

# Area69 News &

Volume 2, Issue 4

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I first attended PRAASA in 2005 in Tucson, AZ. I was a DCM of a large District in Oregon and deep into the process of re-districting. I didn't really know what PRAASA was, just that it was an AA regional event that sounded big and busy. I was reluctant to tear myself away from my pet project, and the duties of administering 70+ groups, but the GSRs of the District were sure I needed to go. I asked my alternate DCM, Chris, to come with me, mostly because he was my husband, but I wanted someone else to help shoulder whatever burden I'd gotten myself into.

My vision of AA had been expanded when I attended my first Area Assembly, I was not prepared for the next expansion. I couldn't believe that AAs would fill up the grand ballroom that was ready and waiting at the hotel. But they did. And easily. The excitement and buzz was contagious as the 1,300+ servants arrived. There was a sense of a reunion, a reconnection, people knew each other and hadn't seen each other for a year, there was much hugging and shrieking.

I'm not really the hugging and shrieking type, so I sat quietly and observed, and listened intently to the well researched speakers, talking about issues that were important. I was so glad that the content was not fluff, it had substance and relevance, it increased my knowledge and improved my effectiveness.

Even though I was getting lots from what I was hearing, I was somewhat puzzled by why this event was occurring. I knew the Conference was soon, but I hadn't put the two together. I couldn't figure out what I was supposed to be doing, no one was asking me to DO anything. By Saturday afternoon, Chris and I were reaching satu-

ration, no more information, please! We decided to duck out and visit a local tourist site, the Mission San Xavier del Bac. We figured the spirituality of the place would cancel out any guilt of skipping a round table. We arrived to find a Native Pow Wow happening on the church grounds. The ceremony was not open to the public, but we could see some serious gathering going on, a little dancing, a little drumming. There were booths in the parking lot with food and art. We decided to tour the church, then the booths.

We were impressed by the frescoes and statuary inside, but more stunned by a connection we made outside. We had our tacos in hand and were roaming the aisles when a particular table caught our eye. An older woman was sitting behind boxes of framed drawings. We started flipping through them and one caught our eye, a picture of a bottle in the weeds, captioned with a quote from the Big Book. We asked the woman if she were a friend of Bill's. She said, "Oh not me, that was my husband. These are his drawings. He's dead now, but he used to go to those meetings. He never could stay sober." We told her we were in town for a large AA gathering, and she said, "Send somebody over to the reservation, we need you!"

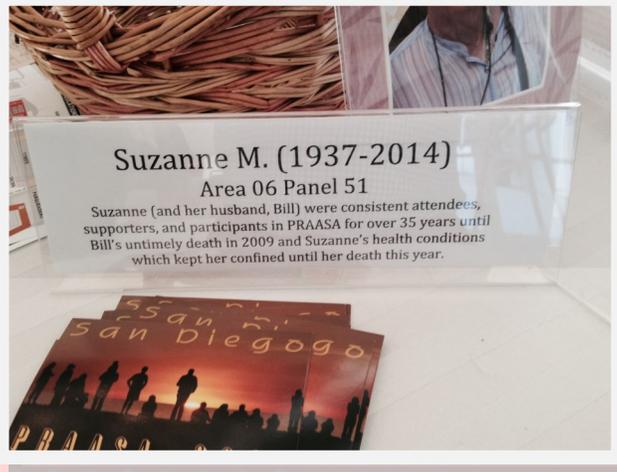
Chris and I returned to the hotel, just in time to stand in line for the banquet. We were still wondering why we were there, what this was for, somewhat dismayed at spending our District's money on something so frivolous, and wondering how we could get someone over to the reservation, and how long are we going to have to stand in this line, anyway? We were last in line, until the next person came to stand behind us. Glancing at his name

tag, we saw he was from Tucson. We launched into our story of the reservation needing AA, he seemed to know all about it and assured us someone was going out there.

We continued to chat, and when he learned we were from Oregon, he got very interested. He told us he had been a Delegate there and had gone on to be a Trustee. He had resigned his Trustee position, but he was still active in Tucson locally. We were almost speechless at the odds of standing next to a past Trustee, from Oregon, no less, until one of us saw our unique opportunity of asking a real pro and said, "What is this for?" His surprised response was, "This? You mean PRAASA?" On our affirmative reply he said, "Oh, this is for the Delegates. They're going to New York soon, and this event helps inform them." Oh. Duh. We were able to see this event in a different light, a little brighter with a lot less resentment.

We have continued to attend PRAASAs, not every one, but many. We even helped host in 2007, and will get the same opportunity here in 2015. I have become a hugging shrieker, and so happy to see people return, year after year, even when they have rotated out of their service positions. I was shown at that first PRAASA that I am part of a great whole, that I don't necessarily have to know what anything is for, that there will always be someone who can explain it to me, that I just have to show up and stay put, and that the loving hand of a power greater than myself will always provide.

