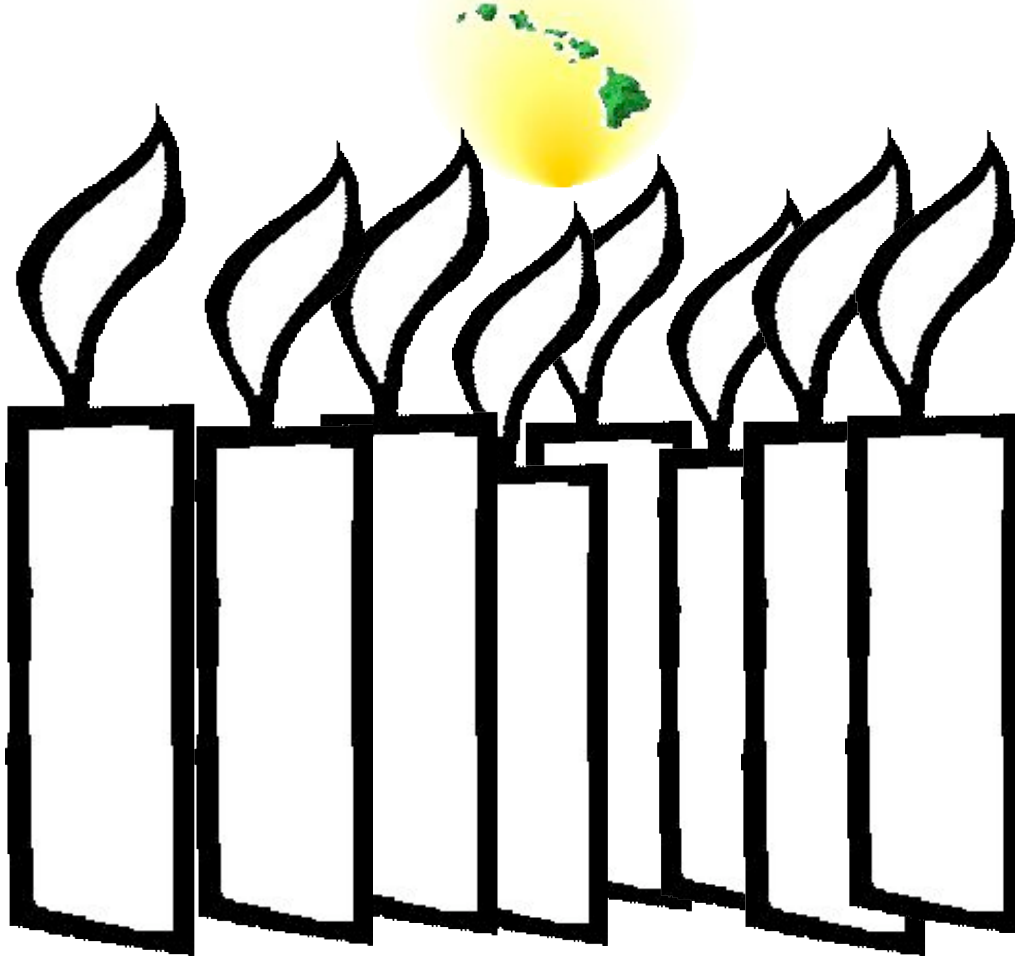




# MYNAH BIRD

## HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER



**“No one of us is given a torch big enough to lead the drunks of the world out of the darkness and into the light. Instead, each of us has been given a candle that burns for a short while with a flickering flame. If we stand together, the light will outshine the greatest torch. If we argue and bicker and blow out each other’s candle so that each of us starts shielding our own little flame, then the alcoholics of the world will continue to suffer in darkness, and so will we.”**

**An excerpt from a 1995 General Service Conference presentation.**

## Diary of a Delegate



### A FOND ALOHA

As I bid you a fond aloha I would like to express my heart felt gratitude for the honor of serving as your delegate for the last two years.

General Service has been both an honor and a constant challenge to let go of old limitations. From a baptism by fire at my first General Service Conference to now this has been an amazing transformational experience. Someone asked me, "What do you mean transformational experience?" Words can not describe the journey, only walking the path can. Soon that journey will start a new for our next delegate. As this panel comes to completion and we pass the torch in the spirit of rotation to the next panel I am reminded of the vision our founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob held for the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The purpose of the General Service Conference is not to perpetuate itself but to facilitate our primary purpose - carrying the message of hope to the suffering alcoholic now and for generations to come. Please encourage and nurture those around you that may step up to the service position you now hold. If others are not showing up, be the one that does show up and lead by example.

In my experience those I may have the biggest challenge with also came bearing the biggest gifts even though at the time I may not have wanted to receive it. We all have something of value to bring to the party. We are each a piece of the mosaic that together create this amazing tapestry of our recovering family. Diversity is our strength but respect is also the foundation of that strength. By acknowledging the value each of us brings somehow we are drawn closer together in the solution. Service has demonstrated to me how important showing up and suiting up really is.

Mahalo Nui Loa for the amazing opportunity serving as your delegate. My life has and is enriched by the love, support and goodwill of the area. I have felt your aloha as a guest in many of your homes and home groups. I am truly honored to call you family. May we all have a sober future.

