

THE BROOKLYN JUNCTION

Tradition 11

"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films."

November 2015

Does Any of This Really Matter?

Remarks by J. Gary L. from the Past Trustees' Panel (abbreviated) at the North East Regional Forum (NERF) 2015. They were read by the SENY Area Chair at the June 1 Area Committee meeting. We were also privileged to have J. Gary L. moderate our Area Inventory at this past November 7th Area Assembly.

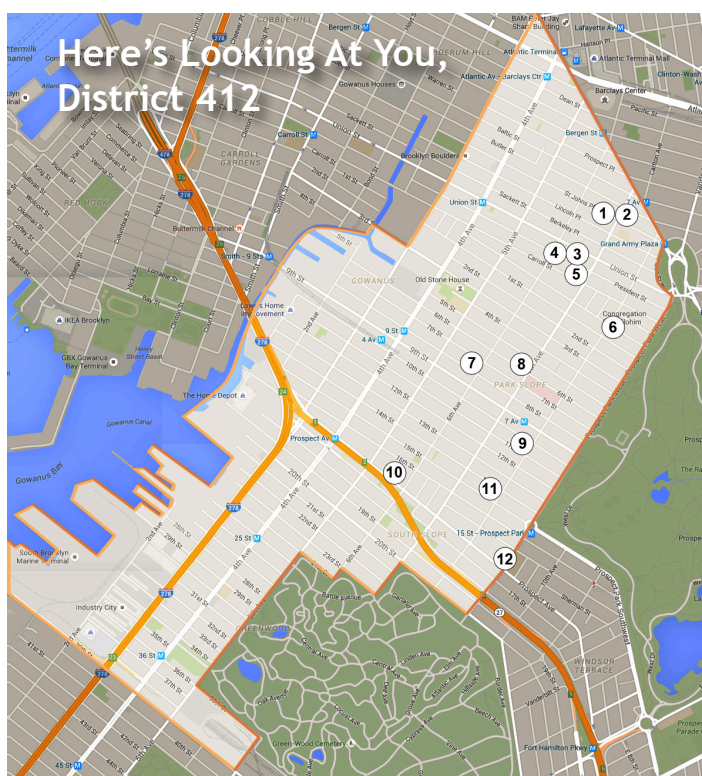
It was my honor to have presented the keynote address at the most recent General Service Conference, and in it, I listed a number of challenges that I felt AA was facing today. Challenges such as: maintaining our singleness of purpose; social media; diversity of our membership in general and our trusted servants in particular; the seeming stagnation of the size of our membership; the technological divide which threatens to polarize our Fellowship; and several others. I left it to our Board Treasurer to talk about the challenges to our principle of self-support, but the one issue that I left out was the disconnect between our service structure and the Fellowship in general.

Now it's a given that everyone in this room knows everything there is to know about our general service structure. But corner the typical member at your Home Group and ask them to explain what a GSR is and what they do. Ask them who *their* GSR is – or if they even *have* one. Ask them those same questions about their DCM or their Delegate.

And if you are tempted to assume that – well, surely the members of the Home Groups of DCMs or Delegates or even Trustees must understand the structure – keep in mind that at a business meeting of my home group while I was still serving as Trustee, the group chair turned to *me* to make the final decision on a particular matter. When I asked her why in the world it should be *my* decision, she said, "Well, you're in charge of AA, right?" And a member whom I had not seen in a while recently asked me if I were still the *president* of AA. So perhaps even those members close to our trusted servants don't fully understand our service structure.

Try asking the typical member how they would describe the General Service Conference to a newcomer. Or what the phrase "Conference Approved" means on *some* of our literature, and why doesn't it appear on *all* of our literature. Ask them what recommendations the Conference made this year – or any year for that matter. Ask them if there are any issues on *their* mind that they feel the Conference ought to give some attention to – and how they might go about helping to make that happen.

And after you've done all that (and are massively depressed over the outcome), ask yourself the big question. Does any of that really matter? Does the "ordi-



- 1: Sunday Solutions
- 2: Sober Living
- 3: Crown Heights
- 4: Happy Hour
A Room of One's Own
Third Step One Flight Up
- 5: Park West
- 6: Park Slope Women's Step
Women's Write Night
- 7: First Step Workshop

- 8: Brooklyn After Eight
Midday Two for One
Our Town
Slope Open Discussion
- 9: Pass It On
- 10: Prospect
- 11: South Slope Solutions
- 12: Hilltop
- ** : Lefferts Gardens (*outside of geographical boundary*)

nary” member need to be aware of any of that? But before you answer, I would invite you to re-read the passage on page S20 of the current Service Manual by former GSB Chair Bernard Smith entitled “Why Do We Need a Conference?” And I think you will agree that in fact all of that *does* matter and folks should be aware of it.

But then ask yourself, who is responsible for this lack of awareness? And the answer, of course, is all of us. How would that “ordinary” member possibly know about GSRs, and DCMs, and Delegates, and the Conference, and what the hot topics are these days unless we inform them. How many of you have heard reports from your trusted servants that sound like, “I went to the convention (or workshop or assembly) and had a great time.” End of report. We joke that GSR stands for “Give Some Report,” but that’s not a report. We also joke that DCM stands for “Don’t Call Me,” but what kind of message does that send?

We have Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity, and Service. Clearly, Recovery is the foundation of our movement. That’s why it always forms the base of the triangle in our circle and triangle symbol. But that triangle is equilateral, making Unity and Service of equal importance to Recovery. And repairing this disconnect between our service structure and the Fellowship in general is a crucial step in reinforcing both of those other two Legacies.

Your General Service Board and your two corporate boards are all concerned with these breaks in our lines of communication. But they alone cannot solve the problem. They need your thoughts, your creativity, your energy, and most important, your *action*. Take what you have learned this weekend and talk about it with your friends, your sponsees, your sponsor. Get folks excited about this world of service within our Fellowship. Tell them what’s going on. Get them engaged. If you think that service is important, and interesting, and exciting, tell your face. Let folks *see* your enthusiasm. Help insure that our Triangle is balanced and strong. And make sure that a healthy, focused, growing program is waiting for that next newcomer that walks through our doors.

Will these actions win you any popularity contests? Probably not. You might even be met by some resistance (or even hostility). The fact is that many of our members simply don’t care about AA beyond their Home Group. But be courageous. If you believe

that these issues are important, be honest and open about your beliefs. I am reminded of words that have been attributed to Mother Teresa: “Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable. Be honest and transparent anyway.”■

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Group Contributions to Brooklyn County can be sent to: AA Brooklyn County General Service PO Box 170582 Brooklyn, NY 11217		

28th Annual BROOKLYN SPIRITUAL BREAKFAST

Sunday, December 6, 2015

9:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Dyker Beach Golf Course
1030 86th St & 7th Ave.,
Brooklyn, NY 11228

Free Parking Wheelchair Accessible

Tickets: \$30.00

For tickets, see your group’s G.S.R. or your District’s DCM.

ALCOTHONS AT OUR FATHERS HOUSE

Our Lady of Victory Church

163 MacDonough St 11216

THANKSGIVING

NOV. 26, 8AM - 9PM

CHRISTMAS

DEC. 25, 8AM - 9PM

NEW YEARS DAY

JAN. 1, 8AM - 5PM

WITH AN OLD-TIMERS MEETING AT 1PM.

Contributions to *The Brooklyn Junction*—be they articles, announcements, poems, haiku, drawings, cartoons, favorite quotations, etc.—can be emailed to:

brooklynjunction@brooklynaa.org

