly and accomplish work! The Chair keeps the Delegate informed of what is going in the area; and keeps the area informed of what is going on in the General Service Office.

At the December Changeover meeting, he shared some of his goals for his two-year rotation in this role. When we talked a few weeks ago, I asked him to expand on his ideas and goals for Area 26.

Roger spoke about his goal to model the Ninth Concept: Leadership. Leading by example, challenging himself and inspiring us to stretch ourselves as Leaders in 12 Step work.

In December, Roger set a few S-T-R-E-T-C-H goals he hopes to accomplish during his two-year tenure: 1) to have no dark districts with Area 26, and 2) to plan and implement a state-wide CPC event, that could occur over a few weeks in large cities within our area. Just think of the possibilities.

When COVID-19 came upon us and changed our assumptions about AA meetings and service work, Roger worked with the Delegate, Officers, Committee Chairs, and many others in and outside of Area 26 to successfully run our virtual area meetings and to roll-out a series of Area 26 workshops, designed to educate and bring together ideas from all of us. Some pleasant surprises are coming out of all this. We have had AAs attending from other states and Canada and new ideas for additional workshops are in the works. They may continue through the rest of 2020 and beyond!

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Enthusiasm is contagious. As the Chair of the Kentuckiana News, I have begun researching and asking many Areas within the US and Canada about their newsletters, with the hope of fine tuning the purpose and content of our Area 26 Kentuckiana News to be more helpful to you.

Yours in service, *Melanie P.*

Growing in Sobriety, Growing in Service

When my sponsor asked for my help in getting the room ready for a meeting, I had no idea that I was being of service to our home group. After all, we were just wiping down tables, straightening the chairs and making coffee. At 3 months, I was expected to take a meeting of my own for the month. My sponsor was out of town, who can I turn to for advice? Fortunately, one of her friends stepped in and suggested the Sunday 4:30 PM meeting—it had very low attendance, perfect for a scared newcomer. Then a senior member of my group gave me a set of keys for the building and store room. OMG! Doesn't he know that I am a thief, a liar and a cheat? I could rob the place! He knew. I was now responsible to show up every Sunday afternoon, clean up the room, make the coffee and chair the meeting or find a chair. Whew! It got done.

At 1 year, I was elected to join the steering committee. We were told that we had no power, no authority. If necessary, our job was to gently remind those attending meetings of our group conscience. Then came elections for GSR and Alternate, I was elected alternate. No one else wanted that position. Gradually, my sponsor introduced me to committee work, first Archives, then Treatment. My responsibilities were growing, so I asked a woman who was a district officer to be my service sponsor. Joni E. was my service sponsor for years, until her death.

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We traveled around the state and roomed together at area assemblies, state conventions and round-ups. Almost all conversations were about service. When Joni became chairperson for the 50th state convention, I asked her to find a job for me. She made me the convention secretary—meetings monthly for a year, then more frequent as the start date approached. My notes had to be accurate and on time. It was a challenge and a lot of fun. We meet with other convention committee members at Applebee’s for coffee after each meeting and talked AA for another hour. I was growing up in sobriety and growing in service.

Of course, during this time I was still active in my home group, sponsored other women and was accountable to my AA sponsor.

Eventually, I became active in some area committees and became a district officer. After I was elected District Chair (same as DCM), Joni told me that it was time to leave the nest. Time for me to pass on to others what she passed on to me. From then on, I roomed with GSRs from my district. We traveled together and talked about AA and service, just as Joni and I had done. She died shortly before she was to attend her first GSO Conference as the Area 15 delegate.

I still have a service sponsor, Beth D. who was Joni’s service sponsor and is a past delegate from Area 15. There is still so much to learn.

Berenice O. Area 26, District 23 Treasurer



*Area 26
Service Series*

August 1, 2020

2:00 PM — 4 PM EST
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM CT

Zoom ID: 213-070-4560
Password: service

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June 19, 2020

Dear A.A. friends,

We in A.A. – here at G.S.O., along with the rest of the world – continue to experience an unprecedented situation. Without question, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Fellowship, including our organized service structure, is facing enormous challenges, locally and globally. For many of us, the most prominent example is that, for the first time in the 85-year history of our Fellowship, we are navigating the lack of face-to-face meetings. While we have found creative ways to allow for the vital interaction between one alcoholic and another, and welcoming newcomers daily, it is clear that the health crisis has other far-reaching consequences.

As we all adapt to the present reality of digital meetings, the question now is, "How do we responsibly practice self-support, our Seventh Tradition?" As we can no longer pass a physical basket, we are working to find ways to support the Fellowship at all levels, from our groups to Intergroups and Central Offices, from our Districts and Areas to the General Service Office itself.

The reality is that even though meetings, Twelfth Step services and operations have shifted to a virtual environment, expenses continue to accumulate during this crisis, which underscores the importance of practicing the Seventh Tradition. Through this crisis, however, we have witnessed the many ways in which the entire A.A. Fellowship has come together to provide ongoing support. Among them:

- Many home groups are still paying rent even though their meetings cannot convene. They are also providing online meetings on platforms that may have associated costs.
- Intergroup/Central Offices are still stocking needed literature and fielding Twelfth Step calls, redirecting A.A. members and those looking for recovery to online meetings.
- Area-level committees are working to keep channels open between the Fellowship and the delegates and board members that make up our General Service Conference, as well as to do public information, corrections and other service.

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- G.S.O. in New York is continuing to support all levels of service. Literature still needs to be published and distributed, calls need to be answered, online platforms still need to be updated, and support operations sustained.

In an effort to keep the membership informed during this challenging time we would like to share a brief three-minute video update from Leslie Backus, the Class A (nonalcoholic) treasurer of our General Service Board.

<https://vimeo.com/430834698>

Please feel free to pass this information along to members and groups in your Area to watch on their own time or to play before their online meetings.

We are so grateful for your time and attention, your dedicated service and – always – your generous support.

Yours sincerely, in fellowship,



G. Gregory Tobin
General Manager

Kentuckiana Newsletter Information:

The Kentuckiana Newsletter is for all A.A. members. The newsletter includes both articles written by people like you and some fun and information about what is going on in Area 26. We are always looking for articles from individuals in the fellowship. Please share your experience, strength, hope, jokes and thoughts with all of us.

The Committee meetings are held during Area 26 quarterly business meeting weekends. All AA members are welcome to participate. If you would like to write an article or would like us to know about an event coming up in your home group or district, please contact the Chair, Melanie P at Kentuckiana@area26.net.

