

The County Connection

District 23 - Area 86



Fall Edition
2012



A Message from our DCM

Well, hello District 23, and thank you Dawn for asking to write an article for our "Newsletter". I've had the privilege of working on previous "Newsletter Committees" and it will be interesting to try and put keyboard to paper on some of the duties/responsibilities thus far as DCM.

First and foremost in my mind is that I am an alcoholic, a member of the Penthouse Group in lovely Leamington and lastly my name is Jim. Any further comments are of my own experience, strength and hope.

There are quite a few events and highlights that have occurred during my brief venture of DCM. The overall concept of world service and the magnitude of our fellowship are quite overwhelming. Just think of it, we are worldwide in more than 180 countries with 108,000 groups and we are run by our membership. Our leaders are trusted servants and they do not govern, coming from a management status for most of my working career it is a scary thought indeed when you let the people run the show. Thanks must go out to our co-founders and fellowship for the traditions and concepts to keep us united or at least from killing one another.

The reality of world service really comes to light when one attends an area assembly. By the way are you aware that District 23 is a part of Area 86 and that there is a two year rotation of all our positions, also we are recognized as Panel 62 for this rotation. Assemblies consist of workshops, old and new business, banquet and elections. The elections are naturally held at the Fall Assembly of the second year. The process is very interesting and initially somewhat overwhelming until experienced. There is a "Third Legacy Procedure" that is used to elect the delegate and other positions and can be applied throughout our fellowship where needed and agreed to by groups and their members.

As for our District we have currently a very energetic and good group of individuals serving you. Our groups are the backbone of AA and have been very supportive. We are very grateful for that support and will try to the best of our ability to grow with you. We should have a website by the time this newsletter gets out or shortly thereafter. This is an important step to help communicate and act as an extended hand to carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Even though we are one of the last to initiate this vehicle for our District I believe it will serve us well in going forward. We are to have a workshop with "Bridging the Gap" as its' main theme on September 29th. The focus has truly been driven by the area to help continue with this avenue and this process is going to give the alcoholic initial support coming out of an institution or similar place. This is not a new endeavor but just to get it jump started and hopefully keep some focus on it.

I'm very glad to see different group activities such as breakfasts/pig roast and our District Roundup (that was another huge success) to involve some family members as well as the Alanon family groups. This shows us that it is truly a way of life and a large part of our recovery



I'd just like to touch on inclusivity being the key to our membership. As our cofounder Bill W. noted that we should always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive: let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of A.A. so long as he or she declares.

Remember that we as members are here to recover and that the groups need to step up and be responsible for the safety of their members and the other alcoholic when attending their meeting.

We are vulnerable in many ways and God knows that there is safety in numbers. I believe we are over 2 million members at last count "Life is Good" or should it be "Life is God".

Thanks for allowing me this opportunity to share.

Yours in love and service.

Jim B.

DCM

District 23 Essex County

Area 86 Panel 62



A Word from the One Day Round Up

The Essex County Round up held Aug 4th at the Lakeside Pavilion in Kingsville was yet another wonderful day that brought together the many blessed with the precious gift of recovery including the recovering alcoholics, Al-Anons and Alateens.

We shared fellowship, amazing speakers, fabulous food and good fun, all a testament to the miracle of recovery. Who knew we could have such a great time, when not so many 24 hrs. ago many were living in the great depths of despair.

The Grace of God, the fellowship of AA, Al-Anon, Alateen, and many volunteers are to be commended for all that was brought to this day thereby creating its success and making it special.

I would be remise if I did not mention a great big thanks to those who participated from Windsor in helping us to sell tickets and share in our day.

