



MYNAH BIRD

HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER



★★★ PRAASA 2008

Special Edition ★★★

Schedule of Events PRAASA 2008

Thursday March 6, 2008
 8:00 am - 9:15 pm Kickoff A.A. Meeting, Eng** Hilton, Birch/Willow Room
 Kickoff A.A. Meeting, Spanish** Hilton Board Room

Friday March 7, 2008
 8:00 am - 8:00 pm Registration Egan Center, Summit Hall
 10:00 am - 11:00 am A.A. Meetings**E/S Egan Center, Summit Hall
 12:45 pm - 1:00 pm Welcome Egan Center, Summit Hall
 1:00 pm - 2:05 pm Panel 1 Egan Center, Summit Hall
 2:05 pm - 2:15 pm Break Egan Center, Summit Hall
 2:15 pm - 4:15 pm Panel 2 Egan Center, Summit Hall
 4:00 pm - 4:15 pm Break Egan Center, Summit Hall
 4:15 pm - 6:00 pm Panel 3 On your own
 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Dinner Break See menu in registration packet
 7:30 pm - 9:45 pm Roundtables

Saturday March 8, 2008
 7:00 am - 7:45 am A.A. Meeting**E/S Egan Center, Summit Hall
 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration Egan Center, Summit Hall
 8:00 am - 9:45 am Panel 4 Egan Center, Explorers Hall
 9:45 am - 10:00 am Break Hilton, Birch/Willow Room
 10:00 am - 11:45 am Lunch Hilton, Aspen Room
 11:45 am - 1:00 pm Panel 5 Al-Anon Lunch Hilton, Spruce Room
 Delegates Lunch Egan Center, Explorers Hall
 Past Delegates/ Trustees Lunch
 Panel 6 Pacific Region Egan Center, Explorers Hall
 Trustees Report/ Business Meeting Egan Center, Explorers Hall
 Break Egan Center, Explorers Hall
 Banquet Egan Center, Explorers Hall
 Speaker Meeting See menu in registration packet
 Roundtables

Sunday March 9, 2008
 7:00 am - 7:45 am A.A. Meeting**E/S Egan Center, Summit Hall
 8:00 am - 9:00 am Sharing Session - What's On Your Mind? Egan Center, Summit Hall
 Break Egan Center, Summit Hall
 9:00 am - 9:15 pm Panel 7 Past Trustees Egan Center, Summit Hall
 9:15 am-10:45 am Break Egan Center, Summit Hall
 10:45 am-11:00 am Ask It Basket Egan Center, Summit Hall
 11:00 am-11:50 am Delegate Panel Egan Center, Summit Hall
 Closing Egan Center, Summit Hall
 Wrap Up Session Egan Center, Summit Hall
 1:30 pm

2:15 pm Panel 2 - Communications Within the Fellowship
 Moderator: Matt E. (93) CC
 Reader: Sophie K. (42) NV
 Timer: Chase B. (58) OR

Topics:

- 1) Communicating the importance of the service structure -- a personal responsibility. Gus P. (58) OR
- 2) Our three legacies -- are we carrying this message through sponsorship? Pat B. (06) CNC
- 3) Sharing the message of service - what are our tools and resources? Doug R. (69) UT
- 4) On-line Intergroup (OIAA) -- Who, what, when, where and how? David A. (58) OR
- 5) Preserving our history - Would the fellowship benefit from making Archives a Standing Conference Committee? Joe B. (08) MSC

4:00 pm Break

4:15 pm Panel 3 - Participation
 Moderator: Suzette C. (03) AZ
 Reader: Marlon T. (42) NV
 Timer: Padee McC. (06) CNC

Topics:

- 1) Supporting the home group's participation in general service -- each member's responsibility. Duane M. (92) WSE
- 2) What is an active, committed home group member? Annis F. (72) WW
- 3) How does the general service structure support my 12th Step call? Dee P. (03) AZ
- 4) In considering a service commitment, when is it my responsibility to say no? Nick H. (17) HI
- 5) From GSR to Trustee -- Selecting our leadership with care Melodie T. (07) CNI

6:00 pm Dinner Break

7:30 pm Roundtables Menu provided in registration packet

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2008

8:00 am Panel 4 - Unity
 Moderator: Maria O. (05) SC
 Reader: Kevin D. (93) CC
 Timer: Sue Ann W. (02) AK

Topics:

- 1) Unity at the home group: the group inventory. Russ D. (09) MSC
- 2) The A.A. Member -- Medications and Other Drugs** David F. (18) ID
- 3) What principles, whose personalities? The 12th Tradition in action. Carol B. (42) NV
- 4) When is an A.A. meeting not a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous? Is there a standard to adhere to? Robert H. (93) CC
- 5) How do we build a strong committee structure, from the Group to the District to the Area? Harriet V. (72) WW

*Presentation topics drawn from 58th GSC Agenda

9:45 am Break

10:00 am Panel 5 - Self Support
 Moderator: Gene A. (18) ID
 Reader: Heidi G. (17) HI
 Timer: Reggie F. (72) WW

Topics:

- 1) Making an informed contribution - knowing Karen F. (18) ID
- 2) Self-support -- more than just money. Jay B. (05) SC
- 3) Supporting ourselves -- supporting Grapevine Juan M. (05) SC
- 4) Are technology skills becoming a requirement? What are the risks? What are the responsibilities? What are the benefits of funding the GSO solely contributions outweigh the risks? Torvald H.
- 5) Would the benefits of funding the GSO solely contributions outweigh the risks? Torvald H.

11:45 am Lunch

1:00 pm Panel 6 - Communications with the Home Group
 Moderator: Richard K. (08) SDI
 Reader: Jeff O. (06) CNC
 Timer: Keith S. (09) MSC

Topics:

- 1) What example are we setting in our community home town a respected community member?
- 2) Reaching out to youth -- how can we work with schools? Rad M. (92) WSE
- 3) Bridging the Gap to Treatment and Correction meets service.* Gail N. (08) SDI
- 4) Public Service Announcements -- are they an effective tool? Dennis W. (03) AZ
- 5) Why will we invite non-A.A. speakers to participate in the International Convention at A.A.'s expense? L.

2:45 pm Break

3:00 pm Trustee's Report Madeleine P., Pacific Region

3:30 pm PRAASA Business Meeting
 Chairperson: Phyllis H., Past Pacific Region Secretary
 Secretary: Jo B., PRAASA 08 Secretary

5:00 pm Break

6:30 pm Banquet - Egan Center Explorers Hall

7:45 pm Speaker Meeting - Egan Center Explorers Hall
 Chairperson: Dave M. (02) AK Reader: Marlon T. (42) NV
 Speaker: Greg M., General Manager, GSO

9:40 pm Roundtables Menu provided in registration packet

*Presentation topics drawn from 58th GSC Agenda



Diary of a Delegate

PRAASA REPORT BACK

PRAASA PREAMBLE:

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 A.A. The Assembly and the PRAASA committee should always foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of A.A.

Communication and Participation-The key to Unity and Self-Support was the theme of PRAASA 2008 as is the theme for the 58th General Service Conference in New York this April. As these Agenda items were discussed and presented on 7 panels, as well as Round-tables for service positions I trust the purpose of PRAASA was fulfilled. I always return with renewed enthusiasm and re-commitment to service.

PRAASA 2008 in Anchorage Alaska was a great success. Even though our northern friends were biting their fingernails about how many members would be able to attend the final count was over 700 persons. Hawaii Area 17 was well represented with 45 registered members in attendance with 13 of 14 DCMs representing their districts.

Our Area chair, Nick did our Area proud and gave a fine presentation on, "In considering a service commitment, when is it my responsibility to say no?" and was well received.

Even though many of us tropical birds from Hawaii were dressed for the North Pole, Anchorage enjoyed unusually warm weather (30s-40s) which was a pleasant surprise. A moose caused quite a stir by making a surprise visit to downtown Anchorage across from the convention center as many ran outside during the break for a photo op with the moose.

Alaska Area 2 went all out and PRAASA 2008 was a wonderful experience for me. Even though the program did not follow as closely to the General Service Conference Agenda items as some would have liked plenty of stimulating discussions was spurred by many of the panels.

Our past Delegate and Trustee David E. gave a presentation on "Is there a growing trend toward reconsideration of Conference decisions? What are the implications?" Out of 789 Conference agenda items in the last 11 years there have been only 16 repeated.

Even though I voiced concern at the mic over the appearance of this trend toward reconsideration the more I spoke with past delegates and got a sense of history the more I began to see the wisdom of a full examination of issues that have long range implications for the fellowship.

Two such re-considerations for this 2008 General Service Con-

ference is considering Class B Trustees (Alcoholic) for the Chairman of the General Service Board. Considering the divisiveness that the principle of rotation for the General Service Office Manager has brought I think it is prudent we examine this issue again. I voted against this motion last year which passed.

The other issue up for reconsideration is the "Gray Pages" for the A.A. Grapevine which are articles on the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism and not authored by alcoholics. This motion passed last year. Our Area conscience was against this idea. We will examine this again as well.

The Delegate round tables were again invaluable for me. Just as the Panel 56 delegates mentored us Panel 57 delegates so we did with the incoming Panel 58 Delegates as we prepare to attend the General Service Conference.

The longer I serve in this position the more I see how much I don't know and how much there is to learn. Serving as Delegate continues to be an amazing spiritual journey that pushes me to grow. The wisdom and experience of past Delegates and Trustees from the Pacific Region and beyond prove to be invaluable providing a sense of history and perspective to issues that may seem like they are happening for the very first time ever when that is not the case.

I have been told by my sponsor that A.A. spent a lot of money on his education and he feels a responsibility to give back. I do appreciate that wisdom that events like PRAASA and the Pacific Regional Forum expose me to that wide variety of experience, strength and hope of our Trustees and past Delegates for this trusted servant.

Gratitude fills my heart with this new and vital life Alcoholics Anonymous has given me. A debt I can never repay. I am available for any questions or report backs about PRAASA whenever possible. Mahalo for allowing me to serve.

In love and service,
Vernon G.

Declaration of Unity

**This we owe to A.A.'s future:
To place our common welfare first;
To keep our fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
And the lives of those to come.**

Communication and Participation - The Key to Unity and Self Support

What a fabulous topic for this year's General Service Conference, and thus the theme for PRAASA 2008. About 750 people put the theme into action in Anchorage, Alaska by communicating and participating throughout a busy 3 days in early March.

This was by far my best PRAASA, being the 5th one I have attended. Yes, it was crazy cold, but there was something really special about traveling to such a remote location to gather and talk about AA, and how can we better serve. Maybe it is because we will be hosting PRAASA in 2011, but I felt and saw the local fellowships presence more than at any other PRAASA I have attended.

One of the highlights every year for me at PRAASA is to spend time with other folks from Hawaii Area. This is important for me, as it creates a deeper fellowship with the people I serve AA with, but only see at Area Assemblies and Committee meetings. For this Alcoholic, who at times is still filled with an extreme fear of people, it is an opportunity to get to know people better, and more importantly, let them get to know me!

As always, every Panel presentation was special, and there was always at least one moment when something said touched my heart. I call these moments spiritual. This is when I am truly reminded why I am in service: I love AA, and there is no sacrifice too great to serve this amazing program which literally saved my life.

The round tables were absolutely amazing this year. When I looked at the schedule at the beginning of PRAASA, I noticed that the Alternate Chairs had their own Round Table, which hadn't been done previous years. I mentioned it to several other Chairs and Alternate Chairs, and by our consensus, we combined the Round Tables into one. This was great, as most of us had been together last year in Portland, and we have been communicating via email all year. We sat in a circle, and we all got to throw out topics for our discussion. We were together Friday night, then had lunch on Saturday at a small chowder house nearby, and concluded our Round Table on Saturday night at 12 am, when the convention center staff kicked us out of the room! We have now created an online Google group, where we can post documents, hold forum like discussions and send group emails.

When I think about building these relationships, I think of how I used to think that people like this (whatever "this" is) couldn't possibly have anything in common with me! I come to find that we find our commonality in being members of AA, of serving AA in this capacity, and then finally in being human. What a concept! The reality is that many of us may go on to serve our Areas in other positions in future Panels.

