



MYNAH BIRD

HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER

P65 Issue #8 April, 2016

Area Website: www.area17aa.org

Articles to: mynahbird@area17aa.org

UPCOMING AREA ASSEMBLIES AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS for Panel 65

(Please purchase tickets early and use the Area's code for Hawaiian Air if you purchase air travel from Hawaiian. It can be found at Area17aa.org)



Committee Meeting

May 21

Waianae District #17

Budget Assembly

August 27-28

Kihei District # 11

Election Assembly

November 12-13

West Hawaii District #8

CONTRIBUTION MAILING ADDRESSES:

Hawaii Area Committee
1253 Beretania St., #2107
Honolulu, HI 96814-1822
(Please include District # and Group name)

General Service Board
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
(Please include group service # and group name)

This, too, is service to AA!

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION:

Pacific Regional Forum
September 30-October 2
Hilton Waikoloa
Annual Hawaii Convention
October 27-30
Hilton Hawaiian Village

PRAASA REFLECTIONS

FROM OUR CHAIR. . . .

Aloha. Thank you for allowing me to attend the Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly for Area 17. Rod, our Immediate Past Pacific Region Trustee compared what happens after PRAASA to rippling circles that travel outward after a rock is thrown into a lake. We all come together and share on various topics. We go home, pass on our PRAASA experiences, and work to create more and better ways to reach the still suffering alcoholic.

The purpose of PRAASA is to develop greater unity among the members, groups and areas of the Pacific Region, to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of AA. The hope always is to foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of AA. The theme this year was "Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Tradition and Concepts." It is impossible to write every thought from all three days, so I'll share what spoke to my heart - hopefully in an even-keeled way. The panels were recorded and many districts and people in Hawaii Area 17 purchased those recordings. If you want to hear more on a specific panel or all of PRAASA, my guess is someone will be glad to lend you the recordings. You'll probably hear ideas that I did not catch, but are important to you.

What I saw, heard and felt...

There are a lot of sober, caring alcoholics in the Pacific Region. Every year, attendees want there to be a representative sample of the many kinds of people, groups and districts we serve. One change I noticed, in the six PRAASAs I've attended - there was a strong Hispanic presence and the voice for Hispanic men was heard. This PRAASA was the first time in my memory that an Hispanic woman came up to the mic, not as an interpreter/translator but as an A.A. member with something to share. She also shared there was going to be a steps and traditions workshop for Hispanic women in her area.

Although we are improving in diversity in our representation, there still is room for improvement. Between panels someone said to me, "You are from Hawaii right? I hope I don't sound prejudice or rude, but how come there are no Hawaiian-looking people from your area here?" I replied that our area has more diversity than she is seeing, and this is the way representation at PRAASA unfolded for us this year. I also let her know, if she comes to the Pacific Forum, or to our Annual Hawaii Convention, she will meet lots more "Hawaiian-looking" people! Although we are all alcoholics first, maybe next year you can help improve diversity at PRAASA. The Friday evening panels were about connecting with the newcomer, with each other and with A. A. as a whole.

Would a plain language translation of the Big Book be easier for newcomers to understand? This would not be a new version or replacement Big Book. Whenever the Big Book is translated, the intent is to translate the words and also the spirit of our original book.

Do we look for newcomers just in our home groups, or do we make an effort to find them other places such as hospitals, correctional facilities or treatment centers? Are we welcoming to all who come through our doors? Do our home groups need to do inventories on how we reach out to newcomers? Although the willingness to get sober has to come from them, the opportunities to create a life better than the way they are living comes from us. One person said, "I respond more to the carrot than the stick." We can all pass on our program of recovery, and create a "culture of service" in our home groups so all feel welcome.

We also heard from the next generation of A.A.'s. The next generation wants to know they are welcome in A.A. They want a sense of fun... because many "would rather die than be boring." Young people feel talked down to when they hear comments like, "I spilled more than... You're so lucky ... You've been spared years of..." They come to A.A. miserable and desperate, and **have** had enough to drink. The next generation wants a fair chance, and to be respected and treated as equals.

