

A Day in the Life
as Secretary
Cleveland Central Intergroup

I have to tell you that I get a small thrill when I receive a message from Dorothy at our ccioa@onebox.com that there is a request to be added to our e-blast list. I'm not sure if its because I enjoy database work (weird) or if its because I love growing the list of members, but I do get a little too excited when I receive these emails. This will probably be the little thing that I'll miss most when I pass off the secretary position to the next member. Since I began tracking in mid-2022, we've added 62 new addresses, for a current total of 335.

So my day as secretary begins with prayer and meditation, as it says in Step 11, and that actually begins with opening my emails to see what the daily meditation is for me. (That's when I get to see those messages from Dorothy!) I most likely will add the address later in the day. I do my best to not send out more than two e-blasts per month, including the CCI agenda materials – but often there are flyers/events that we need to be sure the fellowship is aware of. I do not like to bombard members in-boxes with a lot of stuff and I often wonder who even bothers to look at the materials – which truly are informative and helpful, although everything is also eventually posted at our oacleveland.org website as well!

According to the CCI Bylaws, the secretary has specific duties, including recording minutes, give notice of meetings, distributing a copy of the agenda, file all resumes of group reps, serve on the Executive Board, etc. (Bylaws, Rev 6/2020). As you are aware, these things I do – some with great delight, i.e., file all resumes. I love to receive a resume (conveniently via email!) to add a new rep to our growing roster – currently 17 registered voters) and then, the best part – I mail them a Welcome New Representative folder! (Old secretaries die hard – but I do enjoy busy work...) I enjoy filling up the bright orange pocket folders with a copy of the CCI Bylaws, Policy and Procedures, Responsibilities of a Group Representative, Committee Descriptions, current roster of committee chairs, copies of the OA Steps, Traditions and Concepts, as well as the Spiritual Principles of each, and, of course, a welcome letter on behalf of the Board. It does make me feel a sense of accomplishment when I do these small services.

As far as minutes – I have never enjoyed these, which were a major function of my 20-year career – however they are a necessary evil. Minutes can be provided in a variety of ways – simple note taking, bullet points – or as I do, recording every bit of business as tho someone who was not in attendance can know exactly what occurred at the meeting. I'm wordy – but that, like it or not, is my nature. As CCI Secretary, I record the minutes for the monthly board meeting (first Monday) as well as the intergroup meeting (third Sunday). These I generally put off until the last minute (again, my nature) but so far I have been able to provide them in a timely manner – as per the bylaws. The terrific thing today is that even if I am unable to attend a meeting, the meeting can be recorded and minutes transcribed from there. One day it will probably be possible for minutes to type themselves. Hallelujah!

When my term as secretary began, the responsibilities were sparse. However, my conscience told me I could take on more and relieve others a bit. So I assumed the task of creating the agenda, which meant I needed to be aware of what should be discussed and get input from the other officers. The Chair

always approves my draft prior to distribution. As our Standing Rules state, all OA members are invited to place an item on the agenda – but it must be submitted in writing prior to the intergroup meeting. Another task that is not included in the secretary duties, officially, is maintaining the meeting list. Currently this is provided by a member of the Twelve Step Within Committee, but I believe this assignment could be revisited.

Speaking of committees – all intergroup representatives are expected to participate on a committee, and this includes officers. I serve on the “Super Committee” – with a special focus on Twelve Step Within. This is very close to my heart, which feels so sad when members drift away. When I entered these rooms at the age of 30, I knew it was the last house on the block and had no doubt that I had come home – so when I see a member “get it” – and then disappear, I am pained. I do what I can, which is simply to reach out and say hello and let them know the door is always open whenever they want to walk back in.

Well, that’s it. I have put off doing this essay (because, as you know, that is my nature) but it’s really a simple service – and doesn’t really take much of the day. Especially when I reach out to my Higher Power and ask Him to take over – and give me the words.

With gratitude and respect,

Jo Aslan – CCI Secretary