Imagine if you are a newly elected Delegate for your Area, and you show up in New York absolutely terrified and nervous for your first General Service Conference. Then you get to the hotel, and you see people you have gotten to know over the years at PRAASA. I don't know about you, but that would sure be special to me.

One of the best ideas I was given over the weekend was actually on the airplane flying home. Someone who has a lot of experience in General Service suggested that we ask the Standing Committees to hold regularly scheduled meetings on a monthly basis. This way, people who want to help that Standing Committee can show up. Now, I realize that folks have tried this, and have poor attendance so they become discouraged and discontinue. One thing that comes to my mind is stories we hear about people holding an AA meeting week in and week out, and 1 or 2 people may show up – or maybe they will sit alone and read literature. But you know what happened? That person stayed sober and was of Love & Service!

The subject of an Area becoming too bogged down in the administrative side of AA, that it loses focus on our Primary Purpose came up during the Area Highlights from Arizona Area's Delegate, and I heard it again during our Chair Round Table. What I heard from Oregon Area Chair really made sense to me: It is dangerous to separate the admin stuff from carrying the message. We need the administrative process to enable us to fulfill our primary purpose, to carry the message.

I attended the PRAASA business meeting, and it was interesting to see the group conscience of the Pacific Region at work.

Some of the things I heard throughout the weekend that hit home for me, or struck me as ideas that may work for our Area were:

- Don't tell me what to do, show me by example
- Speak enthusiastically about service when sharing at meetings
- Service is gratitude in action
- A woman from Russia got up to the mic and thanked members of AA
- If a home group does not have representation, it's voice goes unheard
- Your Area can suffer if the Standing Committees Chairs don't do their job
- Begin grooming possible Committee Chairs 6 months in advance
- For training at the Orientation Assembly, develop material for consistency
- The Chairperson tries to sustain balance between keeping time of an Assembly and getting an informed Group Conscience
- One Area uses Past Delegates to plug into Standing Committees that need bodies to do the work
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called!
- There are 2 things an Alcoholic doesn't like: the way things are, and change!
- The Delegate is our Area's GSR
- A non-alcoholic Trustee shared about the gifts that AA has given him
- My desire to serve conflicts with my desire for recognition at times, and we don't hear people share about that
- I have never returned the same from PRAASA

Several months ago, a member said he just didn't understand why we are allotted so much time for PRAASA report backs at our Assembly. I don't know why it's important for anyone else, but I know for me it's important because I want to serve Alcoholics

Anonymous the very best I can. I not only serve Hawaii Area 17, but AA as a whole. I have attended five PRAASAs now, and I have only been funded for one. This is an investment in my sobriety, my service and my spirituality. An investment not only of money, but of time and energy as well. I want to thank my beautiful husband and children, who sacrifice their time with me so I can attend these service functions for my sobriety. As a result, they benefit as well.

It is true; I have never returned the same from attending PRAASA. Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you all.

Love & Service,
Elizabeth M.
Member of Palolo Discussion on Oahu
Alternate Area Chair
Hawaii Area 17 / Panel 57



PRASSA 2008
Anchorage Alaska

It has been said that "Service that we render to others is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth. "With that quote long imbedded in my mind I recently attended the Pacific Region Area Service Assembly in Anchorage Alaska. My home group "High in The Sky" had been passing a second basket at the meeting for months in order to pay for the trip. As their General service Representative, I sought to keep my group and its members connected to the pulse of A.A. That was important, because traveling to a region of the country that had temperatures below freezing, ice and snow, was not high on my list of travel destinations. I have grown quite accustomed to the tropical weather of Hawaii over the past 21 years. However, I wouldn't be in Hawaii, had I not gotten sober in 1985. I owe A.A. A debt I can never repay, but today I get a chance to make an interest payment.

So, o.k., its 37 degrees and the Iditarod teams are complaining that it's too hot for their dogs to be racing. Meanwhile I'm trying to keep from busting my okole' on icy sidewalks that make the two block walk to the convention center a challenge. The first night, a welcome meeting held at the Hilton was like a family reunion atmosphere. Many of the attendees had been in service for years and had attended many PRASSA's

Responsibility Declaration
I am responsible.
When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. Always to be there, and for that; I am responsible.

In fact one woman had attended 30 of them. I remember her words, as they put things into perspective for me. She said: "Just as the program of AA is about repetition so is service. We keep talking about the same things, over and over." Having been a GSR in 1988 and attending PRASSA way back then, I knew what she was talking about. And to be honest at times I felt in service assemblies that an outsider, a casual observer of our fellowship, would probably deduce that we really never solve anything at these gatherings. This lady had helped me to understand that because we had talked about honesty, or gratitude or inventories at the meeting last week didn't mean that those topics had now been sufficiently addressed and need not be brought up again. I understand the importance of continual dialogue and monitoring of our core issues.

First day of the assembly is packed with panels and presentations on a wide variety of topics and run with precision. There's something unsettling about that right there. I mean Alcoholics aren't known for their organizational skills. In fact we pride our selves on being the dysfunctional multi- million dollar non-profit of the world. At least dysfunctional from a Wall Street perspective. Once the floor was open to speakers from the audience a young lady, attending her first PRASSA, stood at the microphone and said :Ok so this is my first PRASSA and I've got some notes here on my first impressions" number one, it seems club-ish and clique-ish". I related to that statement, as it feels that way to me also. I think of an analogy of being at a large family reunion where some members haven't seen each other for years get caught up in the excitement and forget to introduce the distant cousins that are standing over in the corner. I have felt this before in my years of attending meetings and began to apply the remedy. Which as you may know is to stick out my hand and start introducing myself to complete strangers. Strange yes, but my family nonetheless.

Later that day a Russian woman from a small village in Siberia, which was 250 miles east of Anchorage (now you understand my hesitancy in making this trip) had traveled to Moscow, to Atlanta, to Seattle and then to Anchorage with an interpreter to be at PRASSA. Ok., so now my sacrifice of leaving paradise to be up in the frozen tundra has been totally minimized. She spoke of how her small village has a lot of problems with alcohol and that now having witnessed over 600 recovering alcoholics in one room, that she could go back to her home and tell them "there is help". This reminder of what we, as servants, are responsible for moved me, as well as the entire room. That is ' to extend the hand "anywhere that an alcoholic reaches out."

Many issues were discussed relating to the changing nature of our fellowship. Some of them were local issues and discussions led to discovery of similarity in of those issues in certain localities and subsequent discussions at roundtables sought input and solutions. A topic that always is a prominent part of service assemblies: how do I get some one involved in service? How does the group find someone to replace me as GSR when my time is up? Or, how do I get the group to understand the importance of what service is about? The answer has been the same for many years. You talk about it. You share how it has enriched your sobriety. Much like the responsibility to stick out my hand to start to become "part of" and to stop feeling like the distant cousin at his first time family reunion.

Overall my impressions were:

- ▶ The Spanish speaking segment of our fellowship has grown tremendously and now requires that we have an interpreter at our PRASSA in Hawaii 2011
- ▶ Issues with the Courts and AA meeting requirement for sentencing continues to be an area where communication between AA and Judges and other court officials is vitally important.
- ▶ Groups that don't send 7th tradition money to GSO are not "self supporting". They are leaning on groups that do send money. Every group needs to send some money, even if it's a dollar.
- ▶ Our money is being spent by informed, conscientious volunteers and paid staff to carry the message to remote areas of the world where alcoholism still has many stigmas and stereotypes attached to it.
- ▶ Discussion of repetitious topics is healthy for the fellowship.
- ▶ Service at the level of GSR and beyond is a rewarding and humbling experience, but not any more important than the man or woman opening the locked door to the meeting, making the coffee, setting up the literature display, cleaning up the room, answering the central office phone, being an intergroup representative, going to the homeless shelter with a meeting, going to treatment centers or jail carrying the message of recovery or any of the many ways each member of our fellowship unselfishly gives of their time. As they say " in AA there are no big shots and no little shots..... It's, one shot and we're all shot"
- ▶ Lastly, the growing need by some in the fellowship to chant slogans at the end of the meeting. To interject "what's the point" in chorus when the preamble to AA is read "we think not" all of these things as well as the expansion of different prayers being recited at the end of meetings leads me to believe that we may be straying from our principle of attraction and not promotion. I was always reminded by my sponsor to be aware of how things might seem to the newcomer who is attending his or her first meeting. Are we club-ish and clique-ish? Is there humility in any of these trends? I personally think not. I like our slogan " Keep it Simple" and am reminded that I didn't want to " join" anything when I came to these rooms. I just wanted to not drink.

Now there's a whole lot of other personal experiences that I could relate but that would entail a paper akin to a manuscript. I suggest you try to make service to AA in any fashion or way that you possibly can. Then we can share together the awe of what this program of recovery and our small part in carrying its message can accomplish in a world that still suffers from the disease of alcoholism.

Finally , I conclude this report with a quote by Leo Tolstoy. " Joy can only be real, only if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness"

Michael C.
GSR for " High in the Sky"
Kula Community Center Sundays at 9 am

These are the number of registered attendees from the Pacific Region at PRAASA 2008

- Alaska - 227
- Arizona - 19
- Central California - 33
- Southern California - 37
- Northern Coastal California - 64
- California Northern Interior - 28
- San Diego - Imperial - 33
- Mid-Southern California - 64
- Hawaii - 45
- Idaho - 20
- Nevada - 39
- Oregon - 18
- Utah - 13
- Western Washington - 32
- Washington State East - 6
- *BC/Yukon - 1

*Honorary member for PRAASA 2008

PRAASA 2008 ANCHORAGE

I had the honor of attending PRAASA in Anchorage Alaska; I have some moments to share. On the subject of Unity I walk away with a stronger belief to lead by example. When I have an opportunity to speak at a meeting, how well do I carry the message? I heard to address my drug use as an outside issue, "I smoked plenty of outside issues". I will always have the experience to share with someone when the moment is correct. Being clear of the message of Alcoholics Anonymous is my responsibility; I never know who is really listening.

It is so important to reach out to anyone new who shows up at the Homegroup. Many evenings I arrive to my meeting dog tired and really just want to chill out, there is always one or two new guys sitting in the back afraid and not knowing whats going on. My responsibility is to extend my hand and offer a smile, (I have received the gift, share this with those who don't recognize it!!)

Another reminder for me was this "If you don't have the best Homegroup, don't get a new group but get involved and make it happen". Many times decisions are made that I don't agree with, I don't have to take my ball and go home; maybe someone else needs to play with it. PRAASA always reminds me that A.A. doesn't need me to survive, yet without A.A. my chances of survival are slim to none. Thank you for allowing me to participate..

Colin H. DCM 11



My name is Mel K. and I went with my significant other to PRAASA, I am the secretary of my home group Promises, in Puna District I had no idea what to expect. We felt that since she had to go that we might go together and see Alaska, we may never get to go there again.

The most impressive for me was just listening to 750 people say the Serenity Prayer, not only did I hear it I felt it. It was awesome to meet so many people that had that light in their eyes and that smile on their face, and you knew that they were definitely working on the spiritual part of this program, because this was coming from the inside out. It was a little intimidating at first having never been to a big meeting, let alone a conference. A big meeting to me is about 50 people. Once enough hands got shaken and smiles transmitted it was without a doubt the most awesome thing I have done in sobriety.



My thoughts about PRAASA 2008

From Carol G. Recording Sec. Aloha Mana District 8 Area 17

My many,many thanks to my home group for giving me the pleasure of attending 2008 PRAASA. As always I was amazed at the level of enthusiasm, gratitude and continued commitment to service I witnessed in all those present. The theme of this years PRAASA was "Communication, Participation and Unity" and that was exactly what was present by all the panels (7) as well as the past delegate reports. B.C./Yukon delegate (Area 79) summed it up for me with the following example "communication" to remote islands is carried by the DCM via Gulf island ferry system. "participation" takes place as the various GSR's board and exit after receiving the reports.

"Unity" of the gulf islands has taken place wow! To sum it up: for me at the group member level I participate in service and communicating this to my fellow members which brings the unity that glues us all together in our common cause - to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

In the spirit of our great fellowship

Carol, in love and service



My name is Irene H, my sobriety date is 11/11/95, my home group Upcountry Sunrise, Po'okela Church, Makawao, Maui, HI., fully supported my expenses to travel and participate in PRAASA 2008.

Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to be of service through sharing my first experience as a GSR, and my first time in attendance to PRAASA (Pacific Region AA Service Assembly).

After registering in the lobby of the Hilton Hotel, I approached a man with a PRAASA 2008 sign pinned on his shirt, introduced myself, and asked if I might be of service. He pinned the sign (a bib similar to those worn by the contestants in the Iditarod) on my sweater and said, you may greet and direct people arriving to the early registration room at 2:00 pm. He introduced himself as the co-chairman of PRAASA 2008. And so I began my first PRAASA as my first sponsor taught me, being of service. How wonderful it is to meet and welcome family from this entire Pacific Region, in this amazing fellowship called A.A. Thank you Bill W and Dr. Bob.

The Assembly took place in Anchorage Alaska at the beautiful Egan Center, where over seven hundred sober AA's came together to share and exchange the ideas and experiences of our members, groups, and Areas of the Pacific Region. Our message is than carried to GSO, (General Service Office), and the General Service Board, (the Trustees), for national and international action. This I understand is the "Third Legacy of Service" we experience in our group meetings.

What an amazing concept, from a cup of coffee in Bill Wilson's kitchen to international action.

Speaking of concepts, there are the 12 Concepts of A.A. which state, final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship. That means from our individual groups, as well as each of us as individuals. We have a "voice "in the world picture of A.A. through our group conscience. As the principals of Tradition Two states, "The A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only". Our triangle, Unity, Service, Recovery.

We received seven panels of five individuals on each panel. The topics included, Communications Within the Fellowship, Participation, Unity, Self Support, From home group member to General Service Conference, Connect the Dots, Protecting our Newcomers, Expenses, Contributions or Donations, Registration Fees for Conferences, Conventions and Roundups, etc.

Following each panel were two open microphone's which invited anyone to come up and ask questions, or share our groups concerns. Then the Roundtables, each with the topic we were most interested in bringing back to our group. It was a sharing session in which we presented challenges and questions and answers from others experiences.

I have learned so much from my experience at PRAASA, truly a growth in knowledge as well as a spiritual experience. The planning, service, communication, participation fellowship, warmth , and kindness exhibited assures me that our Fellowship is in good stead with God, and our fellows.

Mahalo, thank you Anchorage for hosting 2008 PRAASA and extending a warm and wonderful experience to each of us. We look forward to returning your hospitality in 2011.

In gratitude and service,
Irene H.



**DCM 6 - Kaua'i
PRAASA experience**

When I picked up my registration packet, there was a note attached for me to see the co-chair, Amy, before the dinner break. She asked me to facilitate the "Outreach to Seniors" roundtable discussion on Friday night. My first response was, "isn't there someone more qualified than me?" Then I remembered the Panel Topic given that afternoon by our Area Chair, Nick, about when is it OK to say "no" to an AA request and decided that HP would guide me through it.

It was an amazing experience to have the room fill with people (including Greg M, general manager at GSO), a wonderful man volunteered to be the recorder and the "right" people present to share their experience, strength and hope for our elder population. I started with the serenity prayer, let go and let God do the rest. I reminded myself that I was not in-charge and detached from the outcome and any fear about how I looked and what people would think of me.

Because of the way our program works, I received the gifts of listening/guiding with an open heart. I was privileged to witness HP in action when the "light went on" during the discussion for two women who will be going back to their home group to start a more organized "visit for our homebound senior members" including a requirement for a minimum of 2 years of sobriety and a criminal background check to insure the safety of their homebound members.

The next day continued with great speakers addressing the program topics. Just before the morning break, I got up to the mic and asked a question about "when is an AA meeting not a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous/is there a standard to adhere to". After that, I remember very little about PRAASA as I got a phone call from my Uncle in Florida to tell me that my mother (who was in good health) had a massive heart attack and died. My service sponsor was right next to me as was two other wonderful Area sister-friends who consoled me. I was surrounded by HP and my AA ohana. Even our regional trustee, Madeline, and Greg M from GSO gave me personal words of comfort later on that day/night. I missed the business meeting to pack my bags to catch an earlier flight to Seattle on Sunday afternoon and on to Florida first flight Monday morning.

I did write down a few memorable quotes worth repeating:

- "Nervous is just like excited but excited is much more fun. So...I am excited" (said by a speaker as a preface to his talk).
- "We cannot select leaders unless the leaders can be there. So be there."
- "There's no freedom in yes, if you can't say no."
- "Today I am going to let four people be wrong."
- "Read everything that comes your way and pass it on to your group."
- "There's only 2 things an alcoholic doesn't like: the way things are and change."
- It's not about the money, it's about participation."

I am so grateful to our program that helps me live life on life's terms and just do the next right thing. I'll close with a personal quote from a condolence card:

Life is a Journey
Time is its Distance
Memory is its Map

Mahalo for allowing me to be of service. It sure beats the alternatives.

Shoshanah .
DCM 6



This was my third PRAASA and I want to thank District 8 for sending me. Mahalo mucho! It was another incredible experience that left me filled with gratitude for the life I have, one that is so far beyond my wildest dream, it's in another galaxy. There were about 600 people at PRAASA this year and once again as I looked around the room, I was struck by the fact that though we look different on the outside, we are so alike on the inside. The power of being in the presence of so many people with the same purpose – to help the still suffering alcoholic – was very strong. I was reminded that we are in service to insure that AA is there for those on the other side of the globe as well as those in our own community.

I heard so many inspiring comments. Here are just a few.

- Communicating the importance of the service structure is a personal responsibility. Sponsors show, rather than tell, sponsees.
- Service provides insurance against "King Alcohol."
- Service is gratitude in action.
- One person commented that the quality of their recovery went from "Wow!" to "Oh, my God! WOW!" after involvement in service.
- Alaska Intergroup office has big books in Russian, Polish, Spanish and English.
- "I don't have time for service, but it makes time for me."
- Learned from a service sponsor – "I have a voice."
- If a home group doesn't have a GSR, it doesn't have a voice. The GSR is the link.
- An active, committed home group member participates, shows up early, stays late, attends regularly, shares enough that people know who I am, and gives more than they get.
- Service will keep me in the middle of the herd.
- AA will survive without my service, but will I survive without service in AA?
- We can deliver the pizza, but we can't make them eat it.
-

Perhaps the most important for getting along with others is that today I will allow four people to be wrong.

Cheryl B.
DCM District 8 Big Island

**PRAASA Island-wide Report Back
2008 Theme: “Communication & Participation –
The Key to Unity and Self Support”**

My name is Michael, I am an alcoholic. I am General Service Representative for the Saturday Night Speakers meeting. The purpose of PRAASA is to develop greater unity among 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.

I was asked by No Ka Oi’s District Committee Member (DCM) Colleen to pay close attention to Panel 5 on Self Support. I did. I was bright-eyed and bushy tailed with pen poised above legal pad Saturday morning at 10 am. I also took the questions to my home group last Saturday and will report further on this topic at the Inform the Delegate Assembly on Hawai’i.

Self Support concepts which stood out to me include:

- Historically we AA’s give enormous amounts of time and Bill was regularly going after money. Money was needed to publish the first Big Book.
- Prosperity and abundance in AA can be defined in terms other than monetary.
- Spirituality and money first mixed when Ebby put in a nickel to call Bill then a dime for the subway to his house – without expectation of reward.
- AA’s strength is in self-support, one alcoholic to another. The story about Rockefeller refusing to give the fledgling AA money underscores this important fact. One alcoholic helping another. We must be self-supporting.
- As far as literature sales supporting GSO activities it appears to be a practical reality. Less than ½ of GSO expenses are covered by group contributions.

Looking back what impressed me the most last year in Portland, Oregon was the amateur nature of AA service at every level. By the time we know what our service position is about we step aside in the spirit of rotation. Speakers are not asked to present on a topic because they are experts but as an opportunity for us all to learn or refresh on the subject while affording the presenter, a willing trusted servant no different than you or me, a chance to practice. Speakers dive into researching within the general service structure and then organizing and publicly presenting to a large audience on a relevant AA service topic. It is a beautiful, inspiring event to witness.

This year in Anchorage, Alaska they said it was unseasonably warm but it felt cold to me. What impressed me even more than the moose was the quality of the presentations. The presenters, Area Officers, Area Delegates and past Delegates, Trustees and past Trustees and especially GSO’s general manager, who I will return to, all demonstrated, in my opinion, a high level of dedication and willingness to do this deal. The presentations were great.

By and by I was most impressed with our outgoing GSO General Manager, Greg M who found AA and general service here on Maui over 30 years ago. In general his presentation showed the polish of a great speaker accustomed to speaking to audi-

ences large and small in a manner inspiring trust and communicating his deep love for the AA program, our fellowship and the general service structure that glues AA together worldwide.

More specifically he talked about sharing ideas between fellowships, a recent Share-A-Day meeting at GSO between top executives from Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Debtor’s Anonymous and Al-Anon. He talked about being inclusive and loving all people including non-AA’s in spite of our fear. I felt encouraged to take a deep look into what our founders Bill and Bob meant rather than any loose interpretation I might hear in a meeting. Greg asked, “Why should we love someone less or more because they are or are not members of AA?” He reminded me that fear stops our love. And he encouraged us to listen to our intuition and follow our group conscience rather than codify AA. Finally, he reminded us that when it comes to making splits and sending our part to GSO it is not so much the exact amount of money we give: 8.4 million/year. \$140/year/group. \$6.38/member/year would make our Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office in New York solvent, fully self-supporting through our voluntary contributions. What is important is the act of making splits and taking part in translating the Big Book into Mongolian and joining carrying the message beyond our personal reach.

Thank you for this opportunity to learn, grow and practice living sober,

Michael, GSR
Saturday Night Speakers, Wailuku, Maui



Having been to eight PRAASAs has not diminished my enthusiasm for going to any lengths to repay a debt I owe to Alcoholics Anonymous. I am enthralled with how diverse and how far this fellowship goes to try to carry the message of hope to an alcoholic who doesn’t yet, know that there is another way to live.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll continue to say, that it is a difficult thing to put into words exactly what happens at PRAASA. What happens for me is I feel most connected to the fellowship when I’m in service. I get to witness, time and again, the fruit of reaching out to the newcomer, whether a person or another country. I came away from this PRAASA with a sense of pride that AA has a respectable reputation in Hawaii and the “locals” are coming in at a better rate than the “locals” of Alaska.

I am convinced that AA will survive without my service but that I may not survive without AA. And with that I need to be cautious that my desire to be recognized doesn’t overtake my desire to be of service. Luckily, no one person, me, is going to ruin AA. Rotation takes care of that. And as long as AA chooses its leaders wisely AA will be around for generations to come. One of the things that I heard at PRAASA that I wholeheartedly agree with

is that whatever we are doing there is being carried by someone, to somewhere, somehow.

I have Kihei Morning Serenity, my first home group, to thank for my service ethic. I had several past delegates and strong service minded members as my role models. If their love of the fellowship did not translate into serving the fellowship I would not have come away with a deep sense of gratitude and responsibility that I have today.

If I've ever felt blasé about service and what I've not been doing with my gratitude, PRAASA has always fired me up. I come back with a renewed sense of purpose and concern for how the newcomer and the community perceive us. This PRAASA has done it once again. I loooooove Alcoholics Anonymous!

Cathy B., alcoholic from Upcountry, Maui.



**MY PRAASA EXPERIENCE:
ANCHORAGE ALASKA PRAASA 2008:
Communication and Participation,
The Key to Unity and Self Support.**

From the PRAASA 2008 agenda/ schedule:

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 the members to discuss pertinent aspects of AA.

This was my first PRAASA, and as a first time participant, it is difficult to know where to begin in reporting my experience of the event, so I will begin at the end. At the closing I became aware of the rather amazing nature of being amongst over 750 fellow alcoholics who have come together to share ideas, fellowship and the spiritual experience of such an assembly. I felt privileged to be able to participate in the event and grateful that in sobriety I have become teachable enough to be able to appreciate this experience — this fellowship and sense of unity.

I was gently nudged into standing for the GSR position of my home group by a member who knows the importance of “service” to both the fellowship of AA and to the member serving. Although I felt I was not particularly well suited to the position of GSR, as I heard in PRAASA “God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called”. I guess one of my motivations for attending PRAASA was to attempt to improve my qualifications.

