

AREA 69 NEWS & NOTES

Message from
the editor:

2017 67th General Service Conference (GSC) Theme
“Supporting Our Future”

Dear Friends,

My name is Renae H. and I'm an alcoholic. I am really excited about being your Panel 67, Area 69 “News & Notes” (tri-annual newsletter) editor for the next two years! This edition of News & Notes focuses on the Alcoholics Anonymous 67th General Service Conference theme “Supporting Our Future”, and the discussion/presentation topics as presented at the 2017 “PRAASA” hosted in Sacramento, CA this past March 3-5. The “Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly” (PRAASA) is an annual conference hosted by the Areas of the Pacific Region (PR) of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is made up of 15 Delegate Areas from the states of Utah, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Alaska, and Hawaii. This year, we celebrated 50 years of “Empowering the Informed Group Conscience” with approximately 1,750 registered attendees. The purpose of PRAASA is to develop a 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 A..A.

Participants had the opportunity to experience dozens of wonderful topic presentations ranging from “Supporting Our Future”, including such things as: Supporting our General Service Conference; Seventh Tradition participation; creating safe environments for our Fellowship; supporting newcomers; future literature-too much or too little; future budgets and spending; taking and using our inventory; can our language of the heart grow the Grapevine and La Vina; where does technology and spirituality mix; and this editions' highlighted submission, *“Future Spiritual Awakenings – Will Our Challenges Overcome Our Complacency?”* presented at PRAASA by our own Area 69 Registrar, Devin C.

Many of these topics are derived from the 67th GSC Agenda Item submissions received at the General Service Office (GSO) for fellowship-wide (U.S./Canada) discussion and collective group conscience. At the Area 69 Pre-Conference Assembly, the Group Service Representatives (GSR's) share with our Area 69 Delegate what their groups' conscience is in regard to selected Agenda Items, and how the Utah A.A. Fellowship would like its voice heard at the annual Conference in New York. I hope you will enjoy reading these submissions as much as I did. Perhaps you may want to use some of these topics for discussion in your own home group meetings in an effort to find solutions to some of the challenges and issues facing Alcoholics Anonymous in today's world. Thank you for the opportunity to serve Area 69 Utah.

***“Spiritual Awakenings - Will Our
Challenges
Overcome Our Complacency?”***

Hello, friends. My name is Devin and I am an alcoholic. I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve as Registrar on Panel 67, Area 69 for the State of Utah. Thank you to California Northern Interior Area 07 for hosting this amazing event and for giving me the opportunity to be of service on this panel. Thanks to all of my A.A. friends.

When I read the email asking me to present on this topic, my initial reaction was nervousness, quickly followed by the desire to say “no”, citing how many other obligations I had in my life. That was fear.

The subject itself baffled me. “Future Spiritual Awakenings - Will our challenges overcome our complacency?” Shouldn’t that have been worded differently? Who comes up with this stuff? I wanted control.

***“WILL WE AS INDIVIDUALS AND THE
FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS AS A WHOLE, RISE TO
MEET OUR CHALLENGES OR WILL
WE CHOOSE TO WITHER AND DIE.”***

The next paragraph; “Review appropriate A.A. World Service literature, web sites and 2017 Conference Agenda Items.” So much to read! Have a copy of my remarks by February 27. Two weeks. What an order, I can’t go through with it! Panic setting in.

My friend Doug says fear and excitement feel the same; butterflies in the stomach, sweaty palms, shaking. I should convince myself I’m excited, not fearful. That’s never worked for me.

I had failed to grasp the implications of the first sentence of that paragraph; “Discuss your presentation with your

sponsor and service sponsor....review appropriate A.A.W.S literature...”

My sponsor and my service sponsor. My group, district, area, region, Alcoholics Anonymous World Service. I am not alone. The twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, an effort to practice these principles in all my affairs, and trying to carry A.A.’s message of recovery to alcoholics has resulted in a support system I could have only dreamed of earlier in my life. I am a member of a world-wide fellowship of millions. I can walk into a meeting practically anywhere and feel welcome; to feel support; to feel that I belong. I literally teared up at that re-discovery...that re-awakening. I did what I had done in my first A.A. meeting. I reached out for help to A.A. friends I love and who love me. Perhaps you could say I had a spiritual awakening as the result of a challenge that had overcome my own complacency.