What else? Many rely on phones or devices to communicate and seek information. We need to continue to improve the anonymity component while maintaining and improving A.A.s presence on the internet. Many young people want to primarily communicate with their devices. I talked with a long timer about sponsoring the text savvy. She said, "I needs to hear a voice. Texts can be unintentionally deceiving. Texts won't tell me if your voice is quivering or you are about to lose it." We don't want to short change the next generation. It may take time and practice trusting the process, before they become willing to receive help in all the ways we effectively and lovingly pass A.A. on. One long timer put it this way, "My style of sponsoring doesn't seem to be trending right now." Nevertheless, we all receive and pass A.A. on in the various ways that worked best for us.

Saturday morning panels focused on Anonymity, Safety in A.A. and Going to Any Length. Anonymity with (continued on the next page)

each other is always a personal decision. But I repeatedly heard “at the mic,” if we go in the hospital, there are a lot of folks that want to be able to visit, so consider sharing your last name with the people you are close to! Tradition XI and XII point to the spiritual significance of 100% anonymity at the public level, but many are looking for wiggle room and have varying interpretations of what anonymity at the public level looks like, especially when using social media. Asking the question, “Is your home group picture online?” Andrea from Kihei Morning Serenity researched this topic and gave a thoughtful presentation. We are not anonymous at the public level if we post full face photos and full names or if we identify ourselves as A.A. members. The use of privacy setting isn’t as helpful as we may think if we truly want to practice the principle of anonymity online. The internet is a great outreach tool. But, it is the actions of individual that may cause harm to themselves, to others, and to A.A. For an excellent example of how we can provide the most information about A.A. while maintaining 100% anonymity online, please visit www.aa.org

While practicing anonymity to gain humility and protect A.A. from our egos, what are we doing to protect newcomers? What can we do when we experience or witness an uncomfortable or illegal situation? Our General Service Office is not there to set policy or provide protection. It is up to groups and individual members to address these problems should they arise. Many who come to A.A. for help are being harmed or damaged, so it is not OK to look the other way or act as if predatory behavior doesn’t have a negative impact on members... and A.A. as a whole for that matter.

With so many coming to A.A. with problems other than alcohol, their need for A.A. is not always easy to discern. Because it can take some a while to figure out if they need A.A., we need to give time time, practice patience and keep an open mind.

Joel, our current Pacific Region Trustee, gave his report. He reiterated that the intention of any A.A. service is to make sure that “The hand of A.A. is there.” Joel showed us a series of maps that illustrated AA’s expanding presence in the world through the years. These maps showed us the countries where people who are literate can read our message in their language, and this brought tears to my eyes. Through translations, we have carried the message and provide access to our message to more and more alcoholics throughout the world. Although we haven’t completed this task of carrying the message all over the world, I saw clearly that we are close. The next generation of sober A.A.s may be the group of drunks that accomplishes this. It takes our contributions to make this happen. As long as individuals and groups continue to support this work, GSO will not need to cut back services and efforts to do so.

Joel also talked about paying attention to the spiritual component of giving to A.A. Yes, it takes our contributions to make it happen. Is my contribution an expression of gratitude and service or am I doing it out of habit? The money allows us to do the work. If I am mindful, and take the time to know what the work is and is not, it becomes a spiritual opportunity that I benefit from. He asked us to become aware of the services we provide and the hand of A.A. extended because of those services. This information is provided in meetings like this, the Delegate Report back, GSO’s quarterly newsletter Box 459, The Final Conference Report and the other correspondence from GSO. Yes it is important to financially support all levels of service. It is also important to know how our contributions are used to reach the still suffering alcoholic.

Last year, do you remember Hawaii Area 17 agreed with the request for a pamphlet for the LGBT community, and the request for a pamphlet regarding those with mental health concerns? An all call went out to all A.A.s in North America. A.A. members sent in more than 50 submissions for the LGBT pamphlet and more than 150 submissions for the pamphlet for those with mental health concerns.

The three Sunday morning panels were: “What’s on Your Mind?” Which allowed any participant to share their thoughts with us, Past Trustees sharing their thought on “If A.A. could only...” and The Current Delegate’s Panel answering “ask it basket” questions. The Delegate panel is lovingly referred to as “Stump the Delegate.” During most of the Past Trustees Panel, I either cried or felt like crying. The best suggestion I can give you is to borrow the CD and listen to this panel in its entirety. There is too much wisdom, experience, strength and A.A. history to sum it up in one paragraph. There are no few thoughts that stood out. Past Trustees are all quite human, and in very different ways, each one loves A.A. and continues to give her/his best. They expressed gratitude for A.A. and faith in the group conscience.