In this regard, the participants of the Assembly certainly presented a wealth of information for consideration, such as: the importance of being an active home group member, how the service structure supports a twelfth step call, self support is

more than just money, the prospect of funding GSO solely through contributions, when is it my responsibility to say no to a service commitment, how service enhances my sobriety, and much, much more.

The panel presenters and participants generally did an excellent job introducing their topics and stimulating me to consider some topics in new ways (if in fact I had given any thought to the topic at all in the past) Of course the amount of information which will actually stick in my brain is another issue. Just as repetition of the same topics is essential to my recovery work, I'm hoping it will help in consideration of service topics—so I bought a number of the audio CD's of the assembly proceedings.

Comments from the floor were also of a great part of the experience. Some were quite thought provoking, some were funny, some touched places in my heart which my active alcoholism had previously tried to render untouchable, and of course some comments gave me periodic chances to practice open-mindedness, tolerance, and acceptance of viewpoints I might not share.

A lady from Chukotka in far Eastern Russia spoke from the floor through an interpreter. She expressed her gratitude at being able to attend PRAASA, the travails of her travel to get to Anchorage, and her hopes for her recovery fellowship at her home. Her presence was a great tribute to the value of twelfth-step work around the world and a flesh and blood demonstration of the imperative of contributing to GSO to support what is truly life saving work.. Similarly, the significant Spanish speaking contingent at PRAASA, and the just released Spanish Big Book, served to underscore the vital nature of the work our AA dollar supports.

The fellowship experience was a positive one for me personally. Those of you who know me probably do not include gregarious in your mental description of me. Nevertheless I found myself genuinely enjoying the fellowship; getting to better know some members from Hawaii Area and meeting and visiting with a number of members from around the Pacific Mainland. The ease of this fellowship experience was augmented by the simple fact that I was around a bunch of great people.

My perception of the proceedings was that they were naturally infused with a sense of Unity, of a shared commitment to and common interest in our “primary purpose”. Of course this Unity of purpose is ideally also present at AA meetings, but at least for me it is not usually as palpable as I felt it was at PRAASA. The fact that we can agree or disagree on the details but still share this unity is a wonderful thing, a spiritual thing. As a consequence I spent a lot of my time at PRAASA for lack of a better expression—filled with Gratitude. Gratitude that the hand of AA was there for me, Gratitude for my sober life, Gratitude that Clifford S. steered me along the path of service, that God has rendered me teachable (mostly), and that I have been privileged to be able to associate with people who value service to AA as an expression of Gratitude.

I have found that generally in my life the more effort I put forth in nurturing something, whether it be a person, a pet, or my sobriety, the more I find myself loving that thing. I view the content and process of PRAASA as a sort of individual and collective nurturing of the concept of Service to AA. It has been a joy

and a privilege to be a witness to the love for AA which that nurturing has engendered.

In Grateful service,
Jim Y.
GSR, Upcountry Speaker Meeting



Those who get around.... !

Aloha! My name is Ollie and I am a happy alcoholic. My home group is the Canberra Speakers Group in the Australian Capital Territory. We are about 3 hours drive inland from Sydney. Let me know if your coming down. We love visitors. (ollielovesAA@mac.com)

As a visiting Australian I was asked by the editor of this newsletter to write an article on my experience of attending PRAASA in Alaska - the Pacific Region AA Service Assembly - and on my experience of attending AA meetings in Hawaii. I really believe it is a rare opportunity to be approached to provide some experience to AA and I feel honoured to have been asked.

At the encouragement of my sponsor I have now attended three PRAASAs. Spokane, Fresno and Alaska. I wish everyone in Australia could get to at least one. I find them so interesting and informative.

My AA service experience has taken me to places that I would not usually go. This includes small country towns in Australia and places like Spokane, Fresno, Hawaii and Alaska. People who know me looked at me askance when I mentioned I was going to some of these places. They said, "Why are you going there?" I said, "To meet some special friends." I can't remember when or where, but I once heard someone say at an AA meeting, "Those who get around, stay around."

One of the panels in Anchorage talked about, 'can I ever refuse an AA request?'. I myself have been in the situation where I have accepted every AA request because I've been told I shouldn't refuse them. What this meant however, is that my life, outside AA, would become even more unmanageable. AA also teaches me about responsibility. I have responsibilities to my work, at home and to my family. I learned that sometimes it is irresponsible of me to accept an AA request. So I heard some interesting guiding principles regarding AA jobs and whether to do them or not when asked.

- Have one AA job only
- Observe the spirit of rotation
- Only serve the agreed term of an AA job, do not extend your stay. Move on!
- Don't do the same job twice - rotate on to new jobs

- Do not be afraid to leave an AA job vacant

A long-timer in Australia says this little ditty: "If you're in recovery, and you want to grow, don't say yes, when you've gotta say no." Responsibility includes being able to say 'no'. But because I'm a rationalising alcoholic I always consult my sponsor. On this PRAASA panel we also heard examples of the 'excuses' often used not to honour an AA request. They include:

- I don't like the people there
- I don't know how to do that job
- I'm not getting involved in AA 'politics'

It was indicated strongly that these were not good reasons to refuse an AA request.

I have truly enjoyed my stay on Oahu and Maui. I'm so grateful to the members who showed me extraordinary generosity. It is also so exciting to go to different meetings; to see how they are run; the different formats; the commitment of newcomers and long-timers alike. My AA job at home is literature coordinator for the Canberra Central Service Office. So I was particularly excited to attend the recent Maui Central Office Bash. At home we are just organising our first Unity Day and observing your Bash gave me some ideas to take home with me. The PRAASAs I have been to have always had a strong and enthusiastic Hawaiian presence. Thank you Hawaii for demonstrating to me such a strong sense of Unity.
Mahalo.



(Ed. Note: George D. from New York, "Past Everything" in A.A. asked me to go find Ollie at PRAASA, introduce myself and make sure we took good care of him while he was on Maui. Once he landed here *and* called, first thing was to pick him up at his hotel and take him to a meeting. The Fellowship embraced him from there. If you ever go down under, do take him up on his offer. By the way, George D. was on the last Panel-the Past Trustees panel. His made a wonderful presentation (on topic) on "From home group member to the General Service Conference, connect the dots. Thanks for that George and for making sure Ollie and I connected. Miranda K.

The Hawaii Area Group Photo



From our non - rotating Area Archivist Ted K.**Anchorage 2008.**

This is my first visit since the Winter of 1962, when, as a young Army officer, I was enroute to an assignment as an advisor to the Eskimo Scout Battalion in Bethel, out on the Yukon plain, 400 miles west. Anchorage was then a town of about 40,000 people. I was not then a member of AA, so I can tell you that the town had enough bars for a city three times its size. I visited a number of them.

My return to Alaska was not to revisit the scenes of my crimes, but rather it was to learn all that I could about developing a PRAASA archives display, this in preparation for our hosting PRAASA in 2011. I was privileged to work with Shirley R-D, the Alaska Archivist, throughout PRAASA and profited greatly from that opportunity.

I'll not talk about the purpose of PRAASA (I am sure that our leaders have well covered that matter). However, I will note that our 2001 assembly will be the 44th annual PRAASA. The first was held in January, 1968, in Fresno, California. It was organized as the Western General Service Assembly by the California, Arizona and Nevada areas. By the third annual assembly, in Phoenix, it had become PRAASA and, by the fourth assembly, in Santa Maria, California, it had settled on the first week of March for all assemblies.

Hawaii Area hosted the 11th PRAASA, March 3-5, 1978, barely two years after creation of our area structure. It was held on Oahu at the Kuilima Hotel (now the Turtle Bay Resort). Bob A. and Vic B., both former delegates, were co-chairmen. Total attendance is unknown. Vic B., in his "after action" report noted that "The 1978 PRAASA in Hawaii was the shot in the arm needed to move Hawaii AA forward. In 1978, there were 4 AA Districts on Oahu and none on the other islands.

Today, there are 5 districts on Oahu, 2 on Hawaii 3 on Maui and 1 on Kauai. In 1978, there were 79 meetings a week on Oahu and 11 on the other islands. Today, there are 205 meetings a week on Oahu and over 100 on the other islands. These increases were set in motion by the PRAASA, "Hawaii Area next hosted in 1989. Greg M. and Pat W., likewise former delegates, were co-chairmen of the event, which was held in Honolulu, at the Hawaiian Regent Hotel. There were 680 total attendees, of whom 303 were locals. Most recently, Hawaii Area hosted PRAASA in 1999. The Assembly was held at the Kona Surf Resort (only \$90 a night). Marion B., of District 8, was the Chairperson.

Having attended my fourth PRAASA in unusually warm Alaska, I am now looking forward to Oakland (in 2009) and Woodland Hills (2010) as two additional opportunities to learn and to develop plans for the 2011 PRAASA, to help make PRAASA XLIV the best ever.

**My notebook quotes...what I heard**

I know my illness, thank God you're my solution.

AA is more than a set of principles, it's a society in action – services are vital to our existence and growth.

The Legacies, important, an unwritten responsibility of sponsorship.

Before I got into service, my recovery was wow. In service it's now "Oh my God, WOW!"

Stay aware of what's going on in the groups leadership, trusted servants, those that are elected. We have a great responsibility to keep AA alive and well.

Groups that can't help the GSR shoulder responsibilities are not self-supporting.

Traditions, principles before personalities, not principles without personalities, it is personalities that continue to pass it on – there is a balance; that's how we are effective.

Self support, someday we must rely on ourselves and not count in the sales of literature. Some discussion about the cost of services, roundups, conferences, yes, you buy the chair. What are you? A piggy banker or piggy backer...?

The annual amount needed to support each registered group is \$140.00. The average amount received from each registered group is \$92.00 per year. These numbers mean the amount needed from each AA member is 54 cents a month. The average amount received is 35 cents a month...

If group contributions were met, literature could be sold at cost.

PSA's – what is the value of human life – we don't deal in numbers, we deal in lives. Just like the pizza delivery guy, we deliver, we don't wait around to see if you eat it

Support your trusted servants, AA is not punitive, no single person is going to ruin this thing, rotation takes care of that, and a good funeral will also do the trick.

Talk to groups that don't contribute, GSO needs to know you are alive! Like our recovery, this message is often repeated.

One of our great books "A.A. Comes of Age" sells only 11,000 per year. Why don't people read it, it's a great book...

There were 789 agenda items in 11 years not including floor actions, 16 items repeated-no conference decisions are binding.

A.A. has done more for alcoholics than all of the medical field, so I sent my med students to meetings. I did that for 8 years before I went myself. I can ask anyone in service to AA a question and get a very good response (from a Class A Trustee).

Share from the heart, it revolves around principles, share with a newcomer-it's about action. "Get in the car", get into action. It made me feel a part of. I believed that so it helped me move in that direction, our great responsibility is to serve, to be here, include a newcomer. Be aware of the people we are leaving behind, those that are on the outside, that aren't in yet. Be more informed, aware of the people in our backyards, go next door! Patience, Love, Unity, bring divisive people in, we do this for the love of A.A.

Authority figures are problematic for native cultures, our purpose is to teach. I can't make anyone do something they don't want to, find the people who want what you have.

Attending PRAASA, always something to learn, something more.

About officers not doing their jobs, asking them to stand down - "always surprising that people stand for or want the position and not the job.

Miranda K.

What a difference a year makes! This past year I participated in monthly District meetings, three Area Assemblies, an Inform the Delegate Panel and a Concepts Study Group. With all the experiences of the last year I am just beginning to have a clue about what general service is as well as my role as a GSR. I have heard several times this past year that “as soon as you really understand what being a GSR entails, it is time to rotate out of your position.” After the shared chuckle has subsided I have consistently been assured that this is by design. What an adventure to simply show up for what comes next in the wide spectrum of general service to our fellowship.

Anchorage, Alaska was a bit cold for these old bones 20-40 degree’s most of the time. An interesting tidbit; for the Alaskans it was too warm for this time of year. Lots of ice and not much soft fluffy snow! Once again I was touched by the people who attended PRAASA and shared so openly their experience, strength and hope with one another. AA’s from all walks of life, lengths of sobriety and length of time in general service along with a wide variety of members who currently serve or have served as GSR, DCM, Delegate and Trustee. For me personally, one of this year’s spiritual experiences was reconnecting and sharing with some of the people I had met last year. Also listening and sharing with first time attendee’s a bit of my own experience, strength and hope from my first year as GSR. Being surrounded once again, by such passion and a yearning for more information on how and better ways to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic was both interesting and at times challenging to my ideas and opinions. This year, I expected to be interested and challenged. I was not disappointed!