Listen to the twelve steps the next time they are read. You may hear it casually read “having had a spiritual awakening as “a” result of these steps”. Words have meaning. Step twelve actually speaks of a spiritual awakening as “the” result of the steps. Nothing more, nothing less. We don’t get a pony AND a spiritual awakening; only a spiritual awakening. But that is everything necessary to make all other good things in our lives possible.

One of the meanings of challenge is “*difficulty*”. Ironically, and of great meaning to alcoholics. Webster’s Dictionary lists among the opposite of challenge, both “*willingness*” and “*acceptance*”.

Webster’s defines complacency as “*self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.*” Shortcomings, if you will. I was not surprised to find along with the definition of complacency, the related words *self-righteousness; egoism, self-centeredness and selfishness*. Words that are also more than familiar to alcoholics.

When I read the term “complacency”, I was immediately reminded of the phrase “rest on our laurels”. The book “Alcoholics Anonymous” reminds us that to rest on our

laurels and let up on the spiritual program of action leads to trouble because our daily reprieve from alcohol is contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Without that reprieve, we may drink. And readers of the basic text know that “with us, to drink is to die.” If not physically, right away - certainly spiritually.

Therefore, I interpret this question as; “Will we as individuals and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole rise to meet our challenges or will we choose to wither and die.” Can those aforementioned character defects be thwarted by our ability to overcome the challenges we face?

I am sorry to disappoint if you came to hear the answer to this question. Pretending to know the answer with certainty would be vain and arrogant on my part. In the past, both vanity and arrogance were proxies for my fears. I try not to practice them.

Like most things I've learned in A.A., however, I can point you in the direction of the answer. The book “Alcoholics Anonymous” reads; *“The 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are, we A.A.’s believe, the best answer that our experience has yet given to those ever urgent questions “How can A.A. best function?” And “How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?””* The answer to whether our challenges will overcome our complacency lies in our Steps, Traditions, Concepts and our fellowship as a whole.

As I consulted friends, I heard a list of challenges we face as a fellowship; plateauing or declining membership, decreased contributions and book sales, rising costs; the challenges social media presents to our anonymity.

For certain we will not look tomorrow the way we look today. We have never looked at any point in time like we had in a previous time. The fellowship is constantly changing; too quickly for some, too slowly for others.

Challenges are nothing new in the world of AA. Even a cursory read of AA history shows a fellowship fraught with perils and dissolution around every corner. Our original spiritual awakening as a fellowship happened

during the meeting between Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith in the summer of 1935. Never since that day, has AA failed to meet its challenges.

I believe if Bill and Bob were alive today, they would be too busy carrying the message to be complacent.

We should not be defined by our challenges. I am defined by my solution; by the design for living given to me by the program and members of Alcoholics Anonymous, not by my alcoholism. We should be defining what our challenges really are. Is A.A.’s challenge plateauing membership, or is our challenge how to best carry our message of recovery to those we do attract? Acceptance is not complacency.

Nor should seeking spiritual awakenings be a goal. Rather, we should always work to be in that fit spiritual condition that will allow us to be of maximum value to God and our fellows. We may never achieve the fullness of what the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous has to offer. Nor should we want to, for that would mean we are done growing spiritually and that would be sad indeed.

So, back to the question; “Will our challenges overcome our complacency?” I have continued to have spiritual awakenings in my life. I know many others have. You yourself may well experience your own spiritual awakening here [PRAASA]. How could you not; surrounded by this spirit of service? If the challenges of our members can continue to overcome their complacency and offer them spiritual awakenings, surely, our fellowship can. We, as a fellowship, however, are the only ones who can make the answer to this question a resounding “Yes”. Thank you.

2017 GSC Presentation/Workshop Topics

Growth:

- 1. Diversity-Outreach and Attraction***
- 2. Safety—An Important Consideration***
- 3. Communication—Today and Tomorrow***

Participation:

- 1. Fellowship vs. Membership***
- 2. Leadership: “I am Responsible...”***
- 3. Is Your Voice Heard?***

Contributions:

- 1. Spirituality and Money***
- 2. Fully Self-Supporting***
- 3. Apathy and Power of the Purse***

PRAASA 2017 Experience---Wade J.