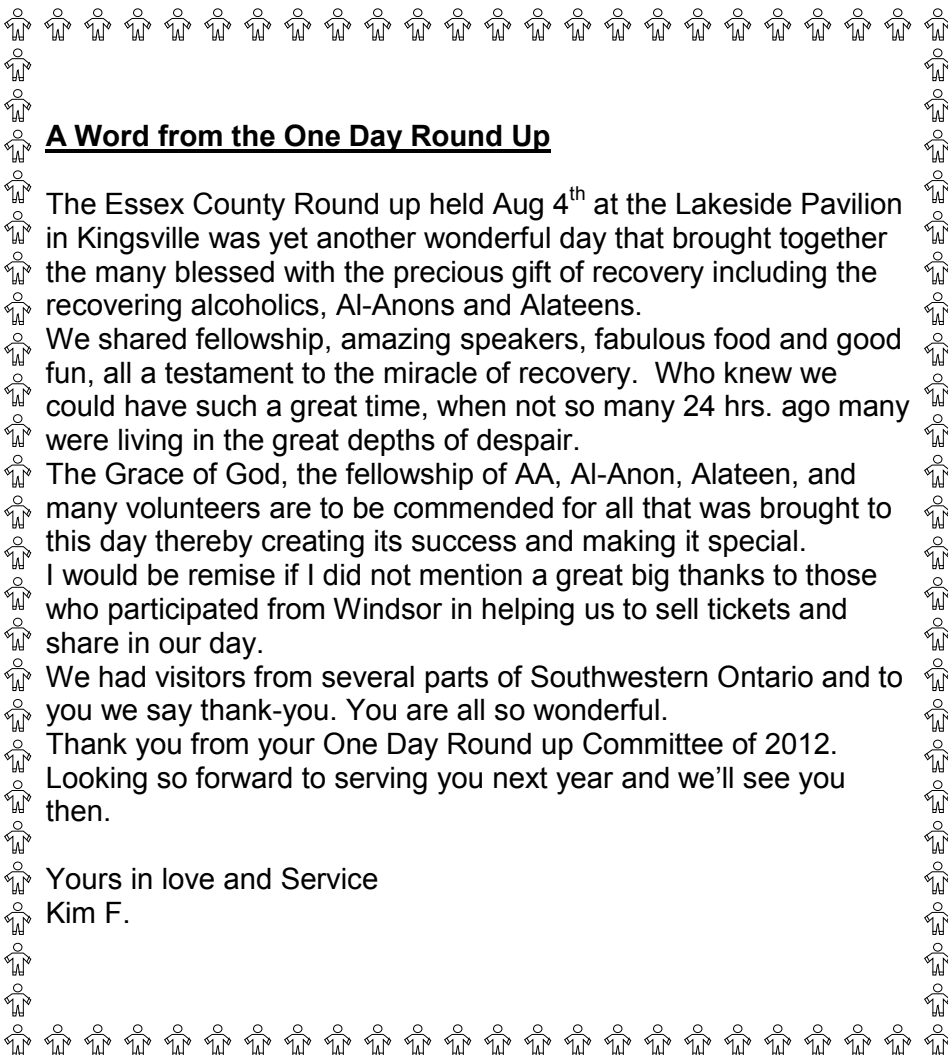
We had visitors from several parts of Southwestern Ontario and to you we say thank-you. You are all so wonderful.

Thank you from your One Day Round up Committee of 2012.

Looking so forward to serving you next year and we'll see you then.

Yours in love and Service

Kim F.



District 23 No Harassment Zone

Know your Rights!

- Right to feel safe
- Right to your personal space
- Right not to be bullied
- Right not to be intimidated

If you feel you are being harassed tell someone you trust. If you see someone else being harassed speak up and tell your GSR.

We are all responsible for making our meetings a
NO HARASSMENT ZONE.



Yesterday.....Today and Tomorrow

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry; two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is YESTERDAY with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. YESTERDAY has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back YESTERDAY. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said. YESTERDAY is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW with its possible adversities; its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control.

TOMORROW 's sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds—but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in TOMORROW, for it is yet unborn.

This leaves only one day—TODAY. Any person can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities—YESTERDAY and TOMORROW that we break down.

Its is not the experience of TODAY that drives us mad—it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened YESTERDAY and the dread of what TOMORROW may bring.

Remembering the "Sacred" Promise

As patients left St. Thomas Hospital, Sr. Ignatia would present them with a Sacred heart of Jesus badge and ask for a promise. Before picking up another drink, they were to return the badge to Sr. Ignatia personally. The badge was a sacred pledge and symbol of the treasure of sobriety. Patients respected the trust Sr. Ignatia had in them and valued the gift as a commitment to stay sober.



"The more willing I become to admit it when I am wrong, the less often am I in the position of having to make such an admission."

*January 1967
From: "Not Under the Rug"
AA Grapevine*

That Angry Guy

He found himself sober but in desperate straits. He took action.