The theme of PRAASA this year was “ **Communication & Participation --- The Key to Unity and Self Support.**” Just like last year, our time together was jam packed with 7 Panels, each panel had five speakers who covered a specific area of their panel topic, 2 Roundtable discussion sessions, a Pacific Region Trustee Report, an “Ask it Basket” and “What’s On Your Mind” session, a Speaker Meeting and the PRAASA business meeting. Basically we started at 8:00 am and went until around 11 pm each day with a coffee break here and there, an hour or so for lunch and dinner. With each day the energy grew as well as the interest in the theme for this year’s General Service Conference in New York.

FYI~ The theme of each PRAASA is designed to assist us in gathering information for a more and more informed group conscience for our delegates to carry with them when they attend the General Service Conference in New York in April of each year. Because of PRAASA and the history we have of supporting our region’s GSR’s and their attendance at PRAASA each year, the Pacific Region is known as a region that sends delegates to New York that are truly carrying the informed group conscience of their Areas. What a great legacy we have. I am truly humbled by it.

The Past Trustee’s panel was a highlight for me again this year. Especially our Pacific Region’s Past Trustee Phyllis, whose comments regarding the diversity in our own backyards and how we can do better at carrying the message to cultures other than what we are comfortable with. Wow! She was spot on! I had been thinking about that very issue throughout PRAASA

and was simply unable to put the appropriate words to it. I had noticed that the number of Native Alaskans in attendance was very small and most of the native people I did see were outside the Conference Center on the streets drunk. Something inside me was a bit unsettled as a result. I felt as though we were somehow missing an important part of carrying the message to those who still suffer and it was right in our faces. Mahalo nui loa Phyllis, you put my thoughts and feelings into words. We can do better in Alaska and in our own backyard in Area 17...It has been shared with me more than once, that while I am serving in general service a cord may be struck in me and I will know where my passion is and it will propel me forward as I continue to serve. This may be it for me. I’ll keep you posted!

My entire life, as well as my recovery are constantly being enriched by serving as my home group’s GSR. Attending and participating in PRAASA is giving me the tools to better serve my home group and AA as a whole. I heard it said best this year, PRAASA is the college level education for service in AA. I am so grateful to KMS for sending me to college! I look forward to this year’s adventures in General Service.

In gratitude, love and service,
Juddee K.
Kihei Morning Serenity (KMS)



PRAASA 2008

I had only been around General Service a little while having finished the GSR term of my group’s representative before I became the Waianae DCM for Panel 57. I kept hearing the buzz about PRAASA and I got to experience the enthusiasm of my fellows when they came back. This year at nine years sober and in the second year of Panel 57 as the Waianae DCM I made the decision to attend my first PRAASA, and was blessed to be sponsored by my district.

I’m sure I had some kind of expectations, but as usual when I have expectations I sold myself short. The opening meeting on Thursday night at the hotel was standing room only, overflowing into the hallway and filled with energy. I couldn’t wait for the events to start on Friday. That next morning we went into the welcome meeting and as we started to say the Serenity Prayer, my eyes filled with tears and my heart filled with gratitude. The theme was Communication and Participation and I was awed and very humbled at the same time at how many people came to “participate” in the PRAASA so far from their homes and give service.

One of the things said early on that first day was that PRAASA was like AA college, and at times during the weekend I felt like that, a little overwhelmed with all the great information everyone had to share but at the same time so grateful to be there. That first day we heard about communication and participation from the panels. I was blessed to have had my name submitted by our delegate as a reader and then selected to read on the Panel 3 about participation. I knew I was going to read but there was a mix up in the schedule and I thought I was reading on Saturday so I had a little glasses problem but luckily the reading was in a

pretty large font and I was able to get through it without any problems. Nick our Area Chair gave a great presentation on that panel. We then had dinner and off to the DCM roundtables.

Saturday was more panels and roundtables. We heard some great topics discussed; unity, self-support and more about communication with inmates, our youth and PSA announcements. That evening we had a dinner followed by a great message from our General Service Manager and again off to the roundtables where we talked about participation in workshops and attendance at the district meetings, many of the same things we discuss at our Area level.

By Sunday morning I was pretty tired but so full of good information and sharing that I wanted more. Yes, I'm still an alcoholic. What a great way to end with each of the delegates answering questions from the Ask It Basket, just like we do here at our assemblies. I'm sure I'll have to listen to the CD's a few times and take some more notes to fully digest all the great information I heard.

A little over nine years ago, I was sitting all by myself at home with my best friend in my hand contemplating where my life had gone and where it was going. I never would have imagined leading the life I do now, given to me by this wonderful fellowship. I get to be of service to my fellows and that is the great joy and blessing in my life. The underlying thought I kept having throughout the weekend was how did I get from there to here?

Heidi G.
DCM, Waianae #17



Another PRAASA? How could I not go? The one State I have not created chaos in was Alaska, one out of 50 are pretty good odds for someone like me. This visit I did it sober. And it was grand. Long walks on downtown sidewalks (no sidewalks in my neighborhood-and no downtown), and in the worst of weather conditions (sleet/rain), I went dog sledding! I was taught to look for the "gift" in the worst of... in this case, weather conditions. I found the gift while sledding through the woods with an eager team of dogs that are in training for a future Iditarod. The gift was a beautiful realization of the similarities I found in the dog team members and in members of the fellowship gathered for the assembly.

This is what I learned about our dog team members; they are made up of lead, swing, team and wheel dogs. Lead dogs steer the rest of the team and set the pace. Swing dogs are harnessed in directly behind the leader. They literally swing the rest of the team behind them in turns or curves. The team dogs were in the middle, our musher guy Jared said they were the worker dogs. The wheel dogs were at the end or beginning depending on how you look at it. They were the closest to the sled and they literally turned the team/sled. They are strong and quick, they help guide the sled through unpredictable and hazardous landscapes. Our guide told us each dog was vital to the success of the team, each dog is equally important, and that each had a purpose, working as a unit, the sled can run strong. Sounds somewhat familiar doesn't it?

The weekend began on Thursday with registration and kick off A.A. meeting. The hotel lobby was crowded with A.A.'s laughing, shaking hands, and of course hugging. One of the lobby volunteer greeters was Irene, a GSR from Maui. She had her volunteer bib pinned on and was ready for service! After a warm welcome she directed me to the registration room where I met my first new friend, Trish L. a Delegate from the Yukon/BC area. And that's what happens at PRAASA; if you stand in a line longer than 5 seconds, you've made at least one new friend.

I must have introduced myself to half the assembly, some twice. As I reached my hand out and introduced myself I found myself amazed by how much I changed. The old me was much too fearful to introduce myself to someone I didn't know unless of course they had something I wanted. How sad to think that was once a way of life for me. I am so deeply grateful for all I have today, for you and for Alcoholics Anonymous.

I heard so many great things over the weekend; somewhere in this newsletter I compiled a list of quotes I heard from the panel presenters. In reading the stories submitted it seems most of us heard the same thing so I tried to spare you the redundancies. Much was new to me and I had not heard at any other PRAASAs before. Comments on the topic of reaching out to youth and in the Trustee panel, a presentation on the vulnerability of the newcomer. There were frank comments on predators in meetings, who sponsors minors? How are we reaching out to the newcomer, do we make them feel safe? Ways the home group can support their trusted servants, how it's much more than just financial support... There was also a palpable buzz in the air regarding a "Thank You Greg" button that many (not all wore). Someone mentioned "we don't do buttons", too much like a campaign. I am sure there is more to it than that so if anyone reading this who would care to enlighten me, please do. Why the buzz?

I attended all the panel presentations but sadly it was noted in the program that the roundtables were only open to those that held the respective service positions, drat! It was also noted in the program to respect that, so that's what I did. Ironically, the theme this year is Communication and Participation – The Key to Unity and Self Support. LOL! It did however give me an opportunity to attend a few other committee roundtables. I learned a bit about archives and remote community issues. It's interesting to see how my experiences from the PRAASA's I have attended have changed. As a GSR I came back fired up about my home group, then it was about area, now it's about the bigger picture, AA as a whole. A big mahalo for all those who presented on panels; some good topics and thought provoking presentations.

And finally, there was a lovely heartfelt moment when all gave our GSO manager Greg M. a standing ovation of thanks for all the work he has done for us and for those to come. I am so grateful for this opportunity to be of service, it's been a joy thus far. I hope to see you at PRAASA 2009 in Oakland next year. I got sober there and I was not a happy camper in those early years. With certainty I am going back a changed person. One of the unforgettable quotes I heard and so related to was this; "My recovery used to be wow, now my recovery in service is "Oh my God... WOW!" It's my hope that you too have or will experience that sentiment.. It's an honor and privilege to serve.

In love and serv-ice,
Miranda K.



PRAASA 3/28/08

So having been home a lil while I have a better perspective on just what happened at PRAASA, what an amazing experience. I was so awed while I was there it literally left me speechless. This was my 2nd PRAASA. I attended last year as my groups alt GSR and was wholly unprepared for what to expect, much like coming in as a new AA. So I was more prepared this year for the time frame.... 8-am to 11ish at night, long but energizing days.

I'm not sure why it was such a spiritual experience this year in Alaska. I don't know whether it was Anchorage or having more familiarity with the HI area members and getting closer to the D8 crew. There were less people than last year so it was not as overwhelming and my luggage arrived in Anchorage with me rather than going to Kauai without me. Last year I was new to HI and very fussy that AA was so different from where I got sober in Phila. Thank god I got involved, rather than drunk.... y'all taught me that. In fact I think that would be a good topic for a workshop at PRASSA next year. AA service member moves to new area. How do we fit in rather than act out? Which I did a lot of, but more has been revealed and I am again grateful and humbled by the love and support we give each other even when we aren't on our best behavior.

In terms of regional assemblies I hear some years are kinda dry, or the topics aren't so interesting, or the level of enthusiasm/r participation is off. Not so this year, it was fantastic.. the presenters, the floor comments, the workshops, the weekend.all TERRIFIC.

TEAM D8 -that's the District 8 West Side Big Island members... that's our DCM and other GSR's – what a crew, total support from pick up to drop off with a few crab legs and fatty snacks in between . Love y'all

The main thing I got from the whole weekend in all the sharing, speaking , research and love was

- We are gonna be alright. Sometimes I wonder , but the wise elder statesmen/longtimers in service – past trustees delegates present and former shared it thoughtfully and honestly in a way that made me believe. That up till now I hadn't. There is much work to be done... as always. And we show up and do it and we save lives. It's Gods work.
- We are not growing as a fellowship. Seems scary that our membership is down given the disease and its enormity .
- According to our last membership survey weekly meeting attendance has dropped to an average of 2. That's a lil scary... but I realize... I too sometimes only make it to two meetings a week as well . even though I am in touch with alcoholics on a daily basis in both my work and personal life.
- That we carry the message of hope and a solution around the world with our 7th tradition supporting the translation of the BIG book yearly into different languages. We have a solution that saves and changes people's lives. how cool is that??
- Speaking of which the most memorable moment of the whole weekend besides the moose and the group photo was....

A lil Eskimo looking woman from Russia (speaking Russian with a translator) shared of being sober 15 years and how she started a group a few years ago in her area with the support of an Alaska group. It was hard to be sober in a community of much drinking. the Alaska group sent Russian language big books to her and her group now has a few members and that her attendance at-PRAASA will give her much to share and great memories but most importantly she will let them know back in Russia that they are not alone. Chicken skin moment that said it all. She got a standing ovation, and reminded us all of why we show up and keep doin` what we do , even when we don't want to .

Greg M. also a local boy from Maui our general service office manager in NY was the sat night speaker. Very calm ,collected and in a general way, with his twinkly eyes, allayed every fear I have for our fellowship and its future . We just keep doing this thing together ...the prerequisite and given is we stay sober then we have something to offer. Trends, anonymity breaks, recovery television, drugs, treatment centers, dual addiction, finances they all come and go. we stay sober and keep the doors open and the big book translations happening and God does the rest.