Delegate's Report

March 2, I flew into Sacramento and made my way over to the Hotel to check in, and after that I made my way over to the Thursday early PPAASA AA Meeting. It was so nice to sit in a meeting with my friends from Utah and others from the other Areas, and to feel the Spirit that each of them brought to the meeting.

After a well needed nights rest I woke up and as I was getting ready for the Assembly, and as always I felt the spirit from Area 69, and once again I was overwhelmed with the gift I was given to represent this wonderful Area.

Friday morning I was part of the Panel 67 Delegate Presentations and we shared a little about our Areas and some of our challenges. There were great presentations throughout the rest of the day. At dinner time, I had the gift to share dinner with 14 of my Utah AA family and what a great time I had sharing dinner and stories with them. Friday evening we did roundtables until 10:30 and I had the privilege of being part of the Delegate's meeting. The Panel 66 Delegates were amazing getting the Panel 67's ready for the Conference.

I was given the opportunity to do a presentation on "Is the Hand of AA Always There for the Alcoholic Inmate Who Reaches Out for Help?" Thank you for the gift. As I get ready for any presentation, I get the gift of reflecting on my past and seeing the hand of my Creator changing my life through the program of AA. I attended 2 Delegate Roundtables Saturday - one at lunch and the other late at night.

Sunday was amazing as always, listening to the "Open Mic" ("What's On Your Mind?") time, and the Past Trustees' Reports are one of my favorite parts of the weekend. I

PRAASA 2017 Experiences---Jolene H.

Here are the things that I learned at my first PRAASA and items that stood out and caught my attention.

"Supporting Our Future", opinions from each of the speakers ranged from supporting AA through the 7th

would like to thank the Area for another blessing you gave me to be your Area 69 Delegate at PRAASA.

PRAASA 2017 Experience---Ben H.

I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to attend the 50th Anniversary of PRAASA in Sacramento, CA. I enjoyed the Unity, Recovery and Education of being a part of service. I enjoyed the "Roundtables" for GSR/DCM, but I learned most about CPC and how to work with professionals for more outreach.

The panels assisted us to understand a lot about the growth of our fellowship. "Supporting Our Future" panels, helped me with understanding the diversity and challenges that we experience in our rooms.

District 2 purchased the CDs of "PRAASA 2017" and our District Archivist is willing to check them out so that everyone can have the opportunity to hear the PRAASA information and experience.

Every year I go to the PRAASA Pacific Region, I am able to find a new development of knowledge to bring back into service to A.A. and to others. The unity of people coming together to help support our future in A.A. is truly unbelievable. It is putting the "upside-down triangle" into action.

Thank you all for letting me be of service and to attend "PRAASA 2017". I am looking forward to bringing back the message of recovery to District 2 and future new comers.

With deepest hope and love,

Ben H. DCMC / District 2

1935 - \$1.00

Remember inflation when deciding upon your 7th Tradition Self-Support Contributions for:
- Group Meetings
- Birthday Gifts
- November Gratitude Month

2016 - \$13.00

Tradition basket donations, home groups, districts, Areas, and the new comers by reaching our hands out to them. "We all support AA in our own ways, when sharing talk about not only how AA has changed our lives by not drinking, but what services means and how it fulfills your sobriety and life."

The topic **“Supporting a Safe Environment for Our Fellowship - What Can My Home Group Do?”** It is very important that our groups have a safe environment for the members. *“Our”* means you, me, the new comers, the old timer, the drunk, the dry drunk---anyone that has the desire to stop drinking. We [need to] follow the rules of the place we have our meetings. For instance, does the club/meeting place have rules about smoking areas, dogs being allowed or not, etc. “Help the new comers to feel they have walked into a safe environment when they come into our meetings.” We all need to work together to protect everyone that walks through the doors.

“Our Anonymity, Your Anonymity, or My Anonymity - Does Social Media Count?” The speaker discussed how people will say something on Facebook breaking their own anonymity and breaking the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Another example mentioned; “I started a new life a few years ago, and I am grateful for that life.” And then someone might break *that* person’s anonymity by saying something like, “Thank God for A.A.”

“Future Literature Requests and Revisions - Are We Doing Too Much or Too Little?” Changes in Alcoholics Anonymous are made to help us grow. Tradition One talks about unity and carrying the message. “General Service is about Tradition One and Step Twelve”.