Wendy W.



Good afternoon family, my name is Doug and I am an alcoholic, I currently serve as Alternate Delegate Area 69 (Utah), Panel 63. My sobriety date is January 14, 1983.

I wanted to start out by telling you a little about myself. I was born and raised in a tiny little town in western Montana named Stevensville, population 700 hundred. Its main street is three blocks and there are five bars. Five thriving bars.

To show you how far I've come I remember walking down one side of Main Street and seeing someone walking towards me who I thought might say hello. I was so scared of people that I walked across the street and started walking the other way! And today I'm speaking in front of a thousand or more! And I'm excited to be here!

When my sponsees tell me that they are nervous about speaking or doing some other service that they have to be in front of people I always suggest that they be excited rather than nervous. It is the same thing only being excited is much more fun!

Think about it. What happens when you're nervous? You get a little sweat on the palms of your hands, your heart beats a little faster, and you have a feeling of anticipation, something is going to happen. So what happens when you're excited? You get a little sweat on the palms of your hands, your heart beats a little faster, and you have a feeling of anticipation, something is going to happen. Oh my goodness it really is the same thing, only much more fun! It's all in the way you look at it, your perception.

I would not have been able to see things that way without the program of recovery that we all know and love. It literally has taken that battleground, where I'm either attacking or defending myself to a classroom where everything is a gift. Everything is a lesson that I can learn and grow from. I remind my

sponsees all the time how blessed we truly are.

But I digress.

My topic is "The Connection between the Conference and the suffering alcoholic."

Short answer: "Absolutely nothing! They are completely disconnected from one another." Oh wait a minute. That would have been my answer years ago. Actually if you would have asked me this in my first year of sobriety my question would have been "What's the Conference?" At that point I wasn't concerned about anything but my own ability, or inability to stay away from that first drink.

Things like the Traditions, and the Concepts where of absolutely no interest or concern. In fact anything outside my home group didn't mean anything.

When I was three years sober they were just forming the Corrections committee in Utah and a friend of mine convinced me that they couldn't possibly do it without me. I eventually agreed to see what it was all about. They met twice a month and I went for about a month and a half. All I saw where these alcoholic egos clashing and snarling, snapping and biting. I finally told my friend that if I kept going to those meetings I was going to drink. So I quit that committee and for the next seventeen years I did my service work in my home group.

When I had 23 years of sobriety I was elected as my group's GSR and I heard that the Area had just approved the creation of an area website. Since that's what I did for a living; website development and applications, I made my way to the southern Utah where they were holding the Pre-Conference Assembly. I was blown away with the committee process. In fact that is where for the first time I saw God's conscious being expressed. I fell in love with the committee process, I was elected as the Area's first Web-

servant and have been involved in General Service ever since. In fact the lady that was conducting that committee became my service sponsor. I still blame her for all the joy I've experienced, thanks LeAnn!

But I digress again!

After that experience and learning about our Traditions, the Concepts and the General Service structure my perception changed a great deal.

Today I would say that the only reason A.A. is still here, still reaching out to the still suffering alcoholic is because of the conference, the entire structure that was sat in motion in 1950. In my opinion there is a direct connection between the Conference and the suffering alcoholic.

I want to conclude by reading a part of a section of our service manual on page S20 called, "Why do we need a Conference?" which was originally a part of a talk giving by the late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, the then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, who answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: "We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life."

Thank you for letting me serve!

Doug R.  
Alternate Delegate  
Area 69 (Utah), Panel 63



## **PRAASA 2014 San Diego**

### **Is General Service becoming its own fellowship?**

**Hello My Name is Kristen and I am an Alcoholic. My sobriety date is April 14, 2006. My home group is The Primary Purpose Group. We meet on Monday Nights at 7:00 in Layton Utah. Come and visit when you're in town for next year's PRAASA.**

**My topic tonight is "Is general service becoming its own fellowship" I hope to be able to answer that by sharing my experience and journey here in Alcoholics Anonymous.**

**When I first came into the rooms of AA, my first thought was I just need to stop drinking and my life will get better. I started attending meetings every day, sometimes two times a day. I started to feel comfortable in the rooms and with the few people that I had met. I heard that I needed to get a sponsor and work the 12 steps. I had a women offer to be my temporary sponsor. She started to take me through those and she explained that there are 3 legacies and without all 3 legacies I would be like a 3 legged stool trying to work with only 2 legs. She helped me get plugged into a Home Group and suggested that I be the group's secretary. She also took me to one of the women's treatment centers. I fell in love with the women in that treatment center. Most importantly I fell in love with feeling of serving others. The fact that I got to go into the center once a week and share with these women the program that saved my life meant the**