- Got to see and hear Madeline our Pacific Region Trustee. She is a hoot, and sits on many committees. A real attraction to this fellowship and to long term service.
- The heartfelt sharing of dealing with members who take medications and whether we should voice our opinions on it sometimes meaning life or death for them

These are just a few of the many extraordinary moments for me. I hope everyone gets the opportunity to experience PRASSA in a similar way.

And I even got to meet a MOOSE!.



I was promised in AA that it would get greater later. That has been my experience, I keep coming back cause I still want more....more and more of what we have to offer.

Thanks for saving my life and allowing me to serve.

Marjorie
GSR – Kailua Kona Group



My name is Ermina, I am an alcoholic, I also serve as DCM, District 12 Puna, Area 17 Hawaii, and this is how we announce ourselves all weekend.

Wow, what a great experience this was. I am going to begin with my registration for PRAASA. I e-mailed Roxanne in Alaska to request home stay. Specifically, a native person. I felt that with such a rich native back round, it would be vital to have a native experience. My choice made me feel that there would be a more spiritual connection produced from this undertaking. I was on the mark. Mel K (significant other) and I stayed with Shirley T. and her son Devin while we were in Anchorage. She was from the other side of the North Pole, and has 13 years sobriety. I could not have asked for anything better. Shirley and her son were very kind and generous. Our first decision was to go to an AA meeting, they do meetings a little different, yet the format is the same.

We shared with each other our sobriety, our parenthood, and the importance of Natives sharing with Natives sobriety and how we are no different than any other alcoholic. HP is so awesome, while I was there I met Anita who is from Waianae, and had recently moved to Alaska. Once again being astonished by the omnipotence of HP.

Anita and I are sobriety sisters; our sponsors have the same sponsor. She was very much concerned with the Native women of Alaska. That in sobriety most of them still felt subservient. Not so with the Hawaiian women, so Anita started a 12 x 12 meeting to help these beautiful women. Anita is awesome, and made me aware of how awesome AA in Hawaii really is, especially the Strength.

PRAASA was a great experience. Mel and I made the decision to sit at different tables to meet and share with new people. That was a wise choice; we sat with two previous delegates from Nevada. What a wealth of information, as well as sharing with a new GSR from Nevada.

This to me was no different than our Assemblies, and felt very comfortable speaking at the conference. Even our Roundtable for the DCM's was the same, with more input on the questions and more answers and definitely more ideas to choose from. Hearing that all DCM's have the same issues really made me feel comfortable that, we are not in control and just when we think we got it, time to turn it over.

The greatest word of wisdom I heard at the conference was from our own Area Chair: When To Say No To Service. This made perfect sense too. That in the event that we had already held a service position that is being offered we should say no and take on a new experience. This will keep us growing and not resting on our laurels in comfort for what we already know. I was moved by Nick's knowledge and experience as well as getting to know him a wee bit more. All of the panels were real informative and got great ideas for "Inform the Delegate".

Finally, I am very grateful to HP for allowing me to experience this event and the other 44 friends of Bill W. from Hawaii to share with me PRAASA. Wow 45 people altogether from Hawaii, no wonder the snow started melting.

Thank You for letting me be of Service,
Ermina C.,
Puna District Chair



Communication & Participation – The Key to Unity and Self Support. An alphabet of quotes from The Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

A.A. will survive without my service. I can't say I'll survive without A.A.

Be a committed active member of your home group.

Contribute for the services that we ask for (Home Group, GSO, Intergroup, District, Area)

DUI/those from the court system: Belligerence + Anger = Fear + Ignorance + Vulnerability

eServices – online at www.aa.org

Folks, we've got work to do.

the Gifts I've gotten in A.A. are long and important to me, and something for which I am very grateful for.

Home Group – the heart of A.A., where we accept responsibilities and try to sustain friendships.

Idea – a good idea can come from anyone.

Just deliver the message – when you deliver pizza, you're not responsible whether they eat it.

Know where the money goes, make an informed contribution.

Literature–thank God for our literature, if it were just me talking it would be mostly four letter words.

Meeting – it's fine just to be a meeting.

Newcomer – protect the newcomer.

Online Intergroup – OIAA - do we want an OIAA section in our A.A. directory?

Principles – It's principles before personalities, not principles without personalities.

Quantify – We can't quantify our 12th step work.

Russian woman (who traveled from Siberia to Moscow to Atlanta to Seattle to Anchorage) said she felt "Waves of friendship in PRAASA and can tell people back home that they are not alone."

Select, don't railroad people into service.

Select with care those who will act in the best interest of A.A. as a whole.

Sponsee- take your sponsee with you as you fulfill your service commitments – let them see what you do and include them.

Trust God, trust the process, trust your trusted servants

Try our best to guide by sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

Ultimate authority – our ultimate authority is in charge.

VIDEO – Young Peoples Video submissions accepted by GSO until September 1, 2008.

www.aa.org

eXpenses at round ups, conventions, etc. - it's a charge for the facility, not for A.A.

You may need to change, not the group.

ZZZZZZ- did I just doze off in a room of 752 people?

Coleen A.

DCM, No Ka `O'i District 5



**A PRAASA Q and A
with a Past Delegate/Trustee, two Past Delegates,
a Panel 58 Delegate from the Pacific Region and a
Panel 57 Delegate from the BC/Yukon Area 79**



Name: Ruth J.
Date of sobriety: June 26, 1970
Current/past service positions: Past Delegate/Trustee-
Do you currently have a service position in your homegroup?
No
What was your first experience at PRAASA like? I got a feeling that I really liked these folks and the enthusiasm (1973 Las Vegas 230 attended)
How many have you been to since then? 34 Why do you continue to attend? Love watching the AA process and newer people solve problems
Was there a topic or panel discussion this year at PRAASA that caught your attention, anything new - something you had not heard before? Some of the presenters
Why is it important that we go? Get a look at AA at a level outside your area and meet your peers from all over the Pacific Region
How does the homegroup member benefit? Can get information on how AA operates beyond their little local area.
Is it worth spending the money? For GSR/DCM's YES--just ask some who went this year
Are you planning on attending PRAASA 2011 Waikiki? YES!



Name: Joan M.
Date of sobriety: January 7, 1979
Current/past service positions: I have served as GSR in three groups, DCM in two districts, Alternate Delegate 1 3/4 terms, Delegate Panel 51 Area 42, Chair of the Northern Area Committee Area 42, Treasurer of two groups and the Area; and I am on the Board of the Las Vegas Round-up.
Do you currently have a service position in your homegroup?
No, however, they know that I am willing to do whatever is needed.
What was your first experience at PRAASA like? I went to Pocatello, ID in 1985 or 6. I was asked to read the Traditions. I was very new to service, and had never heard of PRAASA until all of a sudden I was going.
How many have you been to since then? I think 17.
Why do you continue to attend? I really enjoy knowing that the program continues to be a valuable asset to those of us who are alcoholic and want help. Also, I like seeing old friends and meeting new ones like yourself who love AA.
Was there a topic or panel discussion this year at PRAASA that caught your attention, anything new - something you had

not heard before? The panel on Participation and the one on Unity were the most interesting to me. Those are the key issues to keep out fellowship healthy and alive for the still suffering alcoholic (who might be someone who is already in the program but in need of help.)

Why is it important that we go? The information we hear at PRAASA is what is being done around the world to keep AA alive and well. We all need to know what changes are being suggested so that our groups can decide if that is the best for AA as a whole. If our delegates are not well informed then they cannot make good decisions on the issues.

How does the homegroup member benefit? When our GSR returns from PRAASA, we expect to hear what is happening and how our group can contribute to the process.

Is it worth spending the money? The average member of a group might not feel that it is important to go. However, every group should be supporting their GSR to attend. In our area, GSR's in groups that cannot afford to send anyone can get additional help from their District, the area sub committee in which that group resides, and the area. We always have a reasonable attendance at PRAASA's.

Are you planning on attending PRAASA 2011 Waikiki? You better believe it!!



Name: Jim W.
Date of sobriety: Nov 7, 1979
Current/past service positions: Past Delegate-Panel 55 - Area 05
Do you currently have a service position in your homegroup?
Coffee Maker
What was your first experience at PRAASA like? Salt Lake City 1988 - blew me away and I've been a PRAASA junkie since.
How many have you been to since then? Why do you continue to attend? 10? - The program, the people - I love it and them.
Was there a topic or panel discussion this year at PRAASA that caught your attention, anything new - something you had not heard before? Many things - I always hear new things - every year.
Why is it important that we go? I want to stay fresh - you have to attend in order to experience.
How does the homegroup member benefit? They have to put up with me every week. I love to talk about the incredible life God is giving me - a large margin of that has/is in General Service
Is it worth spending the money? - definitely - I pay my own way.
Are you planning on attending PRAASA 2011 Waikiki? ABSOLUTELY.



Name: Trish L.

Date of sobriety: February 19, 1994

Current/past service positions: Current General Service: Delegate, BC/Yukon Area 79 (Panel 57), Past General service positions = Area 79 Chair, Area 79 Alt. Chair, Area 79 Secretary, DCM District 30 (Area 79), GSR (Reflections Group, District 30, Area 79), also served as Intergroup Rep. (Vancouver, BC, Canada)

Do you currently have a service position in your homegroup?

Yes, I am the shopper and alternate coffee person

What was your first experience at PRAASA like? It was one of those mountain-top experiences for me.

How many have you been to since then? Why do you continue to attend? I have been to one more since then, and hope to continue to attend because it is a fabulous educational opportunity.

Was there a topic or panel discussion this year at PRAASA that caught your attention, anything new - something you had not heard before? All the panels and presentations were stimulating and through-provoking

Why is it important that we go? How does the homegroup member benefit? Is it worth spending the money? I think the best answer to that can be found in Concept IX and on the essay on leadership from that Concept that can be found earlier on in the Service Manual. We are a society with rotating leadership, and we need to constantly be finding, engaging and training the leaders of tomorrow.

Are you planning on attending PRAASA 2011 Waikiki? Oh I really, really hope I can attend that one!

The Delegate from BC/Yukon Area 79 has been invited to attend PRAASA for a number of years now, as an honorary guest (sometimes referred to as "The Canadian Cousin". It is enormously helpful for the Area 79 Delegate to attend PRAASA, even though we are officially part of the Western Region, not the Pacific Region. Our Region is comprised of only four Areas, so the opportunity to get together and share with 15 other Areas provides a wealth of knowledge and shared experience. It truly enhanced my Conference experience as well. Thank you!



My name is Gail N. , Panel 58 Delegate from the San Diego-Imperial Area 08. My date of sobriety is June 1, 1972. I have had many service positions over the past 30+ years. I was very active in the 70s and 80s, then became more involved in Intergroup service in the 90s. In 2003 I was elected to be GSR for my home group and started in General Service again.

I have been a GSR, Area Secretary/Registrar, Area Treasurer, Archives Committee Chair*, Literature Committee Chair, Alt-Delegate, and Delegate. In the Intergroup I have served as an Intergroup Rep, After-Hours Phone Committee Chair, Alt Chair

of the Intergroup and Chair of the Intergroup. I don't currently have a service position in my home group. I attended my first PRAASA in 1976 in Tucson AZ. It was wonderful to hear about the service structure of AA and information about the Conference – even though I didn't understand all of what they were talking about. Every PRAASA has been just as inspiring as the first one. I have attended at least 25 Pacific Region Service Assemblies over the past 32 years.

The topics and panels were very good. The topics reflected some of the Conference agenda items. I believe this stimulates interest and participation from the GSRs to hear people from different parts of the Region having the same concerns for AA that we have in our own Area. It is very helpful to hear how the AA service structure works in other Areas and how each Area deals with particular challenges. PRAASA allows for a wonderful exchange of ideas, sharing what works and what doesn't work to better carry the message of AA. When the GSR comes back to his home group, he/she has a new fervor for service in AA. My own home group has paid the expenses for our GSR to attend PRAASA for about 10 years. I believe this helps the GSR to feel like a real trusted servant because we're willing to invest our 7th Tradition dollars to help him/her to learn and do their job better. We want the GSR to catch the contagious enthusiasm for service that is found at PRAASA. I am absolutely planning to attend PRAASA in Waikiki in 2011.

