

Area 69 News & Notes

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Editor's Note

This edition of the area's newsletter is broken in to two sections. The first part is reports from some of the Officers and Standing Chairs. The second part is articles that I asked your trusted servants to write. I asked them to share their experience, strength, and hope specifically regarding their service experience with panel 57.

Section A

Area 69 Alternate Delegate's Pass the Gavel Report

District 11 hosted a 12 step workshop on Nov. 8th. The roundtables were chaired by prepared AA's Ralph, Adrian and Gary. Mary opened the workshop and her quote about humility "Don't put me on a pedestal, I am afraid of heights" was an excellent one. There were over a dozen people there and made for an informative afternoon of sharing.

On November 16th while traveling to Moab I attended the Moab group and reminded them how much we missed their participation at Area events and offered our helping hands should they need us.

The 23rd of November 7 members of the Area attended District 12's third anniversary celebration. There were over 50 in attendance and Theresa translated for us as we again tried to help with their standing committee efforts. During a phone call I received from Carlos, the DCMC elect for district 12, he expressed concerns over a court ordered fellow using his court card as his signed alibi while he was out committing a crime. We drunks will always find a way to work the system.

On Dec. 1, 2008 the District 10 2009 Post Conference Assembly planning committee invited me to attend their planning meeting. The committee is full

of enthusiastic A.A.'s helping plan this event. During the district 10 GSR meeting they discussed the 7th tradition agenda item that our Delegate Julie had requested help with.

This is my last report as Alternate Delegate for Area 69. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve the Utah Area as a trusted servant. I will always cherish the moment my name was "drawn from Leroy's cowboy hat," and the many hours we have spent together these past two years in service with each other.

Yours in A.A. love and service,
Monte S.



Area 69 Registrar's Pass the Gavel Report

Buenos Dies mi Compadres, Soy Alcoholico, Mi nombre es Carlos.

Good day my good friends, I am an Alcoholic & my name is Charlie.

Welcome to the Pass the Gavel 2008, Fellow trusted servants & interesting A.A's.

We only got back 7 of the most recent mailings & our email list just reached 123, so we are just over 1/3rd of our Area with emailing out our motions, Agendas & Flyers etc.

The FNV shows 602 groups listed in Area 69, 261 Active, 46 Unknown, 32 Merged, 263 Inactive also we now show 7 groups listed as "Active" with Spanish Language.

Right now we have received & recorded all group changes for District 1,3, 7, & 12 with partials on 10. If any of the DCMC's, DCM's or Anyone from Districts ,2,4,5, 6,8,9 & 11 have any additional group changes please send them in now or get them to Doug so He will be able to update the Area Database & FNV. You can also snail mail, email or

give them to me here if you have any this weekend I want to thank all the people who have been getting this to me on a regular basis, you know who you are & it has help made my job less frustrating. I will be forwarding any mailings to Doug that come in after the first of the year as I will be keeping my PO Box.

It is important as soon as any of your Groups or Districts hold their respective elections to get these changes in to either your Secretary, Doug or to me directly as this will make it easier for your

next Area Registrar as I will be rotating out in few more days & want to keep the record bases as current as possible for the transition to your new Registrar, Doug R.

If you would like Doug or me to attend any of your district or G.S.R. monthly meetings please let us know as much as you can in advance so we can schedule

our time to make sure we can attend. As always I will be happy to answer any questions you may have on registration or about the F.N.V. database w/ G.S.O.

If there is anything else I can do to be of service to your group in my Registrar capacity please let me know... I am very grateful to have served each of you in this capacity as your Area Registrar it

has been challenging, Interesting & Enjoyable.

Thanks to you all for allowing me to grow in love & service.

Charlie G.
Area 69 Registrar

Area 69 Treasurer's Pass the Gavel Report

I'm Nadine and I'm an alcoholic. Grateful to be here and very grateful to be sober and in service. This last month has been a mixture of getting things ready to hand them over to Pete in good order and doing the regular preparation

for this meeting. The regular job is so much easier now than it was 18 months ago. I've heard many times that when we figure out how to do our jobs, it's time to rotate out. It's been a wonderful, growing experience and I'm thank-

ful that I was able to do it. Thank you all again for your help, encouragement, and faith. The friendships developed are invaluable to me.

Nadine N., Area 69 Treasurer

Area 69 Standing Chair for Communications' Pass the Gavel Report

My name is Doug and I am an alcoholic. I currently serve you as the Area 69 Communications Committee Chair. It has been a pleasure to serve and I look forward to servings this fellowship as the new Area Registrar. I know I will continue to grow and learn as I do. That is one thing I've learned from this experience; giving and receiving are the same thing. I get as much as I give to this incredible fellowship. Thank you all for giving me that gift!

It has been a pleasure working with the Communications Committee, you've all taught me so much. I love how the A.A. committee process works. I'm also excited to see James, your newly elected Communications Chair, come in to serve the area. He's been attending our monthly meetings and already has added a lot of new energy and enthusiasm. Both LeAnn L. (the current Alternate Web Servant) and I have pledged our support to the new committee, we're willing to help in whatever capacity

they see fit. I look forward to working with this new group of people! As per our guidelines the web hosting and the registration of the utahaa.org domain name have been paid to March 2010. Life to date Area 69 has spent a total of \$729.75, as of December 1 there have had 85,680 visits to the site, which means that it has cost the Area 0.8 cents per visit! That's less than a penny per 12th step call! A pretty good value if I have to say so myself!

E-mail addresses for the newly elected panel will not be changed over no sooner than December 20, 2008. For those that are new to blogging I will ask the new Communication Committee to create some training so you can utilize this website feature.

This is the last Area 69 News & Notes newsletter for this panel. It has been an incredible learning experience. I want to thank LeAnn for putting together several of Panel 57's newsletters.

I was able to attend the District 12 workshop that they held on Sunday, November 23, 2008 here in Salt Lake. It's always a pleasure to see the enthusiasm and eagerness to participate that members of District 12 have! Thank you for allowing the Area to participate in your event.

Again I would like to express my gratitude to Julie, Monte, Andy, Charlie, Sheri, Nadine, Janet, Jim, Renae, Karen, Sheryl, Ken, Pete, John, Mike, Mike and everyone else who has participated in this rotation. I've learned a lot from each of you.