DCM Round Table Discussions/Sharing Session (Notes)

- * Identify position and area when sharing, about 150 people attended.
- * How to encourage participation in service?
- * Third Legacy positions in the district - encourage the groups to participate.

- * Keeping records about the meetings that you support.
 - * Ask the group if they feel their opinion is important?*
- Develop a relationship with the people in the groups you visit.
- * Asking groups to host district meetings.
 - * Focus on groups that do not have a GSR.

On the “Taking Our Inventory” Panel, one of the speaker’s main topic was **“How is the General Service Conference Inventory Being Used to Help Our Fellowship?”** Embracing more methods of communication, having conference calls, a dashboard for our delegates so they have access to the agenda items so they can distribute them to our servants in Areas, Districts, GSR’s, and most important, to the groups for votes.

“Love and Service” topic: **“How Can Our Language of the Heart Grow Grapevine and La Vina?”** “Has one purpose - to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic.” A petition to publish La Vina was presented in 1995. Having representatives in our home groups will help improve the subscriptions of Grapevine and La Vina. The digital Era will also help improve the message.

“Is the Hand of AA Always There for the Alcoholic Inmate Who reaches Out for Help?” Taking the message to jails or prisons - treating the people like they are a part of instead of separating them. Helping the inmate when they first get released - help with getting them to a meeting within in 48 hours. Active “Bridging the Gap” program is an important program for helping them.

“Will a Service Sponsor Help You Grow?” “Sharing experience, strength, hope and responsibilities.”

(Continued next page)

LEARN MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN
UTAH AT:

www.utahaa.org

(Continued...)

“Carrying the Message” topic, **“Do Young People Feel Part of AA or Do We Need to Work on Inclusivity?”**

Pacific Regional Trustee Report to the Assembly

Notes: “Utilize your alternates, don’t forget the unity of the program. Never forget about the triangle of service, draw the connections of that and unity.” “Local Forums” help to produce unity with the Conference Committee.

Translations of the “Big Book” are continuing and being published. Currently translated in 70 languages (including English); reaching out to the Indian tribes, like Navaho. New audio versions of the “Big Book”, “Living Sober”, and the “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” are being created.

I had a wonderful experience with the people from Area 69 that attended this year.

Thank you District 11 for supporting me at this event, I will never forget this experience.

Love, Jolene H.



PRAASA 2017 Experiences---Matt D.

My PRAASA experience. There is a rumor that area officers fly first class to these events. Let me put this rumor to rest. My seat on the plane was as far from first class as it could have been. We were in the very last row. I’m sure you all know what I’m talking about - those seats that we all look at and say, “my seat is better than yours....at least I can recline.” Some of the other fun of traveling...we picked up a rental car and started to make our way to the convention center. I asked for help with directions, not remembering that I had three alcoholic women and Siri giving me directions all at once. Traveling can be fun.

This year’s panelists were very good. It was a treat to see our own Devin C. present on “Future Spiritual Awakenings”. He did a wonderful job even with all of us sitting up front trying to ice him out. The Round Tables this year started kind of late. I attended the Corrections Roundtable. It started at 8:30 and was chaired by John W. (Area 69 Corrections Chair). I have not been involved with corrections, but with our Delegate assigned to this committee at the Conference, I thought that I should at least get my feet wet.

Saturday started early. The girls and I had breakfast at McDonalds, and with coffee in hand, off to more great panelists. Saturday morning I had the opportunity to moderate one of the Panels - another chance to get behind the podium. Even with the rotation of being the Area Chairman under my belt, the microphone and standing in front of a large body of people still scares me.

I met with all the Pacific Region Alternate Delegates for lunch and we started discussing subjects that all areas have in common. There has been talk in our area about a 501c3 for the IRS. This, of course, is over my head but I tried to gather as much information as I could for our Treasurer. We also discussed service event insurance. (No Fault/Liability coverage.) This has come up at our area also, and I think it is something that we need to look at more closely.

After the PRAASA Business Meeting and before the Banquet, we all gathered up to have a group picture. Historically, it is the responsibly of the Alternate Delegate to arrange the place and time to have this taken. I think the spot worked out great, and if anyone would like a copy of the picture, come see me.