**Is General Service becoming its own fellowship?** *continued*

that I fell in love with. I walked away from the excitement of belonging to a fellowship that truly understood why I loved serving others. I became very humbled that night. I went back to that home group and made an amends to them. I remember feeling that warm fuzzy feeling. It was that same feeling I had when I first walked into the rooms of AA for the first time. I was home. There was a new rotation at the district which meant all new people starting new positions. I happen to run into the DCMC at a meeting. I asked him if he had any positions available. He said he did. It was a DCM position. I became very excited and incredibly nervous. This time the difference in my attitude towards service was that I knew deep down inside that this time it was life or death. I remember going to the district meeting and once again I found myself qualifying for the position. My hands were shaking more than when I first came into the rooms. They once again welcomed me back. During my term as DCM I had the honor and privilege of representing my district at the special forum in Woodlands Hills. Here I was full of fear about the unknown and once again I was greeted with a warm welcome. I was on the edge of my seat. I was trying to learn as much as could. I remember the feeling that came over me when I saw all the Big Books translated into so many different languages. AA is so much big-

ger than my little area of Utah. I had so many questions and it was suggested that I get a Service sponsor to guide me through this journey of service. I have a wonderful couple who continues to guide me through this amazing journey.

I am not sure if General Service changed that day or if it was my heart. To me it really does matter. All I know today is that without service I would be dead.

You know my topic for tonight's panel is ... "Is General Service Becoming It's Own Fellowship" I want to scream absolutely not. We are all one of millions who have recovered from a hopeless disease of mind and body. However, I can see how some people might think that general service is a completely different part of AA. When I look back at my journey I can see everything happens for a reason. GOD makes no mistakes. GOD showed me that day what I needed and that was to be of service to Alcoholics Anonymous. So I make it my mission to share all of the wonderful things I get from serving others. I really believe it is everyone's responsibility to invite and share this wonderful experience of service within this amazing fellowship.

Thank You



## PRAASA 2015 UPDATE

### Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

Welcome to 1830. That is the number of people who registered for PRAASA 2014 in San Diego, California March 7,8,9 2014. 1830 sets a new attendance record for PRAASA. Everyone reading this article is invited to join the Utah Area as we host PRAASA 2015 in Layton, Utah at the Davis Conference Center. Our dates are March 6, 7, & 8 2015.

Our PRAASA 2015 host committee has been quietly working behind the scenes to help make PRAASA happen in our area. Many of the chair people for 2015 were able to meet with their counterparts in San Diego and share experience, strength and hope as we prepare for a Twelfth Step call from our Region. We will need many more volunteers during the PRAASA weekend to help our guests find their way around and answer questions. There will be signup sheets circulating so we can find out who is available to help. Everyone who volunteers will have to plan on registering for PRAASA. Right now registration information is under development & more will be revealed. In the meantime take some of the post card invitations that are being circulated at Area events and hang them on bulletin boards and other sites where our Fellowship may see them. You can photograph the invitation with your Smart Phone and send our invitation virtually everywhere. The front of the post card gives event location, the back is hotel information.

Please help us announce this PRAASA opportunity and invite our Fellowship by writing notices for your local Newsletters, web postings, or other methods within the Fellowship from now through February 2015. We won't get another chance to host PRAASA for 15 years.

In gratitude with love and service,

Monte S. Chair PRAASA 2015

Hi, I'm an alcoholic and my problem is Kim. I have gone from a being a GSR for my home group to a DCM SW for district 7 in less than 3 months. Wow I guess I've been called to serve. Being in service in our vital changing world makes me feel extremely grateful in this beautiful life God has placed me in. I put alcohol and other substances on my body to make me feel good. I don't have to do that today thanks to the people in AA and my Creator. I have found my happiness right inside my heart. I have attended many assemblies and conventions since getting

sober and have learned what and how service has helped AA as a whole. I have learned about service, to give back gratefully was has been given to me. I attended PRAASA this year in San Diego and it was awesome. I even got to vote! That was so cool representing area 69!. I am here today because I have been given a second chance in life. I was diagnosed with a fatal lung disease in 2010 and thought I could heal it myself. I didn't. I had surgery Nov. 2013 that removed the blood clots from my lungs and I am a walking living miracle today thanks to my

Creator and doctors that healed my lungs completely so I can give back my experience, strength, and courage to any one who is suffering today. I am living in gratitude today and am so ever grateful for my Creator at giving me a second chance to live the life He has in store for me. I am here with my Creator helping to heal the world one day at a time.

Aho, my friends, aho. Washte,

Thank you,

Kim K.

DCM SW District 7



As a new GSR, I always thought the Guardians of the Traditions were those that sat in the front of the rooms. When questions arose, the answer was forthcoming and invariably made sense once it was explained. We are forever in the debt of those stalwarts that had the experience and the love for the program to keep Alcoholics Anonymous on a course that was straight and true.