Doug R.
Area 69 Communications Chair

"Our Twelve Steps probably won't change, the Traditions, not at all likely. But our manner of communications, our manner of organizing ourselves for function or service-let us hope that this goes on changing for the better, forever." --Bill W. 1960



Area 69 Standing Chair for Literature's Pass the Gavel Report

My name is Pete and I am a very grateful alcoholic. I have the privilege of serving you as the Standing Chair for Literature for (technically) 25 more days. In truth, as much of the Literature as I can help Sheryl get in her car, truck, semi or covered wagon hopefully with leave room for the position of Treasurer.

I have had the absolute honor of being Literature chair for three years, spanning two panels. My biggest disappointment has been that I have left money in the budget at the end of the previous two years that could have been spent on more literature. Well, call me slow, but I finally got it figured to the last penny this time and I shall only have to convert the revenue from this event into more literature to finish out the year. That is progress.

Since Tooele, my primary aim has been to be certain to have plenty of NEW service manuals on hand. It seems that GSO has made it a point to have the NEW manual on hand earlier this year than in previous panels because we had no problem getting next year's manual shipped to us in time for this event.

I also have Big Books and other AA literature available. I have CD's (video) of Markings on the Journey, Bill's

Own Story and Hope. I have tapes, yes folks, even those beloved VHS tapes of just about everything AA has to offer. I have Spanish literature, including the new 3rd edition Big Book. I ordered Spanish Service Manuals, two of them but noticed only a week ago that all Service Manuals are the English. Yikes. Have no fear, Jose can get these in very quickly or may even have them available.

I mentioned in the Newsletter article "The Best Job in AA" many of the blessings I have been privileged to witness over the past three years. When I became the Standing Chair for Literature, I was asked to make available as much AA Literature as I could possibly carry to these events – especially Service-oriented Literature. An added blessing has been to (hopefully) increase awareness in the Spanish-speaking literature at these events. It has been my experience to notice that, although it may not always be purchased at these events, it has been very helpful to have the Spanish-speaking literature so that those who attend these meetings – English and Spanish-Speaking, will take a broader knowledge of the Message back to their groups.

Perhaps the greatest blessing I have received from this job is to watch

someone come over to the Literature display and say "I didn't know we had *that*", rush back later with the money to purchase it and take it back to their group. That sequence alone has been the reward for stuffing all this into my car and carting it all over the state for the past three years. Wow!

Finally, it has been just plain fun. Page 132 in the Big Book, 16 lines down, insists that we have fun. I believe we do. Otherwise, who will want to get into General Service? The principal of attraction rather than promotion has such a huge importance when we consider service and the newcomer into service. The members of AA in this room today are the ones who need to go back to their groups and Districts and let others know how vital it is that we have stronger attendance to Area events. If we don't, who will? Bring a friend, pigeon, whatever. Car-pool to these events and make it a meeting-before and after the meeting. It works.

I'll get off my soapbox now and simply say "Thank You and God Bless You" for letting me be of service.

Pete G.
Area 69 Panel 57 Literature Chair.



Area 69 Incoming Communications Committee Chair's Pass the Gavel Report

I was about half way to Lake Powell when I received a text on my phone. "Congratulations! You're the new Area 69 Communications Chair" rang the enthusiastic text from Doug, who stood for me as proxy. I quickly texted back "That's great! Did anyone else stand?" A few minutes later, a slightly less enthusiastic text responded "No.." I couldn't help but wonder if they all knew something I didn't.

Nevertheless, I am excited to serve Area 69 for the next two years as Communications Chair. I accept this responsibility and privilege with the sole misgiving that I cannot hope to fill Doug's shoes, the outgoing Communications Chair. However, I will do my best to try and maintain the same quality, timeliness and innovation which he brought to the newly created chair. I want to thank him for his guidance and for what I can only say is one of the

most amazing examples of service and recovery I've ever seen. I'm grateful to both he and LeAnn for their willingness to continue to help on the Communications Committee over the next two years.

Already I've had several people express their willingness to help by sitting on the communications committee or otherwise assist me in my responsibilities. I am grateful for their willingness to

serve, and they can be assured I will be drawing on their talents and enthusiasm to meet the needs of the area.

I served for two years as the Alternate Area Web Servant and sat on the original committee which planned and

created utahaa.org, the official Area 69 website. I can say without reservation that it was the best experience I've ever had sitting on a committee, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve in an area which I believe I can be of usefulness.

Thank you for trusting me to serve as the Area 69 Communications chair!

James H.

Area 69 Panel 59

Communication Committee Chair

Section B

What A Long, Strange Trip It's Been!

I've been going through such a mixture of feelings the last few months in thinking about rotation, that it's been weird and confusing. Not that it's that tough to confuse me of late! Come to think of it, that's really what recovery itself has been like ... weird and confusing☺ So, I'm just going to share a little of what the whole experience has been like.

I've shared before that the two Area positions I absolutely never wanted were Treasurer and Secretary. Of course, those were the first two positions I was elected to! At my 3rd Area elections, I was really open for whatever you and HP had in store for me and was very happy to be elected as your Chairperson. For the few months prior to the Panel 57 elections, I was really torn about whether to stand or not ... between my parents mental and physical health, I had been dealing with a lot of crises for a year or so prior. Our Area guidelines only allow a person to serve for 6 years as an Officer, other than as Delegate. At the time of the elections, it appeared that my beloved dad would soon die, most likely before the next rotation started I thought, or I wouldn't have stood at all.

Anyway, I decided to stand for the Delegate position and if I got it, great, if not, my service at the Area level would be over ... at least for the time being ... and that was fine too. I can't even begin to tell you how exciting it was to have you elect me as your Delegate ... WOW!!! Well, at least it was exciting until I came home from work one day and there was a box sitting at my door

direct from GSO. I was scared to death and all of my insecurities came flooding out ... it was all a mistake ... since I was elected instead of drawn from the hat, maybe you guys screwed up ... how arrogant was it for me to ever think I had what it took to represent you ... I carried the box inside and just stared at it letting all of my inadequacies flow over me. I finally opened it. As I recall, it was a box of birthday envelopes. Take a deep breath, Julie – HP isn't going to fail you now!! That has been a pattern for me, starting when I got sober: a new experience comes along, I freak out to one degree or another, all my inadequacies pour through my brain, I finally open the box or otherwise face the most recent fear and my Higher Power carries me through.