Thanks for listening/reading. And thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Colleen A

AND FROM A PAST TRUSTEE

MY HOME GROUP

Hi, I'm Ruth and I am an alcoholic. My home group is the Second Edition Group in Las Vegas, NV. It meets 7 days per week at 6:45 AM. I have been a member of this group for the last 13 of my 45 years sober. New comers are welcome and a regular occurrence at our home group, a sign of a healthy group. We welcome any new face, visitor or newcomer, by noticing a new face and going up immediately to welcome them. We have "newcomer" packets for men and women (pamphlets and meeting list) which they get.

We keep a tool box in the middle of the meeting and invite anyone to borrow any book or CD "tool" they may want or need, and return it when finished (except Grapevines or pamphlets which they may keep). We have "cards" with our group address and some of the AA "prayers" we give them also. After the meeting either men or

women surround the person, talk with them, maybe ask them to go for coffee, give them our phone number and just as important ask for theirs. Remember, newcomers and returning AA's don't always feel comfortable calling us.

My group also doesn't "help readers" – or "respond" to readings i.e. "what's the point" or chant after the closing prayer, which may be the Lord's Prayer or Serenity Prayer or Responsibility Statement – chairperson's choice. I hope you look at how your group welcomes, or not, newcomers. If they are not sure what they are i.e. "alcoholic and a ", or maybe just "addict", or don't want to identify as anything – we have no membership requirements other than Tradition 3! Talk with them afterward and explain what AA is and isn't, maybe direct them to the correct fellowship.

Remember AA's PIC and CPC (Public Information Committee and Co-

operation with the Professional Community Committee) go to courts, judges, social workers, doctors etc. to tell them they can send their clients to us. They may have a sheet that needs signing to prove they attended. We sign with first name and initial only – not full name. It is my experience since 1970 that there are fewer and fewer "pure Alkies" especially among younger members. I would far rather have one non-alcoholic come to AA than to ever exclude one. Let's give them a chance to figure out what they are. Most, out of respect for AA, will identify themselves as only alcoholics, eventually.

Know the difference between a group and a meeting – a group has meetings; meetings don't necessarily need to be groups (AA Group pamphlet for more – or the Area Officers.)

Ruth J

Las Vegas, NV

Past Class B Trustee

CHANTING: A MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT?

If the only requirement for AA membership is "a desire to stop drinking" and an AA group's primary purpose is to "carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers," how does chanting and a few other traditions (small "t") fit in? Such as (1) expecting and in some cases requiring or demanding a person identify as an "alcoholic" – and nothing else; (2) passing the basket without any mention of what it is for; saying we are observing the 7th tradition means nothing to newcomers and visitors – why don't we say what the money is for? – rent, coffee, local and national services and visitors and newcomers are asked not to contribute. I used to hear that at almost every meeting; I rarely do now. (3) using a well-known Christian prayer to close a meeting followed by three or four sentences/phrases of "Keep coming back, it works if you work it and you're worth it" . . . , etc. Personally I have no problem with the Lord's Prayer but I have come to realize over the years that our membership includes many non-

Christians and I feel more comfortable with the Serenity Prayer. To me that prayer sends a more universal, non-religious message to newcomers or visitors.

My belief and understanding of Tradition Four is that a group can do many things differently – with an Informed Group Conscience – which means being aware of an negatives it might cause as well as all the good reasons to do it. That includes the second part of Tradition Four of how it effects other groups or AA as a whole.

What message does it send to a newcomer who in many cases is angry and generally not too happy to be amongst us wonderful folk? Especially those over 40 or 50. As a newcomer I would have been very uncomfortable with (a) hand-holding, (b) a chant or chanting after a prayer. What is next? – a secret handshake? Or password? I certainly hope not and if, like me, you feel we may be going a bit too far, . . . choose not to! Close the meeting with the Serenity Prayer. Don't chant, drop hands after a prayer and explain to people next to you. Don't hold hands; step back out of the circle – a prayer can be a very private thing.

But if your group wants to chant and continue to close the meeting with the Lord's Prayer, be sure they and you are aware and comfortable with how it may affect newcomers, visitors, other AA groups or AA as a whole and how it fits our Primary Purpose and what message it sends about us.

