



Advice to the Advocacy Weary

Your Annual Advice Column

from Sharon Roggy, District 12 LAA Chairman



Dear Sharon,

Is it just me? Sometimes I'm just overwhelmed by all the evils of the world and paralyzed by the amount of information I receive about them. How can I decide where to put my time and money? What should I do to stay sane?

Advocacy Weary

Dear Advocacy Weary,

No it's not just you—we all have those feelings from time to time. My recommendations are these:

- I. **Prioritize.** Yes, you'll receive more information than you can possibly handle. Decide in advance where you want to put your efforts (at both the individual and club level), and then focus your energies there. You have my permission to “delete” all other advocacy appeals.

2. **Collaborate.** Join forces with others who share your concerns. Look for like-minded women's groups, or those who focus on a particular topic or legislative issue. Add your voice to theirs to maximize the impact of the message you carry.



When it all gets to be too much, pour a glass of wine, run a hot bath, turn on your favorite meditation music and allow yourself the gift of relaxation.

Sharon

Dear Sharon,

My Zonta Club is very active in service efforts but hasn't really embraced this whole advocacy thing. What the heck is the difference between service and advocacy anyway?

Confused

Dear Confused,

I'm glad you asked. Service represents direct help while advocacy is the expression of support for or opposition to a cause, argument or proposal. Often advocacy is directed toward influencing legislation or attitudes. While clubs located in state capitols may have more opportunities to have a physical presence during the legislative process, all clubs and individuals have the potential to express an opinion or urge an action via letters, phone calls and e-mails.

The D12 LAA Committee monitors legislation in each state that concerns women and sends periodic e-mails to inform Zonta members. Each individual and club can then choose to pursue an issue or legislation that particularly interests them.

Occasionally the District will recommend action that can be taken to influence national legislation. This past year we have urged action on CEDAW and the Paycheck Fairness Act and encouraged attention to H.R. 3 which would further restrict women's access to reproductive health services.

Hope that helps clear up the confusion. If not, please write again (SRoggy@comcast.net). I'm always here to help.

Sharon