As I am writing this, I am one month away from being a Past Delegate, and while I'm not afraid per se, my feelings are still a jumbled mess. I think of things I could have done better and feel regret; I feel a level of appreciation I can't even describe for all of the love and support I've felt from A.A. members throughout Utah – and beyond; I particularly appreciate how much Monte's dedication has meant to me and I know he's going to be an awesome Delegate – he may well be the most prepared person I know stepping into this position. I am also excited for the time I'm going to have for those areas of my life that have really been neglected the past several years! My house and yard have both been crying for my time and attention ... I'm really looking forward to spending more time

with my son, his wife, and my 4 beautiful grandkids ... I'm looking forward to having a personal life (read playing in my loved red rocks, going to some just for fun AA functions, even dating again). And then once again I feel like there's something wrong with me ... how can I be excited to have what's been the experience of a lifetime be over??!!

General Service, starting with serving my home group as a GSR, serving my district as secretary and DCM, and serving the Area as your Treasurer, Secretary, Chairperson and Delegate, has been the greatest growth opportunity I believe I've ever had. I've learned about the folly of putting people on pedestals or assuming "they" always know more (or less) or are somehow better (or worse) than me, and have had the privilege of serving alongside the people I most admire in Alcoholics Anonymous. You have both humbled and honored me with your trust, your love and support. I've learned what it really means to be a part of a spiritual program and have seen what happens when people forget that that's what we are. General Service has brought me my highest highs and lowest lows in recovery and I don't have the words to express the depth of my gratitude to each of you for granting me these opportunities and supporting me in my growth in service. From the very bottom of my heart, I thank you!

Yours in love & service,

Julie S.,

Panel 57 Delegate





Death by Isolation

Sitting alone in a lawn chair in our garage with a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other--numb from head to toe--with no feelings except for the fearful question: how did I wind up here again? I would gaze up at the shotgun hanging in its rack and think if this is all there is to life, why bother? The only expressions of unconditional love in my life were our Labrador dogs Liz and Brewno (short for no brew). With their doleful brown eyes, they would sit and stare at me wagging their tails whenever I complained to them. My life had literally "gone to the dogs." My wife was angry with me, the family had quit relying on me, my employer was frustrated with me, co-workers were afraid of me, and I hated me. I wanted to be anywhere but where I was and be with anyone but myself. Happiness consisted of wrapping my hands around the next bottle of whiskey and chugging away. The way I dealt with problems was to "abandon ship." I ran from every responsibility and never finished what I started. Married three times, divorced two and half times, I ran out on my 7 year old son leaving him to figure out life for himself. Ten years later that same son gave me the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, my first Big Book, "a pass-it-on" from his sober step-father. After reading that book, my life began to change.

However, it would another two years before I became desperate enough to be committed to the alcoholic ward of the hospital where I had been born and eventually become "reborn." My first A.A. meeting was in that hospital and there I realized I was no longer alone. Here were people who understood drunkenness. They talked about a sober life in a way I had never experienced. They shared their lives with me and asked me to share mine with them. They taught me about alcoholism and recovery. Soon my craving for alcohol became a thirst for knowledge. I wanted to know what had happened. Why did I no longer desire alcohol? How did A.A. perform its miracles? I started reading everything I could find about A.A. and alcoholism. I went to the University to study alcoholism. My newly found A.A. friend Charlie G. invited me to get involved in A.A. General Service to learn about Alcoholics Anonymous.

The people involved (ever notice that by switching a few letters around "involved" becomes "in love"?) in General Service in A.A. taught me how to finish what I start. By making A.A. commitments two years at a time and fulfilling them one day at a time I discovered the secret to joy and happiness in my life. I have a satisfaction with life that comes through the Grace of God as a result of

trying to help others through General Service in A.A. The people in A.A. have enabled me to live a principled; disciplined life that was beyond my ability to imagine. They are giving me honest answers to life's questions.

I have learned that through service to others the best is yet to come. The feelings of loneliness, uselessness and self pity have disappeared. Today I have my family back. Our 7 year old son is now 39 years old and is one of six children Shelleice and I have helped raise. The impending doom of the third divorce has been transformed into an upcoming twenty-fifth wedding anniversary expression of love. You taught me how to keep the same job for over 34 years. I am nineteen years sober. This fall my Area elected me Delegate and I will take part in the 59th General Service Conference in New York City in April 2009. A.A.'s unconditional love has lifted me out of my lawn chair of desperation and saved me from a premature death by isolation.

Thank you,
God bless you,
God bless Alcoholics Anonymous,
Yours in A.A. Love and Service,
M@NTE S. November 2008



Andy B., Utah Area 69 Chairman

Hello to all my fellow Area 69 friends and family. It's almost hard to imagine that two years have gone by already. Where the heck did the time go? And what a gift to have served in such a great State with some of the most AWESOME people that I've ever met. I just want to say Thank You, Thank You,

Thank You. General Service has been another "BIG" part of my recovery. I'll never forget the moment at the Fall Elections in Kanab, when my name came out of that hat, I mean I still have

the ballot slip with my name on it in my wallet. What a very Spiritual feeling I got, and that kind of disbelief feeling of what had just happened, and OH Yeah that little bit of fear feeling, of like "I can't do this job, it's way too big for me" and the "what did I get myself into this time" kind of thoughts that were racing in my head. I really loved the support that I got from all those who had served the Area in that position prior to me. Thank You all.

You know beginning with the first event in February 2007 in Roosevelt, to

the last event in November of 2008 in Tooele, I want to say thanks to everyone who helped me guide our way though everything in between. Thanks to Julie for the little hints like, well the "ppssst" it's time to breath now, when I'd get stuck on something, and thanks Monte who was always there when I had to get some feedback on, well, you know, A.A. stuff. He always had an answer. Thanks to Sheri, who I spent a lot of time with getting our mailings out, I'll never forget folding and stuffing all those envelopes. And thanks to Nadine, taking over the task of keeping our

financial matters in line at such a critical time. And all of those who came and went over the last two years. I know everybody who stood for a position wanted to do the best they could and that life goes on outside our fellowship, I just want to say Thanks for you're efforts. To all of You who came in and filled some of the vacancies, there were 6 or 8 of them, a few of them more than

once, great job on stepping up when asked. You all know who you are, Thanks again. I could go on and on with the "Thank You's", probably a couple pages worth. But I won't. I have enjoyed all of the great times as well, the PRAASA's and Forums alike.