Yours in AA Love and Service,

Ruth J—Past Class B Trustee – Las Vegas

May 10, 2003

AND FROM OUR MEMBERS

“Is that Joel from the Young Peoples Meeting?” asked Smitty.

“No,” smiled Mare. “Joel is our Regional Trustee.”

“Our what? Our who?”

At our District meeting last night, it was announced that we will host the Orientation Assembly in January and that Joel C. wants to come!

So, what is an Orientation Assembly? And what is a regional trustee?

In the inverted triangle, our little groups are at the top! We rule!

Below is our District (Kihei). Below that is our Area (Hawaii Islands).

And below that is our Delegate from the islands.

And on the bottom. . . .our Regional Trustee, Joel C. G.S.Rs (General Service Representatives) are your link from the district, area, and New York! We let YOU know what is happening and we let THEM know what is happening.

We Kihei GSRs meet once a month. Then quarterly, we travel to the neighbor island that HOSTS that assembly or WE host it! We work on committees (Archives, Treatment, Public Information, Treatment (and many more). When we go to the yearly Regional Assembly (PRAASA), we are privileged to hear well presented topics that are inspirational, informative, and thought provoking. What a surprise to hear the most recent topics being discussed- should we make the Big Book more RELEVANT? More easily understood? Imagine the discussion! How about social media? Should AA have a Facebook page? What about folks posting their pictures of AA events?

There is something magical about PRAASA. For me, the gratitude towards AA and for the people willing to continue to be in general service is

powerful. Someone was dissing PRAASA to me, saying, 90% of the work gets done by 10% of the people. And? Yes? I feel the responsibility to be part of that.

In January, we do host the Orientation Assembly. Brand new GSRs will attend, some with that DEER IN THE HEADLIGHT look; everything is new and overwhelming. It's a two year commitment but some of us came in halfway through and will continue for the next two years. We will help in any way we can. SO please consider joining General Service. It's an honor, it's fun, it's deeply meaningful, it's important, AND WE GET TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE AA IS AROUND FOR THE NEWCOMER!

Kihei Morning Serenity

The Importance of Service & Willingness

There was an important job to do and "Someone" would do it. "No one" was worried, "Someone" always volunteered. "Everyone" knew that. "Someone" could always be counted on to volunteer. "That job is easy." "Someone" was heard you say. "Anyone" could do it. Sometimes "Someone" said, "That job is hard, it will take a committee." Still "No one" was worried. "Someone" will form a committee! "Anyone" can join! "Everyone" is always welcome.



"Someone" will gather volunteers to help them, get the job done! "Someone" always gets the job done! "Someone" will design the flyers & get them printed & get them out to all the groups. "Someone" will make sure that "Everyone" is informed. "Someone" will welcome the newcomer. "Someone" will tell them "You are not alone, you are in the right place, we know how you feel." "Someone" will welcome the person back who left counting years & came back counting days. "Someone" will tell them that "we missed them & are glad that they are back." "Someone" will see to it that the doors

are open, that the lights are on. "Someone" will make the coffee. "Someone" will set out the literature. If there is to be a potluck, "Someone" will organize it. "Someone" will bring food.

Then the important day came for the big event & only some people showed up. ("No one" got the flyers printed & "No one" got information out to all the groups.) "Someone" said that, "It was probably a good thing." Since those that came, stood there in amazement! Nothing has been done! "No one" had volunteered! Then "Someone" got angry because "No one" did what "Anyone" could have done.

Wolf
5th Chapter, Oahu

REFLECTIONS

C P N C I I Y Y Y O U T H N N
 W R T H G N I T Q L R P O O O
 N I U A J I C I E A Y I R U I
 P N G N Z H B L D F T X E I T
 Y C N T D S K I U A A T M N C
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 I P R N D I R I O A I M C P N
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 A P L I T E R A T U R E I O Z
 P R O F E S S I O N A L S N A
 J N O I T C A R T T A W Z H G

ACCESSIBILITY
 ANONYMITY
 ATTRACTION
 CHANTING
 CONCEPTS
 CONNECTION
 INCLUSIVE
 INSPIRATION
 LITERATURE
 NEWCOMER
 PARTICIPATION
 PRINCIPLES
 PROFESSIONALS
 SAFETY
 SHARING
 STEPS
 TRADITIONS
 TRANSLATION
 UNDERSTANDING
 YOUTH