

WE GET TO DO THIS

I am a diehard fan of the TV series M*A*S*H, the '70s and '80s show about the goings-on at a mobile army hospital during the Korean War. In one episode a conversation takes place between one of the M*A*S*H surgeons and the camp's priest, Father Mulcahy, in which Father Mulcahy laments the fact that he, unlike the surgeons, doesn't always get to see the end results of his work -- to know whether his efforts were successful or not. He confesses to feeling pretty useless. While those of us in A.A. who reach out to problem drinkers are certainly not priests or other religious figures in real life (well, most of us anyway) it would seem that Father Mulcahy frequently found himself in the same boat as we do. His life's work brought him into contact with many suffering souls and he did his best to help every one of them, but more often than not he had no idea of where they went from there or whether his efforts had made any difference. His satisfaction and fulfillment had to come from giving and not from receiving.

About a year into my sobriety I decided to join my sponsor and a few other fellows at the weekly commitment they had been hosting for a number of years in the Medium Security unit at the ACI. I had often heard my sponsor speak about his hectic Thursday afternoon routine: Hurry home from work to grab a quick bite to eat, then rush back out the door to make it to the prison by the six o'clock starting time, wondering all the while why he stayed committed to this weekly exercise in stress. He would then describe leaving the prison



an hour or so later, "floating half a foot off the ground" and feeling extremely grateful that he had kept the commitment and hadn't surrendered to the urge to blow it off. Once I became active in the commitment I, too, found myself racing

to get to the prison by six on Thursday evenings and "floating out" an hour or so later. And the thing is, I don't remember ever walking out of there thinking that those guys we had just left had damned well better appreciate the fact that I took time out of my busy schedule for them and ran my butt off to get there! In fact, I almost always left there feeling extremely humble and grateful for the time we had gotten to spend with our brothers on the "inside", and for the opportunity to simply sit and listen as these men, who were not going to be allowed to leave at 7:00 when we did, shared their experience, strength, and

definitely hope. Indeed, there were times when seven o'clock rolled around and I realized that I hadn't said a word during the entire hour. (When that happened, one of my fellow group members would turn to me with a wry grin, pat me on the back and say, "Good to hear ya tonight!").

Looking back, I believe that that prison commitment was the first time in my sobriety that I truly began to "get it" when it came to understanding the roles of service and commitment in Alcoholics Anonymous. (I must say that I really miss that commitment and I hope we will be able to start it and our other prison

commitments up again someday before too long).

In A.A. we try to reach out to problem drinkers in many different ways. We greet them at the door, we offer a cup of coffee or maybe a ride or just an ear. We go on commitments to other groups, and to detoxes, rehabs, and hospitals. In non-Covid times we participate in events like health fairs and recovery rallies. We share our stories and pray that something we say might give them a reason to keep coming around long enough to begin to identify with us, to 'get' what we've got, and to join us on our journeys.

During my years of life as an active alcoholic I was one of those who always expected a "thank you" or some other tangible sign of appreciation for my having extended myself to help another person. Maybe my expectation was not a conscious one, but I have no doubt that if I had shown you an act of kindness in some way and you had not responded with an acknowledgement of my goodness I probably would have silently decided to not like you . . . at least for a while. Since becoming sober I have had the privilege of serving in several different positions from the Group to the Area level. Service work, in whatever form it takes, is slowly but surely chipping away at that selfish and ego-driven part of me that expects something in return for something given and replacing it with the simple joy of giving. Well, some of the time anyway. I still have a long way to go. Progress, not perfection.

-Bob H.

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AREA 61 DELEGATE'S REPORT

As the 93 Delegates of the U.S. and Canada prepare for the 71st General Service Conference which will take place in April, it gives me a few minutes to reflect on my first year as Area 61 Delegate. Of course, this has been a year like no other. Last year at this time, no one could have predicted that meetings and conferences would be held virtually. In kind, the role of Delegate has also changed. Instead of meeting my Northeast Regional cohorts once in February (at NERAASA), once in March (at a Delegates reunion) and for a week at the General Service Conference in April, I see them ALL the time, at least a couple times a week. Our work never ends. We are always being asked for input, being asked to speak, being asked to attend, being asked to write something. This non-stop action helped make my 2020 fly by. If I weren't as busy as I was, who can say what kind of state I would be in today? The Service I was asked to provide in the past year was unparalleled in all the previous years of the duties of Delegates and I thank God I was there to do it. I look forward to another year of the same.