I'm looking forward to my next episode in General Service as the Area 69 Pub-

lic Information Standing Chair, I've already been talking to a few of the past P.I. Chairs, and been offered their support. And I hope to serve to the best of my ability.

Andy B.



From your Area 69 Registrar 2007-2009

First I would like to thank each of you for all of your support & confidence by allowing me to be of service to you for these past two years. It's been an incredible ride! I have gotten to know each of you and you have allowed me to grow in ways that I could have never imagined.

It has been a journey of Love and Service, I thank you for all your love as well as my sobriety that has been enhanced as a result of being allowed to serve you the Area & A.A. as a whole.

This has been a rare privilege to be part of the conference these past two years with each of you, it makes my heart fill and feel very appreciative that we each get to participate in the spiritual legacy that Bill and Bob left for us to expand and enjoy but mostly for to continue this program for the still suffering Alcoholics in the world.

The perspective that the position of Registrar has given me was totally different than what I had expected. By being at the back of the room there is a different spiritual tone of the Assembly and of our committee meetings. I remember being at PRAASA's and the Forums that we attended and thoughts of each GSR, DCM & Committee chair

that we serve and felt each one of your presences there even though some of you could not attend, you were there in spirit.

Since November is traditionally Gratitude month in our fellowship I would be remiss if I did not express to each of you how grateful I am for the cooperation each of you have given to help me do fulfill my service position these last two years.

Here are just some of the things we will be taking inventory of to see just how we did these past 2 years.

We tried to improve attendance, to keep group information up to date, to get the mailings out promptly and on time, to use new media and email for sending out directories and forms, to explain and keep up with the New Fellowship New Vision database from GSO, We stayed in constant contact with Karen Hale and worked with all of the staff to help better cooperation with the office, We tried to contact all the districts, DCMC's and DCM's to get the new groups and district contact information and make sure there were plenty of copies at each of our events.

I hope you will extend to Doug the same communication & Love that you have extended to me these past two years. I will miss greeting each on of you from the back of the room but look forward to greeting you next year from the front of the room as your new Area 69 Chair.

I must say that I was totally surprised when they told me I was elected as I was busy making some additions & changes for the people records that had come in late and had given me their new information that day to be put in the database when I got home.

All the way home from the election I gave thanks to you and my Higher power for allowing me to serve again, this wonderful Area 69 and may our Higher Power still send those less fortunate out to us so we can stand by the door & welcome them into the life saving program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I would like to share with you this excerpt from Sam Shoemaker, a close personal spiritual adviser of Bill W. He had a lot of influence in the early days of our program and was a mentor as well as a friend to Bill and the fellowship:

I Stand at the Door

By Sam Shoemaker (from the Oxford Group)

I stand by the door.
I neither go to far in, nor stay to far out.
The door is the most important door in the world -
It is the door through which men walk when they find God.
There is no use my going way inside and staying there,
When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,

Crave to know where the door is.
And all that so many ever find
Is only the wall where the door ought to be.
They creep along the wall like blind men,
With outstretched, groping hands,
Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,
Yet they never find it.

So I stand by the door.

The most tremendous thing in the world
Is for men to find that door - the door to God.
The most important thing that any man can do
Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands
And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks
And opens to the man's own touch.

Men die outside the door, as starving beggars die
On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter.
Die for want of what is within their grasp.
They live on the other side of it -
live because they have not found it.

Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,
And open it, and walk in, and find Him.
So I stand by the door.

Go in great saints; go all the way in -
Go way down into the cavernous cellars,
And way up into the spacious attics.
It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God is.
Go into the deepest of hidden casements,
Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.
Some must inhabit those inner rooms
And know the depths and heights of God,
And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.
Sometimes I take a deeper look in.
Sometimes venture in a little farther,
But my place seems closer to the opening.
So I stand by the door.
There is another reason why I stand there.
Some people get part way in and become afraid
Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;
For God is so very great and asks all of us.
And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia
And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.
And the people way inside only terrify them more.
Somebody must be by the door to tell them that they are spoiled.
For the old life, they have seen too much:
One taste of God and nothing but God will do any more.
Somebody must be watching for the frightened

Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,
To tell them how much better it is inside.
The people too far in do not see how near these are
To leaving - preoccupied with the wonder of it all.
Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door
But would like to run away. So for them too,
I stand by the door.

I admire the people who go way in.
But I wish they would not forget how it was
Before they got in. Then they would be able to help
The people who have not yet even found the door.
Or the people who want to run away again from God.
You can go in too deeply and stay in too long
And forget the people outside the door.
As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,
Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,
But not so far from men as not to hear them,
And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door -
Thousands of them. Millions of them.
But - more important for me -
One of them, two of them, ten of them.
Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.
So I shall stand by the door and wait
For those who seek it.

'I had rather be a door-keeper
So I stand by the door.

Thank you again for your Love, support and friendship may
we all grow in the fellowship of the spirit to help the next
alcoholic who comes to our doors.

Charlie G
Area 69 Registrar
2007-2008



Nadine N., Area 69 Treasurer

I'm Nadine and I'm an alcoholic. Thank you all for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer for the past year and a half. Service is near and dear to my heart and in fact is one of the major reasons that I am still actively involved in this wonderful Alcoholics Anonymous organization.

One of the peculiarities of my alcoholic personality is that I get excited "in the moment" when I'm around other people. Gratefully, during that excitement I volunteer to do things. Later, when I'm by myself, I find myself not wanting to do what I volunteered to do but.....because I made the commitment, I show up anyway. Thus, being of service keeps me showing up.