**When I was chair of the Archives Committee (1986), we started the first R.O.O.T.S. meeting. This is a meeting of old-timers that all have over 30 years of sobriety. We have four to six speakers each having about 20 minutes to talk about their early days of sobriety. We especially try to get speakers who have gotten sober in San Diego so they can share about some of the early meetings and service activities. R.O.O.T.S – an acronym for Remember Our Old-Timers Stories, is hosted once a year by our Archives Committee. They put it on as a break-even event. Though the attendance is usually 400-500 people, we still sometimes have to pass the basket a second time to meet expenses. I am always surprised at how many people are interested in hearing about the early days of AA. This meeting seems to draw a broad cross section of AA members from young people, older members, General Service members, Intergroup members, Hospitals & Institutions members, and all members in between. The speakers frequently were involved in the beginnings of these AA services and their tales of those early developments are usually quite funny.*

The Archives Committee asks on the flyer for attendees to bring donations of cookies. The Committee provides coffee and tea, plates, cups, napkins, etc. Usually the Area Literature Committee and Grapevine-LaVina Committee are asked to attend and set up their displays. At the end of the meeting there is a "count-down" to find the longest sober and the newest sober persons in attendance. Of course a Big Book is given to the newcomer by the old-timer. We sometimes have people with over 50 years sobriety, and often 40+ years.



Mahalo nui loa to Ruth, Joan, Jim (the Whipp!), Trish and Gail for participating in our Mynah Bird Q & A.

Excerpt from a 2008 report on what's going on at GSO from our Pacific Region Trustee Madeleine P.

Corrections

The old copies of the book, Inmate to Inmate, are still available for \$5.00/case (20 books), basically, shipping cost only. They want to get rid of the old inventory and this is a great opportunity to get some literature for institutions at a great price. There is no limit so buy them up.

The Corrections desk linked 1,607 inmates with an outside contact through the Corrections Correspondence Service. This amounted to 1,184 male contacts and 423 female contacts. I want to remind everyone that the male outside contacts are always short of volunteers. Please help where you can.

CPC

The CPC desk arranged for Alcoholics Anonymous to have an exhibit at 43 national professional conferences in 2007.

Literature

The most exciting news out of this committee is the Spanish language Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, 3rd Edition, will be available in February 2008. Whoo hoo! A letter of appreciation was sent to all authors who submitted stories, thanking them for their generosity and informing them they will receive a complimentary copy in February. A complimentary copy will also be sent to the GSR or mail contact of all Spanish speaking groups listed in the US and Canada.

Publications

2,105,628 books were distributed in 2007, up 8% from 2006. Total AA. purchases in 2007 were 1,697,035 units, while non-AA.s accounted for 408,593 units, or 19% of the total purchases.

Alcoholics Anonymous was translated into Amharic (for Ethiopia).

Just so you know, the annual amount needed to support each registered group is \$146.00. The average amount received from each registered group is \$92.00/year. These numbers mean the amount needed from each AA member to support GSO is \$0.54/month. The average amount received is \$0.35/month. We are so close. Wouldn't it be wonderful if group contributions reached the point where our literature could be sold at cost?

Public Information

The A.A. Videos for Young People has had approximately 550 accounts created to upload videos but only 4 valid submissions have been received. The deadline has been extended to September 1, 2008. This is to provide the fellowship a voice in expressing their stories and to avoid having videos that are outdated before they are two years old. Information on how to set up an account and submit a video submission can be found on the website – AA.org.

To give you some idea of what your Tradition 8 special workers do on a daily basis, in 2007, GSO staff mail amounted to 13,706, e-mail of 24,021 and faxes of 206. This brings a total of correspondence answered of 37,933. This does not include all of the telephone calls coming in to the office. If you consider holidays and the occasional day off, this averages about 152 items responded to on a daily basis.

(Ed note: The following is chicken skin reading, we really do carry the message all over the world. On the following page is a sharing of what our GSO Mgr and Trustee at Large experienced in Kuwait)

International Committee

Where all have we been this last year? Our Trustees-at-Large and our GSO staff have traveled to:

- First UAE International Conference on Addiction Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Visit GSO – Lima, Peru
- Uruguay's XXVI National Service Conference
- Visit GSO – Santiago, Chile
- Mexican National Convention Guadalajara, Mexico
- Meet with Intergroup & Justice & Corrections' Officials Nairobi, Kenya
- 3rd Sub-Saharan Africa Service Meeting Windhoek, Namibia
- 50th International ICAA Conference on Dependencies (International Council on Alcohol & Addictions)
- Stockholm, Sweden
- 7th AOSM Service Meeting Ranzan, Japan
- Meet with both Finnish Service Structures Helsinki, Finland
- 20th A.A. Anniversary - Russia
- 1st General Service Conference of Mongolia
- 14th European Service Meeting Frankfurt, Germany
- 15th REDELA (Meeting of the Americas) Sao Paulo, Brazil
- A.A. Malta & Gozo 2nd International Convention 2007 Salina Bay, Malta
- 7th Annual Gulf Convention of A.A. Muscat, Oman
- 1st West Central Africa Service Meeting Paris, France (it was less expense to meet in Paris instead of Africa)
- Concepts Workshop Warsaw, Poland

"I think it is important to remember that while we enjoy an established, almost well-organized service structure and fellowship in the US and Canada, there are countries that are struggling to bring the AA message to anyone who wants it. That makes your 7th Tradition contribution even that more important. We, as a conference, can try and give away what has been so freely given to us and truly practice the spirit of the 12th Tradition."

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AREA 17

This is an excerpt from last years PRAASA Board Report 2007 by Madeleine P., Pacific Region Trustee

Some of what Dorothy W. and Greg M. shared with the International Committee about their trip to the 6 th Annual Gulf Coast Countries Convention in Kuwait

“I know I am guilty myself of getting caught up in the minutia of carrying out my service position in A.A. and losing sight of the big picture – that of carrying the message to the alcoholic who hasn’t found our program yet. I forget that some still can’t get to our program.

Greg and Dorothy (GSO Mgr. and Trustee at Large U.S.) shared about their attendance at a convention where the local A.A.’s could not put up any signage advertising the location of the convention as it was illegal to meet. The Literature table was covered by a blanket so as to not draw attention to it and only uncovered when someone needed to obtain a piece of literature for themselves. Did you know it is illegal for citizens to say they have ever had a drink there? And the punishment is 18 lashes? And you thought the “lash of alcoholism was bad?!”

Dorothy and Greg shared about members from Iran (our disease knows no boundaries and neither does our program of recovery) who attended the convention who, when handed 6 A.A. pamphlets translated into their native tongue of Farsi, sat with tears streaming down their faces, filled with gratitude to read the “language of the heart” for the first time in their native language. They shared how there were no A.A. groups in the open in Iran as it was illegal but there several thousand N.A. meetings as they were not illegal. They shared how the police raid the A.A. meetings, arresting those in attendance. It makes no difference how long one has been sober, there is still a penalty for admitting to drinking alcohol.

GSO’s best “guestimate” is that A.A. is in approximately 160 countries today but that doesn’t detail the circumstances surrounding that presence. I think many of us here in our conference came to A.A. to avoid the police and incarceration, not incur it! Please don’t misconstrue my words for a political or religious commentary as they are not meant to be one. The situation just reminded me of how that “buck in the basket” helps to carry the message to those who can’t get to it, can’t read it or otherwise hear it. I believe there is a serious responsibility for those of us here in the U.S./Canada, being the oldest conference, to help where others can’t. Somebody somewhere had to go out of their way to bring the A.A. message to your town, your neighborhood, your prison – someone like Ebby had to spend his own time and money to make a trip to an old friend to share his recovery.

So when we feel bogged down in personalities or dotting the I’s and crossing the T’s, let’s all remember why we do what we do.

Inform the Delegate Assembly

April 4-5 Puna District (Big Island)

Budget Assembly

August 23-24 Waianae (Oahu)

Prepare for the Assembly!

Go to www.hawaii-aa.org for more info and for the

February Committee Meeting minutes are also posted on the website



Jails, Institutions or Death Event

April 19th, 2008

12 – 4 pm

St. Phiomena’s Church in Salt Lake

**The Leeward District Presents
A Day of Fun and FREE FOOD**

Including:

- Games such as “Con Lingo Bingo” and “Treatment Family Feud”**
- Panels on jails and institutions**
- Did we say, FREE FOOD?**
- Coffee, fellowship, sodas**
- A funny skit performed by alcoholics**
- Oh.. and FREE FOOD.**

**3300 Ala Lualani Street, behind McDonalds and Block Buster
Questions? - Holly 227-3748 or Erin 386-8940**

20th Annual Big Island Bash

Kailua-Kona

**Sheraton Keauhou Bay
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April 25, 26, and 27, 2008

www.bigislandbash.com



AREA BUSINESS

January Assembly business items:

Proposal: Elizabeth M. Background: Update the job description of the Alternate Delegate. We have no one to take care of our Structures and Guidelines

Proposal: Add to 2.7B, at the end of sentence; "and the Structures and Guidelines."

30 For - 57 Opposed. Motion defeated

Proposal: Elizabeth: Background: Update the job descriptions of the Area Officers and Standing Committee Chairs.

Proposal: Add to the beginning of 2.3 "Area Officers shall attend all Area Assemblies and Committee Meetings."

Add to the beginning of 3.3 "Standing Committee Chairs shall attend all Area Assemblies and Committee Meetings"

88 For - 0 Opposed Motion Passed

*Proposal for pamphlet to the Agnostic passed.

Go to www.hawaii-aa.org for minutes. The discussion and voting results are noted.

Motion Carries onto GSO for consideration

*Proposals to create a Pamphlet for the Non-believer/ Agnostic/Atheist Alcoholic has been explored six times in the past.

1975-1976

1981-1982

1988-1989

1995-1996 and in 1997

2000-2001

A member shares:

I think as long as agnostics are willing to believe in a higher power of some sort, I am okay with AA creating a pamphlet aimed at this idea. I think when agnosticism is a code word for "no power greater than me/my rational mind" I question at its appropriateness in AA. If an alcoholic wants to recover without any concept of a higher power then perhaps AA is just not for them. It's their choice. I think individuals in AA have every right not to believe in a higher power. However, I do not think Alcoholics Anonymous should change their essential program which repeatedly states that a power greater than ourselves is necessary to restore us to sanity. "No human power could have relieved our alcoholism." I completely agree with people choosing their own concept of a higher power and certainly the theistic language in our literature can feel limiting. Therefore a pamphlet aimed at broadening the concept of a higher power may well serve those that are put off by the more narrow Judeo-Christian interpretation of that higher power.

(The sharing above comes from a member who did not attend the assembly. You do not have to be present at Area Assemblies to have your voice heard, your voice is important. We welcome your comments and thoughts, your participation is important!)

The following is an excerpt from our Delegate's report at the February Committee meeting. Full report can be found at the area website under committees.

"We are about to start the process of collecting the Area conscience regarding the business of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole so our collective voice can be heard and be a part of the decision making process affecting the fellowship. I mistakenly thought the agenda was light after first reviewing it but now I can see that there are plenty of juicy items for us to chew upon, to take back to our groups and get their feedback.

The Conference theme this year is "Communication and Participation- The Key to Unity and Self-Support" We have panel discussions at our April Assembly and at the Conference in New York as well as the Workshop Topic "Love and Tolerance, Now More Than Ever". The topic of love and tolerance is always appropriate but in the world we live in, the prevalence of treatment centers that have changed the face of recovery and how we encounter our twelve step prospects we are challenged more than ever to live up to those principles and singleness of purpose.

From the infamous topic of rotating our General Service Office Manager, revisiting the question of having Class B (alcoholic) Trustees being considered for Chairman of the General Service Board and having "the gray pages" (medical, social aspects of alcoholism) in the A.A. Grapevine to issues involving Finance, Literature, Treatment, Public Information Committees as well as many other aspects the Conference will be a full, rich and empowering endeavor. I wish all the membership could know the importance of everyone's participation so the connection with the A.A. member to the Trustees and the General Service Board stays strong. The knowledge of the Area conscience is vital so that the Board is informed of the needs and wishes of the fellowship.

We will be informing the Delegate and ourselves on the topics and gathering the Area conscience and consensus where ever possible so when I travel to New York at the end of April I will have a solid knowledge of our Area conscience.