In addition to death and taxes, it seems that rotation is inevitable. The faces at the front of the room change but the issues with the Principals remain the same. Good Service Sponsorship helps to keep the collective knowledge intact. When an issue arises, many tools are there to aid the new navigators through the currents associated with the Fellowship. Other tools, call them collections of wisdom if you wish, are available. Guidelines are excellent tools. Meeting minutes can aid in the solution. Ad hoc committees can be formed to study issues in-depth to provide information on an issue.

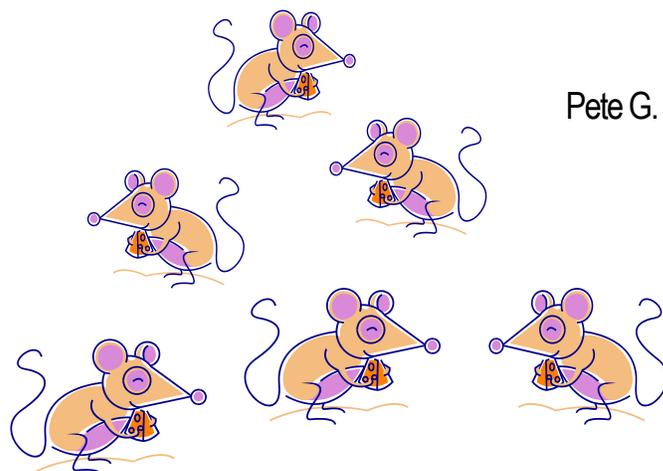
A wise ex-officio once told me that a knee-jerk reaction in AA can take up to five years. The meaning behind this is that nothing happens fast in our Fellowship. We take the time to listen to all opinions, gather all the facts and seek out some answer or course of action that will enjoy the broadest support possible from those who will be affected. In this way we come to a substantial unanimity, which is a mouthful for 'most everyone agrees in part, if not all'. A common phrase for this is 'we can live with it'. In our Fellowship, we must be able to live with it or some may go back out and die because of it.

These days, having spent time 'at the front of the rooms', I realize the most effective Guardian is not just located at the front – it is a combination of all the wisdom throughout not only the rooms, but the Groups. After 75 or so years, few problems are truly new. When the Traditions are challenged in some way, it is typically a known problem using a different disguise. Today's social media

anonymity break is akin to yesterdays misguided newspaper article. Today's Revolving Door is akin to yesterdays Golden Slippers. Today's Thirteenth Stepping is akin to yesterdays ...hmmm... Thirteenth Stepping. Well, some things never change I suppose.

Once a year, the Delegates gather to discuss, vote, table, amend, appeal and report. Much of our service effort is devoted to sending an informed Delegate to the General Service Conference and we eagerly await the report on the results. Have no doubt, these are Guardians of the Traditions. Every day, every week, the other Guardians are at work in meetings. The true strength of AA is in the groups that keep the doors open to the newcomer. These groups Guard and preserve Our Traditions. An hour of sanctuary, a season of Steps, a lifetime of growth are the visible and accountable results of this Guardianship – this Stewardship.

Yes, we owe a lot to those at the front of the rooms. Yet, at any time, you may find yourself at the front, under the spotlight, expected to have the 'right' answer. The well-being of others may well rest upon your shoulders. When that time does come, you can rely on the lessons and wisdom from those who have gone before and realize that we are all Guardians and that we do not have to do it alone. If you find yourself alone, remember that it is not important which mouse gets the cheese but it is important that we all have a chance to nibble.



Pete G.

## PRAASA – HISTORY and AREA 69

As early as 1955, Stan W., then Conference Delegate from California Northern Coastal Area, spoke to the other three California delegates about holding a state wide conference of some sort, but no agreement could be reached among the four, and the plan was abandoned at that time.

1967, Mrs. Pat S., Delegate from the California Northern Coastal Area. During the annual meeting in New York in April of that year, she spoke to the other four California delegates, but the only delegate to express interest in a statewide conference was Ken K., for California Northern Interior Area. However, in further discussions, Paul R., Arizona Delegate and Les E., Nevada delegate, expressed interest in holding a three-state conference to discuss General Service matters.

Upon her return to California, Pat S., immediately contacted Stan W.. Stan had served as secretary of the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous for several terms and was thoroughly familiar with putting on special conferences, assemblies and other special events. Pat asked Stan if he would act as general chairman and put together a three-state conference, including Arizona, Nevada, CNCA and CNIA. Pat S. and Ken K. volunteered to act as co-host for such an event. While this conversation was going on Edward D., delegate for Oregon, wrote to ask if his state could be included in such a conference.