It has been exciting, fun, scary, expensive, relaxing, and exhausting (taking a trip, not taking a trip) traveling around the State of Utah and also going to Alaska, Portland, New York, and Spokane for different service functions. I feel privileged to have been so blessed. Going to functions like these has expanded my field of vision about the worldwide fellowship and organization on alcoholics in recovery. What feels like the most valuable to me today is the friendship that has developed with the people I have been so lucky to have served with. I believe that this kind of friendship endures for the long term and for that I become more grateful each day.





Grateful to Be Here Today

I have been asked to share some of my fun Service experiences. As I reflected back to the beginning it was hard for me to try to figure out where to start. My head and heart have been overwhelmed remembering the wonderful fun times, the wonderfully loving people, and the absolutely incredible spiritual experiences. In the past 71/2 years I have had the opportunity to serve as a GSR for the Big Uglies Group, a DCM in District 10, Area 69 Treasurer, and I currently serve as Area 69 Secretary.

The first Area Assembly I attended as a GSR was the Pre Conference Assembly. I went with the intention of trying to focus on listening as much as I could because I knew I didn't know anything. The new members were welcomed to their first Service Assembly and then we were told to just keep coming back just like a new comer, and eventually the lights would come on. Some of you have had that same experience..

I was given a copy of the ABC's of a GSR, which was very helpful to me. It relieved a lot of confusion and anxiety for me. They pretty much taught me to just keep it simple. I focused on every week having something. Not a lot and not boring, but a connection to AA itself. One of the most touching moments was when I received a letter from GSO after 911 telling us about how the members on the clean up crew held together. They held meetings in the back of a semi truck until one day under the wreckage a rusty triangle was found. That triangle was hung up the a door of one of the rooms in a building that was in OK shape, and that was their anonymity sign where they held AA meetings to help them thru the horrible tragedy.

Another great thing I heard and learned was about the Traditions. I was told that it was my job as a GSR to safeguard the traditions. I knew if I was able to do that I would have to know what they really meant. The traditions took on a different meaning after asking questions, and really learning what they meant instead of just ready them in a meeting.

I rotated from GSR to DCM. When I was nominated and accepted as a DCM, it felt like another miracle that I was trusted enough to serve the GSR's and represent the District. There were 10 groups under my tree at that time and one of the duties as DCM was to assist the GSR's. I attended all those groups and got to know and love more members. I was welcomed and felt just as much a part of as if I was in my home group. My circle was expanding. One GSR came to me one time and their group was having some issues on what it meant to be a closed meeting. The GSR didn't know if the guidelines were being broken or not. After some research we were able to take the needed information to the group and with a group conscience the group voted on keeping it a closed meeting, but with the understanding of what that meant. It was a great learning experience.

PRAASA was being held in Reno Nevada that year, and District 10 was going to send 2 DCM's. I was chosen to represent the district. I was very honored and humbled. PRAASA stands for Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly. Members from all over the Pacific Region get together to discuss what is going on in AA in their Areas. There were about twelve hundred. It was held at the Hilton Hotel and they raised the price of their coffee because they were losing money on Alcohol. (We did do our share of gambling though.) Everywhere you went my eyes kept connecting with another Alcoholic from who knows where. It brought me in touch with how miraculous this thing really is. The Speaker that Night brought me to tears. I sat with my 2 dear friends JoAnn and Grahame afterwards not saying a word, just taking it all in.. We were overwhelmed again with the connection. That experience started a habit of attending PRAASA for me. I have been able to attend in San Diego, Tucson, Woodland Hills, and Portland.

In 2004 our Delegate at the time invited myself and another dear friend to share her room in New York while she attended the Conference. We visited GSO and met some of the employees

who worked there, was given a full tour, and spent some time going thru the Achieves. There was tour guides set up for the friends and family member who were in New York while the conference was going on. We landed up with a guide who was not only in the program, but was one of the volunteers who helped clean up the wreckage from 911. He took us thru St Josephs Church. We saw where the volunteers went to get rest and food. Afterwards he gave us a complete tour of the ground zero. I stuck to his side like glue. I felt there was something about this man, and I didn't want to miss a thing. I soon found out that he was one of the members who actually found the triangle in the rubble that was explained in the letter I had received from GSO. I had goose bumps when I received that letter as a GSR, and now I was talking with him face to face. After the tour he wanted to treat us to lunch where he work during his drinking days. (He had been a bartender in one of the local bars.) He was well loved and we were treated with respect and had a great time. On that trip we also had the privilege of going to the home where Bill and Lois lived. (Stepping Stones) Walking thru their home was like waiting for them to come back from the Store. Everything was still intact. There were several bookcases with hundreds of books. Bill had masking tape labeling different kinds of books. There were so many different topics from religion to spirituality. It looked very organized. I sat at the table where Bill sat with Ebby. And imagined what it was like that day. There was a small house built several yards away from the home of Bill and Lois, and this was where Bill went when he wrote the 12 traditions. (Wits End) Sitting at his desk was a special experience and is hard to put into words.

In 2004 close to the elections time I was asked by a couple of friends if I had thought about standing for a position in the Area. I was surprised and explained that I didn't feel qualified. She said "God doesn't call the qualified. God qualifies the called." That statement changed my life. I prayed about it, got the courage to stand, and was elected as

Area Treasurer. I loved that position and really got a lesson in Traditions and Guidelines.

In 2005 the World Conference was held in Toronto Canada. And again I was blessed to attend. Alcoholics were everywhere. It reminded of a colony of ants building a foundation. Watching the flag ceremony where 96 Countries were represented again overwhelmed me with gratitude. I was so grateful to be a part of this program and fellowship. There are so many alcoholics who either don't ever get the opportunity that we have or just don't stay for whatever reason, and there I was holding hands with approximately 48000 grateful Alcoholics saying the Serenity Prayer. I was experiencing a Miracle, and another Spiritual Experience.

In 2006 when the elections came up again I really had to have faith in the

process of being where I was suppose to be. I remembered the Statement of God qualifying the called. I had recently had a conversation with my Service Sponsor, and she made me understand that if I was willing to believe that Statement I was told before that I should stand for everything I qualified for. I stood for Area Secretary even though I had felt that this would be the last position I would ever want to hold, but apparently my higher power had a different plan. I was elected. I have not only learned so much about the program of AA, policies and procedures of AA, principles of AA, but I have had the privilege of actually feeling the passion that comes from the members who serve AA on this level. I have been brought to tears more that once in typing the minutes and feeling the gratitude from my very dear friends and family members. It has taught me about Gratitude in Action.