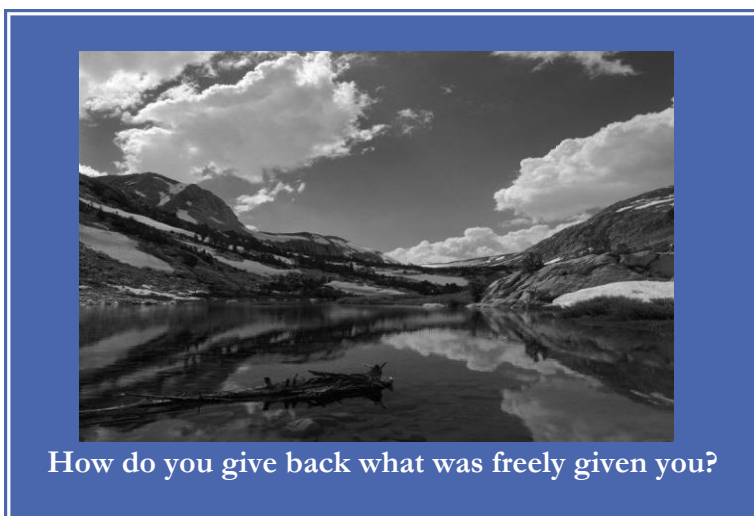
The Alternate Delegate Roundtable was at 9:30 Saturday night. I can't lie---I was spent by then, but I was sent by you to attend and represent Area 69. I'm glad I stayed up. We discussed some great issues like the cost of stamps; one area's Treasure will bring the thank you letters and receipts (received from Group Contributions) to the next service event instead of mailing them, in order to save money. One area shared how two or three of their districts will get together to host an Area event. That is something that we could try, and maybe get some of our other districts involved.

I could go on and on. What a wonderful experience. PRAASA always recharges my service batteries.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Matt D.

Area 69 panel 67 Alternate Delegate



How do you spread the message of hope, recovery and unity to those beyond your home group? Are you ready to be of service on an area level? Contributing to the Area 69 News & Notes publication is a rewarding way to be of service and to share with fellow members around the state. Simply contact your newsletter editor, with your article or photo by emailing:

area69immediatepastdelegate@utahaa.org.

Upcoming Area 69 General Service Events Through November, 2018

UTAH AREA 69 CALENDAR OF EVENTS As of April 2017

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| April 7-9, 2017 | Pre-Conference Assembly | District 5 | Price |
| April 22-28, 2017 | General Service Conference | | New York |
| May 19-21, 2017 | Post-Conference Assembly | District 1 | Ogden |
| June 10, 2017 | Bridging the Gap Workshop | District 11 | Layton |
| August 19-20 2017 | Pre-Assembly Workshop | District 10 | TBD |
| September 8-10, 2017 | International Bridging the Gap | | Minneapolis |
| September 22-24, 2017 | Fall Assembly | District 2 | SLC |
| November 5-6, 2017 | Fall Workshop | District 7 | Cedar City |
| December 3, 2017 | December Committee Mtg | District 10 | SLC |
| February 24, 2018 | February Committee Mtg | District 11 | TBD |
| March 2-4, 2018 | FRAASA | Area 42 | NV |
| April 6-8, 2018 | Pre Conference Assembly | District 3 | Provo |
| April 22-28, 2018 | General Service Conference | | New York, NY |
| May 15-20, 2018 | Post Conference Assembly | District 4 | Filmere |
| June 16, 2018 | Bridging the Gap Workshop | TBD | TBD |
| August 18-19, 2018 | Pre Conference Workshop | TBD | TBD |
| September 2018 | Pacific Regional Forum | Area 6 | San Jose, CA |
| September 21-23, 2018 | Fall Assembly (Area Elections) | TBD | TBD |
| November 3-4, 2018 | Fall Workshop | TBD | TBD |

Note: Area 69 News & Notes newsletter is published by Area 69. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of A.A.W.S., nor does publication of any article imply endorsement or affiliation by A.A.W.S. or Area 69. Contributions from A.A. members are welcome and will be printed as space allows. Submissions must be e-mailed and include the writers' contact information. Submissions may be signed with first name and last initial. Anonymous submissions will be published but the author's contact information must be included. The editors reserve the right to edit contents for length, clarity, and their relation to the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. An effort will be made to contact the author regarding content changes. This e-mail/newsletter including any attachments are confidential.

Please respect the anonymity of others when sharing this publication.