Stan W, agreed to act as general chairman and was enthusiastic about putting together a special assembly in early 1968; however, he suggested it should include all states and/or areas within the Pacific Region. He contacted all delegates within the Pacific Region with the exception of Idaho (this was an inadvertent oversight). He received an immediate reply from Ralph B., delegate from the State of Washington, and gradually received word from all delegates within the region, including Alaska and Hawaii, expressing some interest in participating. Stan there upon set out to produce the first regional AA Service Assembly. It was held January 26th – 28th, 1968, in Fresno California. 1969 the second one was held in Reno, Nevada.

At the 1970 assembly, the Western General Service Assembly was changed to the Pacific Region AA Service Assembly. The PRAASA rotates throughout the Pacific Region; it is an annual event, held the first weekend of March.

PRAASA's are a great way for the Regional Service people to meet with The General Service Office personnel and become better informed.

Utah Area 69 had the honor to host th 8th PRAASA, February 28th, March 1st and 2nd 1975. It was held at the Roadway Inn in Salt Lake City. Bill T. –Chairman. There were seven panels plus the Saturday night speaker meeting, the Sunday morning meeting and the Ask-It-Basket. The speakers for Saturday night were Shauna S. Centerville, UT, Alateen; Holly C. New York, NY (Al-Anon Family Group World Service Office), Al-Anon; and Margaret C., Agawam, MA (United States Trustee), A.A. Al-Anon held their own meetings during the weekend.

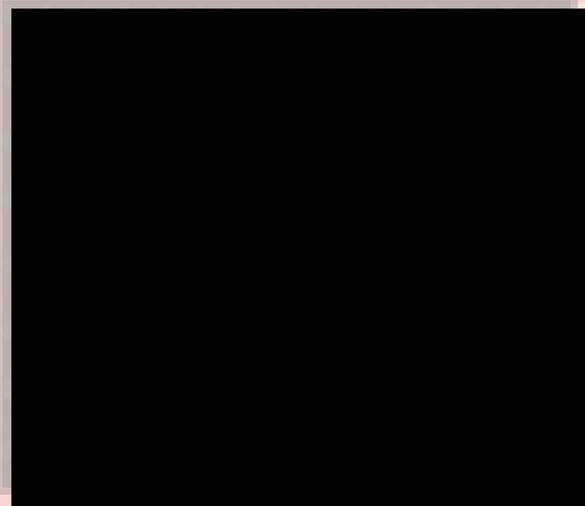
21st PRAASA, Salt Lake City – March 4, 5, 6, 1988 at the Hilton. There was a definite problem finding qualified volunteers to be the Chairman. Past delegates were unavailable and others didn't have the necessary experience as specified in PRAASA Guidelines. So, we began with co-chairmen: delegate Terry A., Panel 37 and a volunteer who was willing and had attended PRAASA before. Due to many problems with unity throughout the area, the delegate found it necessary to ask the co-chairman to step down. After a committee discussion it was decided that the delegate would act as chairman. A kick-off meeting was held on Thursday evening and was attended by over 100 members. Also that evening there was registration for 2 hours. We used over 500 room-nights at the hotel which covered Wed. through Sun. there was an overflow into other hotels because of over bookings.

33rd PRAASA, March 3rd, - 5th, 2000 in Ogden, Marriott Hotel. Tom F., Panel 45 Past Delegate chairman. That year we had a unique committee that not only included a past delegate as chairman, but also included Panel 39 delegate, Patti W. as co-chair and Panel 47 delegate Rod B. as program chair. Mickey H. our current Panel 49 delegate, served as our advisor. The rest of the committee consisted of a group of enthusiastic and strong service oriented members of A.A.,. The vast majority of the committee members had attended multiple previous PRAASA's. The committee worked in cooperation with the Al-Anon co-chairs, so they could plan their activities without causing conflict. Bob P. Past Delegate, Past Trustee and Past General Manager of GSO to be the Sat. night speaker. Also invited Jim C., Pacific Region trustee and Greg M., the General Manager of GSO to attend. Pacific Region Delegates encouraged us to stay as close to the Conference agenda items as possible. 16 rooms were assigned for roundtables and we would be using all the meeting rooms available at the hotel. Total of 793 participants; 739 Alcoholic and 54 Al-Anon.

PRAASA is the opportunity to receive an enormous 12th step boost from the rest of the Pacific Region. The biggest gift, is the gift of involvement. PRAASA affords us the opportunity to participate in an intimate way with others who understand the importance of not only the 12 Steps of Recovery and the 12 Traditions, but the 12 Concepts as well. I have had the privilege to attend several PRAASA's and always come away better informed and with feelings of gratitude.

This is a brief summary of PRAASA history from our Area 69 Repository Archives

Submitted in love and service, Janet H.



## **PRAASA, A Place in the Sun.**

Descending the stairs to baggage claim I saw a woman holding a PRAASA sign. It was a welcome sight!! She was friendly and informative. "Welcome to PRAASA!!" The entire weekend was invigorating while still being informative and exciting.