I have been able to attend a Forum in Seattle and the Forum in Portland. The Forum is where the workers at GSO come and present panels answer questions. What a gift being able to share in their experiences, knowledge, and gratitude. Maybe some of you might be thinking that the opportunities that I have been given are great, but those of you who share this wonderful opportunity to give back thru this service know exactly what I feel. I would never had believed 10 years ago that I would be asked to share this with you and I don't know how it happened, but it did. It can happen for all of us. Miracles are all around us if we will just open up our hearts, and minds, believe and have faith. I will continue on my journey and Thank you for being part of my Sobriety and allowing me to serve you.

With Love and Gratitude
Sheri P.



God could and would if He were sought

My journey in this program started 31 years ago when I was 19 years old. I remember the very first meeting I went to. My arm was in a sling, my face and side where all bandaged over from road burn from the car accident I was in the day before. It was in the basement of a Catholic Church that was dark, filled with smoke, and a few very old drunks. I don't remember what most of them shared except the very last guy. Who has an old cowboy who when he shared he kicked back in his chair, put his feet up on the table, look directly at me and said, "Have you ever been to jail because of you drinking? Have you ever lost a job because of your drinking?" He went on and on, some things I had experienced, some I hadn't. Then the very last thing he said, again looking directly at me, "Keeping drinking and you will." My first reaction was "F**** you." I walked out of that meeting, continued to drink and everything he asked if I had experienced yet as a result of my drinking came to be.

He was right, but it took another 6 years of going in and out of this program, in an out of jails and hospitals before I came to see the connection between my drinking and its consequences. I always

thought I was the victim of unfortunate circumstances. I drank, I fell down, I drank, I fell down, I drank, I fell down. Then the next day I would do the same thing over again. That in a nut shell is what my drinking was like, and it took years for me to see the connection between drinking and falling down. I would always wake up 'in the gutter' and wonder how it happened again! It wasn't until I had a moment of clarity in which I had a vision that I perceived as my future that I finally surrendered to my disease. It wasn't full of darkness, despair, wrecked cars, hospitals, jail sentences. I had already seen that happen. It was a complete abyss, absolutely nothing! Which got my attention long enough to say, "What do I have to lose to give this program an honest try?"

I stopped fighting everything and everyone. I used to say that I stayed sober that first year on the sheer novelty of being sober. What it really was was that I finally accepted the fact that I was powerless over alcohol. It controlled me, not the other way around. I simply got sick and tired of being sick and tired. Of course my ego would not allow me to see myself as unmanageable. I was in and out of jail, in and out of

jobs, in and out or relationships, but I managed just fine, thank you very much! I didn't get the second half of that step until I heard it paraphrased as, "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and our lives were out of control." Out of control! Now that I could understand!

It wasn't until my second year of sobriety that the pain started to bubble its way back up to the surface. All of the guilt and shame, fear and anger, the stuff that kept my drunk for years resurfaced with a vengeance. It was time to start working those steps! I always knew there was a God, an All Mighty Power that could do anything, I also knew that that Power couldn't give a shit less about me, because that's where I was at. I will be forever grateful that in the ABCs of "How it Works" they wrote that, "Probably no human power could relieve me of my alcoholism, and that God could and would if he were sought." Could and **would!** All I had to do was the seeking, that was my job!

And it's still my job today. Through the Grace of God and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous the compulsion and obsession for alcohol has been re-

moved. I continue to clear away those things that interfere with my usefulness to God and my fellows by practicing the principles of this program in all areas of my life. To the best of my ability. Always striving for a better way to apply them, to put them into action. Even though perfection is the goal, I can only claim progress!

It does continue to amaze me that my understanding of who God is, who you are and who I am continues to get deeper and deeper, clearer and clearer. Life continues to get better and better, easier and so much more full than it ever was. Sometimes to the point of being overwhelming. That's when I sit back and get into a place of gratitude and just enjoy the ride! I've come to understand that is what my Higher Power's will for me is; simply to be happy! Happy, joyous, and free. That's exactly what this program has given me!

The very first taste of General Service (at the level above serving my Home Group) was when I was about three years sober and a friend of mine was involved in forming a Corrections Committee for district 2. It was the most miserable experience ever! All I could see were these alcoholic egos clashing with one another. In fact after about three months I told my friend that I was going to drink again if I continued. So for the next 17 years I did my service work at the Home Group level, serving as Secretary, Treasurer, Coffee Maker, Greeter, Chair, etc.

I was drawn to become our group's GSR in 2004. At the first Area Assembly I attended (Pre-Conference Assembly in Washington, UT) I was elected the first Area Web Servant under the Public Information Committee. Having not been privy to what had gone on in the ad-hock committee I jumped in with both feet! That next weekend before the PI Chair had a chance to get back home

she had several calls waiting for her asking what I was doing and why! There were things on the website that the Area had not approved. Good thing websites are easily and quickly changed! And it's also a good thing that a few mistakes did not destroy A.A.! I learned a lot from that experience. One being the committee process and how that all works within the general service structure of our area. Subsequently, through that committee process everything I had on the website has been put back on, but each one was looked at, discussed, and voted on. The traditions of A.A. have been one of the most critical elements that are kept in mind when the committee discusses wither or not an item should be on the Internet. I've come to truly admire and respect the committee process that A.A. uses to make its decisions.

In 2006 a motion that an ad-hock committee had proposed was voted on to create a new standing chair position. That being the Communications Committee. At the Fall Elections Assembly I was elected to chair this new committee. What a blast this has been!

That begins my story of Panel 57. I want to express my gratitude to my committee, the Officers, the other Standing Chairs, and all who have participated in Panel 57. It has been an incredible learning experience. Because of your experience, strength, and hope, actually because of your willingness to share that experience, strength, and hope I continue to grow in the sun light of the Spirit. The friendships that come from working with others, especial when it's for the common good of our Fellowship are amazing! Thank you all.