This last weekend I was at the Gopher State Roundup in Bloomington, Minn. Over 8,000 people attend this roundup each year and it can be a bit overwhelming. I haven't been in a few years, the last time I went, there were about 4,500 folks. It just keeps growing. At the Saturday night speaker meeting, we found ourselves without seats in the main room. However, we were grateful that they show all the speakers on the closed circuit TV which you can watch in your bedroom.

Love and Tolerance was the theme this year. I only heard two of the speakers reference it even though a huge banner was draped over the curtain right behind them. Almost every speaker did have one phrase in common though: "but, that's not the miracle..." Each one said it about some part of their journey in recovery and why it wasn't as special as the real miracle. I met with several old friends who live in the greater Minneapolis area and go to meetings up there. It was nice to catch up and re-live old times. Each of them, without mentioning it, reminded me of how pissed off I had been in AA. It really made me remember all the bitterness, intolerance and selfishness that I displayed and honestly felt during the first few years of my recovery. Some people still fondly remember me as the "angry guy."

You see, in early recovery, I still thought I should run the show and believe me, my actors and actresses kept screwing up the production. I would honestly look around the room before the meeting and criticize (in my own head most of the time) what others had done to help set up or get ready, sometimes even what they were wearing. Didn't they know how important this was to me? Didn't they understand how hard I was struggling to just make it through a day. They could at least try to do things the right way. But of course, that was me being my selfish, self-centered, egocentric self and wondering why you didn't realize that pleasing me was the most important job in AA.

At one particular meeting, I was so angry you probably could have toasted marshmallows near me. Other people were not living up to my expectations one more time and I was just pissed. My friend at the time turned to me and said, "No one said you have to stay here." I really needed to hear that and I looked at her, relieved and walked out of the meeting and away from that group, but that's not the miracle...

Luckily, I didn't drink or go postal during this time but I assure you that was probably where I was headed if I didn't find release soon. I didn't know what to believe in anymore, I had seen the program work in other people and knew that something had happened that gave them an entire psychic change, something or someone gave them a solution. I didn't have that nor did I really know how to get that. All I really knew to do was read the Big Book and pray to a God I didn't really want to believe in. That's all I needed to stay sober. I was taking actions that I didn't believe would work. But, that's not the miracle...

For years after leaving this meeting, I would attend meetings but I wasn't interested in sharing my experience, strength, and hope. As far as I was concerned, my experience was flawed, my strength missing and I had little hope. I would listen to people yammer on in meetings about their problems, rarely hearing a solution and sometimes would be so pissed off again that I would stand up and walk out of the meeting.

Sometimes I would walk out just knowing who the lead was, thinking to myself, "that person will never grow or change and I'm not interested in hearing the same crap that they've said countless times before.: That's not real recovery that's just bringing your body and hoping that you learn by osmosis.

I was in double-digit, so-called sobriety and still the angry young man. I was lost and just didn't know it. I had put my Big Book on a shelf to collect dust, hadn't talked to God in quite a long

time (unless something was wrong and I needed a pinch hitter), and wasn't trying to be of service to anyone except myself.

I didn't drink in any of these years, nor take a drug ... but I might as well have. I had the chance to go to a meeting with my friend Suzanne out of state and I spent the whole time obsessing about what they didn't do right that I didn't hear the message. Afterward, Suzanne remarked on the powerful stories of the speakers and I just wasn't at the same meeting – I was still director and my actors were out of control again.

So that's how I found myself on a ship, a cruise ship, looking out over a beautiful starlit sky and thinking to myself "If I just throw myself off that would be the end of it." That thought shook me, how did I get here again, how was I at the jumping off place? I was honestly pretty frightened and avoided the balcony the rest of the trip. I was lost, again.

When I returned home, I sought out help from someone who had what I wanted – serenity. I explained that I was lost and asked for direction and for help finding a path again. I committed myself to shaking everyone's hand before a meeting. I started reading my Big Book regularly again. I sought out Step meetings and examples of service and action. Slowly, I got better.

The miracle is that I asked for help.

The miracle is that I remembered, "Faith without works is dead."

The miracle is that the anger is gone.

The miracle is that I remembered God doesn't make to hard terms to those who seek him.

The miracle is things are exactly as they are meant to be and every once in a while, in the group therapy sessions the locals think is AA, I hear the real message of Alcoholics Anonymous and remember that someone else might be hearing it too.

—James P., Washington, D.C.