In no time at all, I was at the hotel checking in and seeing old friends. I hadn't even made it to my room or the registration area and there were two members from Area 69. The next 3 days were packed and I hope to convey a humble feeling of gratitude for the opportunity to attend. There was so much love for AA and 12th Step Work that I hope to convey a part of that feeling.

The first night was the Early Bird Meeting. This was a good time to familiarize myself with the facility and speak with the Registration Chairperson. There were probably about 15 members from Area 69 already present. The floor mikes were opened up for all who wished to share. The following day was the official opening of the weekend events.

The Welcome and Orientation took place at 11:45 Thursday morning. Panel 1 was the Pacific Region Delegates. It was shared how service to AA is countless hours and life interruptions. When you have a service commitment you are constantly giving up time you may want to spend with family. The re-

ward is having AA there in the future for our children, grandchildren or the alcoholic who is still wandering around in the dark looking for hope. It was emotional for me knowing the truth in these words. My daughter had just decided alcohol is a problem for her.

The service part of PRAASA focused on carrying the message of recovery through our Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Warranties. We can each share how service, our third Legacy, has skyrocketed our sobriety into the 4th Dimension. It is essential that we use the three legs of the stool; Recovery, Unity & Service. AA is so much bigger than ever imagined when sitting in that first meeting. It is necessary that once we recover from the illness of mind and body that we share this amazing journey. The spirit of AA can flow through the entire fellowship but words alone cannot express the "feeling of gratitude". We are all in service for the "LOVE" of AA.

The Pacific Region Service Assembly ensures the continuation of AA, which saved my life. Each of us has a responsibility to give back for unity. We are the linchpin of AA and that together we are stronger in our common efforts. Doug R. spoke that this is not to ensure my recovery but for the alcoholic who may not yet be born. Again, I thought of my daughter and the hope I have for her finding this program. Doug R. also spoke about perception. Perception is

one of my favorite shows. Each member can choose their own perception of events, ideas and feelings. If I feel shaky and sweaty, I can choose to feel like I am suffering or I can choose to feel excited. I can choose whether to feel like a victim or a survivor. To me, everyone committed to a service responsibility is a survivor. Look what it took for us to make our journey to where we are in our lives today!!

A speaker shared on changes in AA. I have learned nothing changes in AA overnight. It usually takes 7 years. I learned that the By-laws have been amended 14 times which demonstrates that change in AA is possible [S-16]. Bill W. said "we will resist change because of fear". Alcoholics will resist change until we are persuaded of the need for change. Things that don't change become irrelevant? There are some things in AA that shouldn't change such as our Steps, Traditions, and basic core principles. We all have a voice but the common desire is to protect our Primary Purpose.

The great part of service is that it doesn't matter if you have 3 years or 30 years, we each have a voice. Service work is humility not superiority. It is not ego control but brotherly love. The group conscious is a partnership. Ego is superiority, anger, willfulness, and selfishness. Humility is being a part of the solution and experiencing spirituality. Concept 4 talks about responsibility from

growth. If we encourage each member to feel and act as a part of the solution, we cultivate encouragement, hope, and love which begins a process from selfishness to selflessness. We learn to give of ourselves. The Steps treat the disease but the Traditions teach us to unite as members.

There is no way to share all the enthusiasm and love of service that I felt. There were a couple things that really stood out to me that I wanted to pass on. First that anytime there is a controversy in a group, district or area - that is a great opportunity for growth. None of us are perfect – WHAT AN ORDER. I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT!! We can learn to share a spiritual experience with acceptance, tolerance and flexibility. The group conscious allows for love of others and demonstrates our Higher Power in action. The Traditions and Concepts should always outweigh the big shot egos. Our common welfare should come first. Critics can be our benefactors. If we say they are wrong, we miss an opportunity to

grow and maybe the motivation to serve a greater good. Recovery is what we do. Nothing else matters.

General Service is a “we” program. It is not about me, myself and I. It is about what is the greater good for AA as a whole? It is not important who does the job but that the job gets done. No one person can tell another member what to do or not to do – that takes a group conscious. Is it Service to AA or Love of Serving AA? There is a difference between serving AA while looking for power and prestige versus loving to serve AA and being of service – tolerant, humble, grateful and patient. In our 12th step work we should all be “stretching” out our hand to the alcoholic still suffering.

When Rod was given time to share, he made us cry and laugh. It was bittersweet to listen to him at his final PRAASA as the Pacific Region Trustee. There was a great slide presentation showing where his travels as a Trustee have taken him. My favorite slide was the one showing when he was nominated by Area 69

as the candidate for the Trustee position. Rod has been an inspiration for living a spiritual program and he has been an example of humility in action. I feel blessed to say he is from Area 69. I am excited that we will host the 2015 PRAASA. I feel sad Rod will not be the Pacific Region Trustee at that time but perhaps he will be able to just enjoy the event.