One of the greatest gifts that being involved in general service has given me is the idea that just because you express an opinion that's different than mine doesn't mean that you're attacking me,

or belittling me. It doesn't mean that one of us is right and the other is wrong. It doesn't mean that one is better than the other. It especially doesn't mean that I must correct your thinking! It just means that you have a different view of things. It also means that maybe we can learn from each other. Maybe we can grow because of our different opinions, our different thinking, our different ways of seeing things.

I've heard ego defined as anything that separates me from anyone or anything. Love that! That's exactly what my disease does as well. It makes me think I'm unique, different, special, not like you. Therefore I isolate and begin to listen to the rest of the things my disease tells me. Things like, "It wasn't really that bad, you're not really an alcoholic. You were just going through some hard times. You're so much more mature than you where, you would handle it different now."

I'm very grateful that I know that no matter how different I seem to be, no matter what my thinking tells me, that you and I are the same. In a very real way we are One. It's the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous that reminds me of that simple truth and for that I am forever in your debit.

God bless us all . . . Actually God does bless us all, wither we're aware of it or not! I pray that no matter how dark your outside circumstances seem to be that you will always be aware of the multitude of blessings from your Higher Power. As the long form of the 12th tradition says so eloquently, "that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

Doug R.
Communications Committee Chair

**Please remember to invite your sponsees
to the next service assembly!
Saturday, February 28, 2009
Richfield, Utah**



Rena H., Area 69 Corrections Committee

As the "rotation" year comes to an end, I can't help but reflect over the past two years of how my service responsibility has affected my life and my sobriety. What a deal! I said "yes" to an open service position---and stayed sober for two more "fly-by" years and got to experience blessings beyond my imagination! I have made a host of friends along the way that have first of all, loved AA and general service, and secondly have influenced, supported, and enhanced my sobriety by being stellar examples of service in action. Service has certainly been an ongoing journey out of "self" and more toward "selflessness" for me, which is a far cry from where I was when I first got sober!! Sometimes I am just so amazed that I stumbled into "Service"; what I now know to be the sustaining ingredient strengthening my understanding of the absolute need for "Unity", thus the third leg of the Legacies being "Recovery"---and realizing this as being the "HOW" of it just in these last few years. (Some of us are slower than others!)

My first service job in AA was at 18 months sober as secretary of a meeting I started going to when I was newly sober

and very wet behind the ears! I found warm welcome and smiling faces of people whom I saw showing up week after week. I really looked forward to seeing them because they not only were good examples for me, but they also gave me hope that I might just have a chance at this thing. The position was a 2 year commitment which seemed like a life time to me, but in spite of my fear and insecurity, I jumped in with both feet and before I knew it my term was up and it was time to rotate!

That experience was very pivotal, I think, in how I perceived the whole service idea. By having made a commitment to showing up, sometimes even when I didn't exactly feel like it, I learned two very important things for me. One was, I learned how to keep my word, which in the past I had always operated on the "sliding scale" method of "if I don't have something better come up, I'll be there", or if I was too drunk to remember what I said I'd do or where I'd be! The second was kind of like a light bulb going on and maybe a little self-serving in a way, but I experienced how quickly time seems to pass when I keep my feet busy by doing ser-

vice and helping others, which in turn, enhances my sobriety and personal spiritual growth along the way.

I have continued to experience the blessings of the program and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous through the many service opportunities available in AA. Whether it be a greeter, coffee maker, putting a chair away, or simply smiling and saying "hello" and "welcome" to a new comer; or being a GSR, DCM, standing Committee Chair, Area Committee Member or even an Area Delegate, it is all important work and service being done every day by many to carry out our "primary purpose" outlined in Tradition Five---"to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic".

I am so full of gratitude as we near the time to "Pass the Gavel", and prepare to step aside giving others the opportunity to share in this wonderful journey. Thank you Area 69, from the bottom of my heart, for allowing me to be one of your many trusted servants!

Respectfully and in Love and Service.



Service is sobriety!

My story before AA is not at all unique. Everything was pretty much all about me and my getting what I wanted when I wanted it. I manipulated people in either a cheerful or a tearful way and became quite a master at having people do things for me because they either really liked me or felt sorry for me. Trying to get everything (and everyone) to be the way I thought things (and people) should be was exhausting. When I would finally get what I wanted, the emptiness did not go away. In fact, it got worse. I was a square peg trying to fit into a round hole and never felt like I fit in anywhere. The ever-

present loneliness was like a big, empty hole which I tried to fill with people, places and things. When I inevitably ended up all alone with just my own thoughts, the emotional pain I felt was like a heavy black blanket. Alcohol helped to stop the pain for a little while and oblivion was always my goal.

I had blackouts from the first time I drank alcohol. I gulped my drinks and my favorite drink was always "more." I had no way to know that other people didn't have blackouts when they drank because I never talked about my fears, weaknesses or problems with anyone

before I came to AA. I was trying to look good on the outside while I was falling apart on the inside. I wanted everyone to think I was perfect, that I came from a perfect family and that I had a perfect life. The truth was that I was always afraid someone would find out that I was just an empty shell and that I was really a mess inside. I was taught from an early age to keep family business, especially family secrets, within the family. The prevailing attitude was that if you didn't talk about something, it would eventually just go away.

I was quite sure all my troubles would be solved if I could get far away enough from my small hometown and the watchful eyes of my parents. I thought they were too controlling. I quietly rebelled in the most socially acceptable way I could at the time and chose a college 2500 miles away from home. I planned to leave and never look back. Imagine my surprise when the black, empty loneliness surfaced again shortly after I left home. I had periods of not drinking alcohol and believe I may have still had a choice about drinking back then.

After being exposed to AA at an early age and knowing in my heart I had a serious problem with alcohol, I drifted in and out of the program. Looking back on those early days, I can now see that I was always looking for a reason to leave the program rather than a reason to stay. It's kind of ironic - the square peg had finally found a place to fit in, where there was peace and quiet and emotional comfort and a feeling of true fellowship. I did not stay long because I started to feel uncomfortable again. I only half-heartedly worked the 12 Steps, didn't work with others and did not get any lasting relief from my obsession with alcohol. I eventually drank again and continued my quest for oblivion.

When my life got really out of control in the summer of 2001, I snuck back in to AA meetings. I felt better right away and saw lots of people who had come into the program and never left. They seemed calm and happy, which was something I really wanted. When I was home alone, my brain never stopped. I analyzed everything in excruciating detail. I really needed a rest and the people in the meetings seemed to have what so desperately wanted - peace of mind.