On another note, as Delegates prepare for the General Service Conference in April, it gives me a chance to mention our Pre-Conference Assembly which will take place on April 10. We will meet during the weeknights prior to tackle some of the issues facing Alcoholics Anonymous:

SHOULD WE CHANGE THE PREAMBLE?

SHOULD WE BEGIN WORK ON A 5TH EDITION OF THE BIG BOOK?

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH 'VIRTUAL GROUPS'?

SHOULD WE BEGIN WORK ON 12 STEP WORKBOOKS?

SHOULD THERE BE A SEPARATE, GENDER-NEUTRAL BIG BOOK?

PLEASE BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR 'ROUNDTABLE' MEETINGS BEGINNING IN EARLY APRIL, AND GET INVOLVED.

YOUR voice needs to be heard, so I can bring the Group Conscience of Area 61 RI to the Conference. The GROUPS are in charge of AA, but if you don't show up to be heard, then who is really in charge? Don't let a few dozen people decide what's best for AA. Let's ALL work together to decide what directions we think

Alcoholics Anonymous should go in. That's what the General Service Conference is. When Bill and Bob realized they wouldn't be here forever to make decisions about the direction of AA, they devised a system where

the groups are in charge. And you speak through me, the Delegate. I am humbled and grateful to be one of the heirs of Bill and Bob. You have the power to decide AA's future. Please don't throw it away.

—Steve L.

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ZOOM TIPS

Did you know you can move the boxes around on many if not all devices? Just click and hold, then move away. This only works after a certain number of people have arrived. That number varies from device to device. It won't work when someone has their hand raised.

To save battery life, switch to "Speaker View". Your device doesn't have to work as hard keeping track of just one person.

If you have a bad connection, turn off your video when it's your turn to speak. Your audio won't have to share bandwidth with it.

Every Host should assign a Co-Host. This will keep the meeting from crashing if the Host's connection goes down.



Find your people.

Find the ones that make you feel safe. At home in your heart, mind and body. That find joy in your joy.

The ones that “get” that life is hard but also “get” that life is beautiful and will honor both of those realities.

The ones that can handle both your joys and your struggles with Grace and nonjudgement.

Who don't change the subject when you share your excitement, your pain, or try to make you feel bad for expressing your feelings.

People who want to be real and make your heart happy.

These people are out there, your chosen family.

The ones who are present with you and acknowledge you.

I can't think of anything more precious or more worthwhile than connecting with another person who sees, accepts, and loves you for who you are.

I am fortunate to have some of those people in my life. I love and am grateful for you.

I have room for many more.

I am looking for you.

Peace and Blessings, —Linda W.



2021 Rhode Island Virtual AA Convention

March 19-21, 2021

Friday 6PM – 10PM
Saturday NOON – 10PM
Sunday 9AM – 1PM

REGISTRATION FEES:

Register by January 31st - \$10
Register by February 28th - \$15
Register by March 17th - \$20

One passcode per person/household, or device please. You will be asked to use log in under the ZOOM name you have registered with.

Each Registration gives you a pass to attend virtually via ZOOM on all three days. There will be a few rooms open during these times with different events.

Login information will be emailed to each registrant by March 18th. We respectfully ask that you do not share your login information with others. It is imperative to the financial health of the Convention that this request be honored.



For the health & welfare of all of our participants, this years' Convention is being held virtually. As usual, we are planning a fantastic weekend featuring:

- AA Speaker Meetings
- Area 61 Committee Presentations
 - Marathon Meetings
 - Entertainment!
 - Alanon Meetings
- Sobriety Countdown
- And Much More

To register online or view list of events, visit the Area 61 website
aainri.com

**preferred option*

Convention Chair: Mary K.

Email: conventionchair@aainri.com

Registrar: Sandy C.

Email: conventionregistrar@aainri.com

MAIL TO: RI Convention, PO Box 255, Coventry, RI 02816– must be received by March 17th

Make checks payable to "RI Convention"

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

ZIP _____ E-mail _____

Please write clearly as you will be emailed all pertinent information for login. Thank you!