This has been a short summary of my 15 pages of notes. I hope I have conveyed my experience with love and passion for AA service. I want to end with a familiar quote. A miracle took place in my life this morning. I woke up and said “Good Morning, GOD” instead of “good God it's morning”. Thank you for sharing and supporting my journey of recovery and service.

Treesa Jerman

Area 69 P.I. Standing Chair



# VISIT

For news,  
information and  
calendar of service  
events

I am so grateful for A.A. and for my sobriety. Because of the tremendous efforts of our Founders and the early beginnings of this great Fellowship, we have a design for living which gives us a choice over alcohol. Without the continual vision, action, and sacrifices demonstrated by the early members of A.A. to meet the many difficult challenges necessary in forging a path through which recovery, unity, and service could be experienced by so many suffering alcoholics, I don't know where many of our lives would be today—or worse, how many of us would have already met an alcoholic death.

I was able to attend the 2014 Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA) hosted in Area 08, San Diego, California, during the weekend of March 7-9, 2014. PRAASA, along with all other Regional, Area, District, Group, and the week long Delegates General Service Conferences in which the business of A.A. world-wide is conducted—are gatherings in which we as A.A. members work together in continuing to improve our efforts in reaching the still “stumbling-in-the-dark” alcoholic who has yet to reach our doors, and how to continue to preserve the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions in an ever changing world and technological environment.

How are we doing in attracting the newcomer? Welcoming the newcomer? Inviting the newcomer to stick around long enough to get a full understanding of his or her alcoholic condition? It's been my experience that the Third and Fifth Traditions seem to always be at the forefront of topic presentations and discussion at all levels of General Service events, including all the way up to our own individual Home Group discussions, business meetings, and inventories.

PRAASA activities include many “Panel Presentations” throughout the weekend, giving all attendees the opportunity to participate in discussion and questions at the microphone following each. This year included 6 Panel Topics, each having 4-6 individual presenters on specific subtopics: “The Upside-Down Triangle”; “Communicating our Legacies/Living in the Heart of A.A.”; “Communicating Our Legacies: Sharing About Service”; “AA Takes Its Inventory, Year Two”; “Communicating Our Legacies: Sharing About Unity”; and “Communicating Our Legacies; Sharing About Recovery”. In addition, there were two separate Pacific Region Delegates panels; “Highlights of the Pacific Region Delegate Areas”, and the “Delegate Ask It Basket”. And finally—always my favorite—the “Past Trustees' Panel”, held on Sunday morning. This is where we got to hear sharing from 9 Past Pacific Region Trustees who have served at least a 4 year term as General Service Board members.

I was deeply impressed by the love and concern that each expressed for not only Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, but also for the way in which we as A.A. members are welcoming and reaching out to the newcomer, particularly, the one who doesn't quite know yet who and what they are and identify themselves as something else other than alcoholics. This sentiment echoed throughout the panel during their sharing, resulting in a strong message of personal and fellowship-wide responsibility to please let our new members stick around long enough to find out and gain an understanding of what their true condition is. What I heard translated into love and tolerance, patience and understanding, and “reaching out the hand of A.A. to anyone, anywhere” who is still suffering. It is my opinion that by participating in these principles at a personal level and within our own home groups, we may make the difference as to whether a new member stays—or if they go away—possibly dying from an “alcoholic-and-a.....” condition that we may have helped them find a solution for had we not been so self-absorbed in our “proper semantics” and our own level of comfort/discomfort in having an “and-a...” attend our A.A. meetings.

My home group is a closed meeting of A.A. Over the years we have had many loving discussions of how to, and who's responsibility it should be, to maintain the "integrity" of a closed meeting. A number of old-time members believed the responsibility should be that of the group chairperson as they had dedicated themselves to a two year term when they were elected for that position. And so it was written in the groups service guidelines. I have experienced, to my horror, the chairperson cutting off a new person from sharing, sometimes politely, but more often, abruptly—outright asking the individual in front of everyone, if they have a problem with alcohol—and if so, they may continue to share. I have seen newcomers so embarrassed by this that they would literally shake and sweat as they tried to finish sharing and then left the meeting.

My home group holds its annual steering committee meeting to talk about the group's format and our officer's duties and responsibility outlines—making adjustments as needed— and to take our Group Inventory. About 6 or 7 years ago, as one of the results of our inventory, the group conscience led us to add to the chairperson's responsibilities and guides, verbiage to the effect of—"we will not interrupt a persons' sharing during the A.A. meeting"—but rather, we as home group members, will gently talk to the newcomer after the meeting and help guide them in determining whether they may be interested in attending any of our "sister-fellowship meetings. However, even with this practice in place for quite some time, "all bets are off" sort of speak when the sharing begins, because none of us really have any control of what others may say or do.