After about six months of not drinking and going to lots of meetings, I again

started to feel restless, irritable and discontent. I became terrified of the thoughts I had about leaving AA. I knew that to leave would mean a certain return to drinking. I was sure I had crossed that invisible line and had lost the power of choice with regard to alcohol. I knew with certainty that if I started to drink again, I would die a slow, painful death as a result of my alcoholism. I knew I wouldn't be one of "the lucky ones" who died quickly of the disease.

Then the miracle happened for me AGAIN. I knew there had to be more to AA than just going to meetings and doing my best at working the 12 Steps. One Sunday morning, the secretary of my home group announced that our group needed a GSR. I didn't know what a GSR was, but my heart started to pound and my hand started to go up. I panicked and put my hand down quickly. Luckily, no one had seen me! No one volunteered for the job and the secretary said they would announce it again the next week. I thought about the meeting all day and made a deal with God. I told God that if the GSR position was still open the next week, I would volunteer.

The following Sunday morning, the GSR announcement was made. My heart was pounding and I had my hand halfway up when another woman's hand shot straight into the air. The secretary announced that our group had a new GSR. I was really relieved because I'd kept my part of my bargain with God. However, this time someone had seen me raise my hand. The group said they also needed an Alternate GSR and they decided that the new Alternate GSR would be me.

Thus began my journey in General Service. I felt like a newcomer again and felt like I was learning a foreign language with all the new terminology I heard. I was discouraged a lot and

wanted to quit more than once, but something deep inside of me felt like I was finally on the right path. I asked a lot of questions, made some new friends and slowly began to understand some of what was going on. After serving as Alternate GSR for a few months, our GSR stepped down and the group elected me as GSR. I finished out the GSR term and later had the opportunity to serve as District 10 Secretary. What an order! In August of 2008, I was asked to serve as Area 69 Grapevine Chair. What a wonderful opportunity it has been to serve at the area level. I look forward to serving as Area 69 Literature Chair for the next rotation.

General Service has proven to be the missing piece of my otherwise "okay" sobriety. I have had many opportunities to stretch and grow outside of my comfort zone. I've experienced how rewarding it is to be able to give a little bit back to the fellowship that has quite literally saved my life. Participating in General Service has taken "suiting up and showing up" to a whole new level. I make and keep commitments; I understand how important it is to be responsible and to help newcomers to General Service. When I'm asked a question for which I don't know the answer, I can say, "I don't know, but I'll look into it and get back to you." I have learned to read our literature, ask others for their opinions, gather information and follow up to answer those questions.

I am truly grateful to be involved in General Service and I look forward to continuing to serve Area 69. God has truly done things for me I could never have accomplished on my own. For me, service is sobriety!

Gratefully,
Sheryl T.
Area 69 Grapevine Chair

**Be sure to visit us on the web at
UtahAA.org!**



The Best Job in AA

I suppose that everyone in service has heard that the best job to have in AA is the one you are doing. There is a lot of truth to that saying. The problem is that I *have* the best job in AA.

Having three years to do a two year job was very helpful and I am thankful for your patience and kindness. Literature has always been dear to my recovery and sobriety. I became a life-long student of the Big Book and other AA literature beginning in March of 1998 and I am always quick to say the Big Book not only saved my life but makes it worth living.

Back in February of 2005 there was a consensus to provide more service Literature at meetings and also a need to have a moderate supply of as much material as I could acquire. When we meet for Workshops, Committee Meetings or Assemblies, the more remote Districts could be able to acquire as much Literature as they can stand. That proved to be a very inspired idea.

Two years ago, Area 69 increased the budget for Literature so that we could have a broader representation of all the material we have available. Each event that I have attended in the past three years always provided at least two tables for the literature display. The design for the cover on pamphlets was changed to be more attractive. It worked, they are. Not only for AA members but to those who we reach out to – the medical professionals, the corrections professionals and most importantly – to those who still suffer.

Is this job attractive? Yes. Where else we you possibly see the ever-changing yet constant face of AA carry our Primary Purpose than in our literature? In just this past year, we have witnessed the Third Edition of the Spanish Big Book become available, with new stories pertinent to Spanish-Speaking members. We have seen a new edition of Inmate to Inmate being distributed. We now have some of our most popular videos; Hope, Bill's Own Story and Markings on the Journey – placed on CD's rather than VHS. Same message, new format enhancing our ability to Carry the Message into more places.

During this next panel, we will see a new booklet for Native North Americans that simply outgrow the ability to carry the message in pamphlet form. The message got too big.

Some of the most inspiring things to me have been to see our Braille Big Book come out of the dusty confines of the garage and into action at a correctional facility. The manner in which this came about is nothing short of a miracle.

To see a group that ten years ago was too poor to pay attention have the ability and dedication to their fellow alcoholics to contribute excess money to Districts so that they may have more literature to carry into jails and institutions – now that's inspiring.

To watch Districts acquire more literature for their members, for their literature racks and for their servants to carry the message into correctional facilities – now that's inspiring.

To be invited to bring a display to the Spanish-Speaking convention and have no other means of understanding what is taking place except to feel the language of the heart – now that's inspiring.

My biggest inspiration and blessings over these past three years have been the small and seemingly unimportant moments. When a new member approaches the display and sees a piece of literature for the first time, whether it be Pass It On, Living Sober, AA Comes of Age, the pocket version of the 12 and 12 or Daily Reflections. Whatever the material is, the excitement in their eyes as their journey of recovery gets broader – now that's inspiring.

My journey in recovery is vastly richer today because you have allowed me to serve in some small way and to pay back as best I can the life that AA has given me. Looking back over the past three years, there are many faces who are no longer here and many faces who are new. This opportunity has taken me places I never dreamed possible. It is difficult to leave the comfortable job that has given me so much. Yet, I know Sheryl possesses new energy and new ideas and is eager to apply them. I offer her my support and a back brace. I look forward to my next best job in AA.

Thank you for letting me be of service. God Bless You.

Pete G.
Area 69 Panel 57 Standing Chair for Literature.



Thank you Panel 57, all the best to Panel 59!