I have submitted the proposal for an Agnostic/Atheist pamphlet to the Conference Coordinator for the 2009 General Service Conference as was decided by substantial unanimity at our January Assembly. I asked Amy, our GSO Archivist to research similar past proposals and have copies of her findings which shed light of the history of this kind of proposal in the Conference process (full findings report at www.hawaii-aa.com)

I look forward to the up-coming Inform the Delegate Assembly in beautiful Puna and your presentations. Once returning from New York I will visit all of the districts in Area 17 and give a full report on the Conference.

(The two columns on the right are the topics that will be presented by districts (GSRs) at the April Assembly. Districts were drawn from the hat for the panel presentations)

58th General Service Conference 2008**Communication and Participation –
The Key to Unity and Self-Support**

Panels that will be presented at the April “Inform the Delegate” Assembly by Districts and the Finance Committee are:

Panel 1. Puna ~ Communication and Participation:

- Sharing the Message of Service
- Our key to keeping A.A. strong
- Leadership in AA: Building Communication

Panel 2. Kihei ~ Unity:

- Our Common Welfare Should Come First
- Principles before Personalities
- Diversity: reaching out to all Alcoholics

Panel 3. Diamond Head ~ Self Support:

- Self-Supporting through members voluntary contributions only
- Contempt prior to investigation
- Responsibility to Communicate and Participate

Panel 4. No Ka Oi ~ Finance

- Discuss request that a Finance Kit be developed to assist groups, Intergroup/Central Offices, district and area service workers in carrying the message of our shared responsibility for the seventh tradition
- Consider the request to “discuss the benefits and the liabilities, both spiritual and practical of funding the general Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous solely by the voluntary contributions of AA members and the AA groups, that profits from literature sales will no longer be used to fund our General Service Office. Further, consider a procedure for gathering input from the fellowship as a whole and prepare a report on these discussions for the 2009 conference.
- Discuss self-support

Panel 5. Tri Island ~ AA Grapevine

- Consider publishing two CDs of stories from La Vine on traditions one –twelve
- Reconsider the 2007 general service conference committee advisory action recommending that” The grapevine and La Vina include a section on the medical, legal, and social aspects of Alcoholism, with an appropriate disclaimer”
- Discuss the A.A. Grapevine’s legacy of self-support
- Consider ways to increase awareness of the Grapevine and La Vina’s roles on the fellowship today.

Panel 6. Waianae ~ Literature

- Consider a request to change the title of the pamphlet
- 44 questions to the FAQ subtitled to Frequently Asked
- Questions About A.A.
- Consider a request to reinstate the pamphlet “Letter to a Woman Alcoholic”

Panel 7. Leeward ~ Public Information

- Discuss the 2002-2006 General Service Conference Advisory Actions regarding replacement and production of television PSA’s
- Consider proposed text for a new section on posthumous anonymity in the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity”
- Consider request that a wall poster with information about Alcoholics Anonymous be created for placement in school guidance counselor offices.

**Panel 8. Windward ~ Report and Charter
The AA Service Manual, 2007-2008 Edition:**

- Consider a paragraph titled “ District Information” for inclusion in Chapter Three
- Consider a suggestion to place a glossary of terms used in the AA Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts for World Service after the text of the AA Service Manual and directly preceding the index. AA Directories (Canada, Western U.S, and Easter U.S.)
- Consider listing online Intergroup of AA (OIAA) in the new section titled “Online Intergroups” under the section International Correspondence meetings” in the A.A. Directories where “online meetings” appear, and include the online Intergroup website and email addresses.

Panel 9. West Hawaii ~ Treatment Facilities

- Discuss the possible development of conference approved literature and/or service material to stimulate A.A. members’ interest in Treatment Facilities Twelfth Step work.
- Discuss a proposal that the pamphlet, Bridging the Gap (BTG), be rewritten to reflect that the BTG program is used in both Treatment Facilities and Corrections service work.

Panel 10. Honolulu ~ Trustee

- Review report from the trustees committee ion nominating regarding Nominating Procedure No. 9 (Guidelines for hiring General Manager, GSO) and length of service of General Manager, G.S.O.
- Discuss request to revisit the 2007 general Service Conference advisory Action to consider all eligible Class A and Class B trustees when selecting the Chairperson of the General Service Board

**Panel 11. East Hawaii Workshop - Love and Tolerance,
Now More Than Ever**

- What does the face of A.A. Look like? Is there diversity in my group, district, area, at the conference? If not, what can or should we do about it?
- How are Twelfth Step calls being made these days

Sharing sessions from the assembly body follow each panel.

Standing Committee Chairs

CPC ~ "COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY"

Aloha all,

We were given the opportunity to participate at an education session at the Kaneohe State Hospital on March 19, 2008.

Medication was the topic of discussion. We had utilized the pamphlet, The AA member – Medication & other drugs, for our presentation. Post our presentation, the question addressed "Why do sponsors tell sponsees not to take their medication?"

Our answer to the question based on the informational literature "We do not play doctor" and the practice of Honesty for the alcoholic in recovery. Realistically, this question presented as a problem experienced by the professionals.

Responsibly, we "carry this message to the fellowship" as the recipient of the message from the professional community.

In Service with Love,
Ken K.
Hawaii Area 17 CPC Chair
cpc@hawaii-aa.org

C. E. C. REPORT

Aloha Area 17,

After attending the Inventory Assembly in January I could see all that has been done and how much more could be done. We looked at a possibility of a (C.E.C.) Cooperation with the Elder Community chair in every District as it should be, but this appeared unrealistic. Then we entertained an idea of a C.E.C. representative on every island, this did look possible and that can only happen if we have more Seniors In Sobriety (S.I.S.) Meetings in Area 17.



Maybe there are a group of seniors in your home group that might want to get together, Or perhaps your brother, sister, parents, grandparents. The rewards of them getting together are endless and it's easy.

S.I.S. Meetings are like other meetings, all you need is a coffee pot, a Big Book or other Readings, A.A. the group and A.A. for the elderly pamphlets; find a place and a time and someone who will start the meeting. From there they can contact their D.C.M. and me so they could join the Big Island and Maui S.I.S. meetings.

The 3rd Annual A.A. Seniors In Sobriety Conference will be held aboard the Queen Mary Hotel, Long Beach California, May 20, 21, 22 & 23, 2008. I was at the first one at Keahou and can tell you it was all inspiring, great fellowship, and wonderful to listen to all the wisdom they had to share. I will be attending and hope to see you there.

If there is any way that I may be of service to you please don't hesitate to contact me.

In Service,
Remigio A. (Archie)
C.E.C. Chair, Area 17
cec@hawaii-aa.org

3rd Annual A.A. Seniors In Sobriety Conference

*Queen Mary Hotel
Long Beach, California
May 20, 21, 22 & 23, 2008*

Featuring:

- Meetings, Workshops & Fellowship
- Luncheon, Banquet and Speakers
- Entertainment
- Stateroom rate: \$129 (applies 3 days before and 3 days after conference)
- Excursions – Long Beach Sites & Avalon (Catalina Island)
- Full AI-Anon Participation

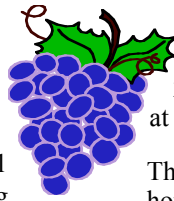
Contacts:

Michael M. (714) 686-7360, gramamki@gmail.com (Co-Chair)	SIS 2008
Pick H. (951) 926-1530, homelandick@yahoo.com	P.M.B. 160
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Patti B. (949) 412-9910, Registration@2008SISconference.org	www.2008SISconference.org

Our Purpose - International Seniors In Sobriety Conference
This conference will focus on concerns and issues impacting seniors, their spouses and family with both short term and long term sobriety. It will provide an opportunity for alcoholics of all ages to discuss the effects of aging on sober alcoholics and how to help the still-suffering senior alcoholic.
Our history began with a conference in Kona, Hawaii and continued with another in Sedona, Arizona. We intend to use experiences from these events to create yet another highly enjoyable and rewarding conference.

Registration Form - Over

**2007/2008
Grapevine Committee**



We are most proud to report subscriptions to The Grapevine Magazine increased by more than 5% in the Hawaii area, or 26 subscriptions. (Counts for audio subscriptions not available at this time).

The **AA Grapevine** is the international monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as “Our Meeting in Print”. The La Vina is the Spanish version of the magazine. There are 4 ways to order- Online: www.aagrapevine.org, By mail: The AA Grapevine PO Box 1980 Marion, Ohio, by fax 1-212-870-3301, by phone- English 1-800-631-6025 (US) 1-815-734-5856 (International).

The Hawaii Area Grapevine/LaVina had a productive 2007. 2008 promises to be an even better year for the Grapevine/La Vina committee.

In 2007 The Hawaii Grapevine/LaVina committee attended district meetings, Unity Days, and held workshops when invited. The Grapevine group and district representative numbers increased. (Representatives registered with Grapevine). The traveling Grapevine/LaVina literature display visited Hawaii Island, The Hawaii AA Convention, and the Hawaii Area Assemblies/Committee Meetings. The Hawaii Grapevine/La Vina posted articles on the Hawaii-AA.org website and our newsletter The Mynah Bird.

The online Grapevine is going stronger than ever. The Grapevine home page at www.aagrapevine.org has been updated and is all new for 2008. The new user friendly experience has updated graphics, free features, and easier navigation. The website also offers a digital archive where you can find every article, letter, editorial, special feature, joke, and cartoon published in AA Grapevine from the first issue in June 1944 to one year ago. There is even a sobriety counter where you can see how many years, days, and even seconds you have of sobriety. The monthly E-Newsletter is free! Where you can get the latest on what’s happening at The Grapevine delivered to your inbox. The Grapevine magazine is available in audio format. Subscribe, download, and listen to stories, jokes, PO Box 1980, and the Editor’s note from your desk top, MP3 player, or CD’s.

“The AA Grapevine, Inc. is totally self supporting and does not accept AA group contributions, receive income from advertising, or membership fees. Grapevine publications are financed entirely by the sales of the Grapevine magazine, Audio Grapevine, Digital Archive and other related books and CD’s.”

If The Grapevine has made a difference in your sobriety, please pass the word to your group and encourage them to gift a subscription to a newcomer or even an old timer!

<p>Oahu Intergroup Matt L.</p> <p>Central Office: 1400 Kapiolani Blvd. Bldg. C #27 Honolulu, HI 96804 (808) 946.1438 Website: www.oahucentraloffice.com</p>	<p>Kauai Intergroup Kathryn B.</p> <p>Central Office: P.O. Box 3606 Lihue, Kauai, HI 96766 (808) 245.6677 Website: www.hconv.org/kauai/kaui.htm</p>	<p>Maui Intergroup Tom McN.</p> <p>Central Office: 70 Central Avenue, Suite 1 Wailuku, HI 96793 (808) 244.9673 Website: www.aamaui.org</p>	<p>West Hawaii Intergroup Paul J.</p> <p>Central Office: P.O. Box 5135 Kailua-Kona, HI 96745.5135 (808) 329.1212 Website:www.turquoise.net/~whaa/</p>	<p>East Hawaii Intergroup Chris</p> <p>Central Office: P.O. Box 1434 Hilo, HI 96721 (808) 961.6133 Web- site: www.hawaiiiaa.org</p>
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**Got a story for the next issue?
The topics for the next issue are:
Unity, Participation and Service**

Submissions on Steps, Traditions, Concepts are always appreciated.

send to mynahbird@hawaii-aa.org

or to your Mynah Bird District Chair, GSR or DCM.



Hawaii Area #17 Groups/members Bulletin Board

write something
for the Mynah
Bird and then
submit it.

Happy #19
Nick H.
March 31

Attn: Treasurers
Send Area Contributions

To: Hawaii Area 17
c/o Linda M.
454 Kuamoo St. Apt C
Honolulu, HI 96815
include: group name
and district #

Budget
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Happy # 9
Birthday
Elizabeth
April 5

Happy
Birthdays
April and
Jedediah
#2

Rule
62

Happy # 14
Miranda K.
March 21

Buy a newcomer a
subscription
to the Grapevine
or LaVina

Happy #5
Shoshanah
March 14

Happy
birthday
Feli #1

Check the website
for Assembly info,
details, location,
dates, minutes,
service materials
and registration
forms.
www.hawaii-aa.org