Several years ago, we had a young man come to our meeting along with another young man who had been attending our home group for about 4 months. They arrived late to the meeting missing the AA birthday celebration portion. Near the end of the meeting, the new comer raised his hand and apologized for being tardy, but wondered if he could share is 60 day birthday with us. Everyone was excited for him and encouraged him to go up and get a birthday chip and "tell us how he did it". You could tell he was just so nervous, but proud of his accomplishment. He introduced himself by his first name followed by "and I'm an addict". Then he proceeded to tell us that he wanted to come to our group because his friend that had brought him there, had felt so welcomed by us (the group) in the several meetings he had attended here already. So far so good, right—most of our home group members weren't overly concerned about how he introduced himself. About this time, someone in the back of the room spoke out saying, "I thought this was a closed meeting for alcoholics only". If you have ever been to a meeting where something like this has happened, you know the truly sinking feeling that confrontation can facilitate in that moment. The rest of the meeting consisted of cleverly disguised shares loaded with opinions from both sides of the spectrum, giving rise to total chaos, and morphing into something other than an A.A. meeting.

I did not see either of the two young men at our meeting again until about one month later. The one who had brought the 60 day sober fellow, attended one night. Near the end of the meeting he shared about how the friend he had brought to our group a few weeks ago, had felt so unwelcomed in A.A. because of that experience, and furthermore, the friend didn't think that there was a solution or a place for him in recovery. He shared that his friend was found on a street corner dead from an overdose a week ago. This young man did not return again. What a devastating wake-up call this experience was for us all. Sometimes our manner of communication isn't always in our words...it speaks volumes through our actions. The physical and mental torment that this disease inflicts can be harsh and deadly. I am reminded through that experience, that my actions and words may be the only example of Alcoholics Anonymous and the "Big Book" a newcomer might ever get to experience.

Is it possible, as individual members and as groups, that we could give a little more pause toward how newcomers introduce themselves—with the understanding that our halls may be the last hope for many of them? My hope is that we all can extend the hand of AA long enough to reach out to the person who introduces themselves as an "and a..." that they will have a chance to find for themselves what we have found here. God Graced us all with a "beginning in recovery", and I pray that we will not be careless with his gift to those who are new to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Anonymous

# Message from the Editor:

My name is Keith and I am an alcoholic. Being the News and Notes editor is wonderful, I get to read all of our uplifting articles and all the real work is being completed by Christy R. our trusted servant from District 10. She completes all the layouts, formatting, graphics, and editing. The theme for this issue is "Solving Problems by Better Communication." My current Area 69 Utah service assignment is immediate past delegate and it's busy. Service for ad hoc or standing committees involves lots of communication. Some of these committees are employing new modern technology, the conference call. Ok, new to me. This has created new communication challenges. The bold older members of the committee speak-up and are always heard; however, the newer more timid members are not speaking-up. It seems at times that you almost need to interrupt to make your point. Another concern is all the visual parts of communication are lost, smiling, frowning, smirking, etc. I prefer face to face committee meetings which is part of the most basic fundamentals of our fellowship. AA began with one to one face to face sharing and I hope it will always be our primary means of communicating. The practical advantage of conference calling is overwhelming and we need to improve techniques to make it function better. It is common for travel of all committee members to a one hour meeting to include over 12 to 15 hours of drive time and possibly an overnight stay for some of us. Good communication involves a lot of work. Our fellowship has a long history of excellent traditions that improve good communication:

- 1) respecting individual opinions,
- 2) sharing one at a time,
- 3) asking for input from all members of the committee, regardless of experience, length of sobriety, service position, etc, and
- 4) democratically voting of all committee recommendations.

Substantial unanimity within our committees is a wonderful principle and makes our fellowship uniquely

qualified to solve problems which all occurs with better communication.

How can you give back what was so freely given to you? Write an article. How do you carry our message of recovery beyond your home group? Write an article. If you are a trusted servant in General Service, share what you are doing, write an article.

Contributing to the Area 69 News and Notes publication is a rewarding way to be of service and to share with fellow members around the state and region. Simply contact your newsletter editor or email your article to [area69immediatepastdelegate@utahaa.org](mailto:area69immediatepastdelegate@utahaa.org) or [keithm@montach.com](mailto:keithm@montach.com). Area 69 News and Notes newsletter is published by Area 69. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of Area 69 or A.A.W.S., nor does publication of an article imply endorsement or affiliation by Area 69 or A.A.W.S.

Contributions from A.A. members are welcome and will be printed as space allows. Submissions must be emailed 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 major content changes. *This email/Newsletter, including any attachments, is confidential. Please respect the anonymity of others when sharing this publication.* Thanks to those that contributed to the writing, editing, and production of this edition.



Keith M.