In love and service,  
Vernon



## PACIFIC REGIONAL FORUM REPORT BACK

Regional Forums originated in 1975 at the suggestion of Dr. Jack N., then chair of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. They were to be week-end sharing and informational sessions designed to help the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Grapevine Board, Grapevine Staff and General Service office staff staying in touch with A.A. members, trusted servants and newcomers to service throughout the A.A. structure.

I have just returned from Spokane attending the Pacific Regional Forum. Wow! Just as stated above the forums are designed to enhance participation by A.A. members and communication with General Service Board Staff, Grapevine staff, General Service office staff, etc. The U.S and Canada has 8 regions. We are a part of the Pacific Region consisting of 15 areas from California, Hawaii, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Oregon, Washington State, Alaska and Idaho. We come together at the Forum once every other year similar to PRAASA, (Pacific Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly). Area 17 (Hawaii) will be hosting PRAASA in 2011 at the Sheraton Waikiki in Honolulu.

The forum is an education for all involved. Not only do New York and the General Service Board listen and stay connected with the membership, everyone present learns more about how the structure of A.A. operates. Thanks to the vision of our founders Dr. Bob and Bill W. and the old timers Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide movement. In his report, Leonard Blumenthal, Class A Trustee, non-alcoholic Chairman of the General Service Board shared in his presentation that, worldwide, over 25 million people die of alcoholism every year!

The forum was chaired by our Regional Trustee Madeline P. We had presentations on the A.A. Grapevine Board and La Vina by board members as well as presentations on Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (A.A.W.S.) by director George M. Some have asked me if the trustees are paid. They are not. They are volunteers and receive no pay. We had presentations by Class A and Class B trustees including Class A Trustee Rogelio Flores, a judge of 23 years. Flores is a wonderful speaker who has sent 10-15,000 defendants to Alcoholics Anonymous in his career! He answered an often asked question, "why judges do sent drug addicts to Alcoholics Anonymous? The answer- they don't know any better. They need education and once educated they can make more informed decisions. He emphasized how important our Co-operation with the Professional Community committee (CPC) is in letting judges, doctors; probation officers know what A.A. is, we are and what we aren't.

Our Trustee-at-large, Dorothy W., along with others, helps to carry the message of hope A.A. offers worldwide to those suffer

ing by nurturing countries that do not have the unity or resources we have. While in Kuwait attending a convention, all literature had to be covered up and hidden due to government restrictions. Also she attended Trinidad's 52nd A.A. convention, Hungary and Turkey 14th annual conventions. Russia celebrated 20 years of Alcoholics Anonymous being in their country. Our trustees also visited Alcoholics Anonymous in Greece, Croatia, and Mongolia where transportation was a camel and accommodations were tents.

Dorothy also visited Iran, where alcohol is illegal. Perhaps a year ago or more I attended an A.A. meeting on Oahu where a recovering alcoholic originally from Iran shared. She was returning to Iran to carry the A.A. message. She shared how, because alcohol was illegal in the Muslim country of Iran, alcoholics sometime resorted to drinking gasoline. I thought perhaps I had misheard but Dorothy did confirm that fact which speaks to the desperation of our disease. Dorothy also related that she had indeed met and worked with the person in Iran I had just spoken about.

I was deeply touched by her presentation as she shared the overwhelming gratitude she experienced from the countries she visited to see A.A. s visiting their country. She shared that the people she meets touch her heart and live with her forever as she shares her experience, strength and hope. We need each other. We are people who normally do not mix but we do mix and we mix very well. She shared that China has 7 A.A. meetings. A member shared while visiting Afghanistan an A.A. meeting started on an air base so that our soldiers have an A.A. meeting to attend.

Throughout the Forum we had general sharing sessions and opportunities to ask questions directly to those able to answer them. A Panel by past trustees, a rich depository of A.A. history concluded the forum. Greg M. gave a presentation on self-support where among other things shared Hawaii Area 17 had a 21% increase in groups contributing from approximately 42% to 64%.

Delegates from the Pacific Region gave presentations on such topics such as, "attraction rather than promotion," "our primary purpose," "7th tradition" and "sponsorship." Workshops were given about the A.A. grapevine, singleness of purpose, A.A. history, what does G.S.O. do for my group, A.A. websites, general service, the group conscience and protecting ourselves from apathy. I facilitated a workshop called, "How are decisions affecting A.A. Made?" The conference process was discussed with Doug R., conference coordinator; Paul C., Trustee and George M., director of A.A.W.S. present as well as Hawaii Area 17 past delegate Scott C. The workshop was really about learning how our conference process works. It was great to have Doug, Paul,

George and Scott present to answer questions directly. I had the opportunity as facilitator to keep my mouth shut, listen and assist in the flow of discussion. Briefly, every decision made by group conscience from the home group to the General Service Conference affects A.A. Some questions discussed were: "are the trustees fair about allowing agenda items to the conference?" "Is the fellowship informed and is due time being taken before decisions are made?" Different ideas were discussed about changing the conference process. Trusting our trusted servants is not a one way street. Transparency builds trust. A good healthy airing of diverse opinions and view points was heard.

Diversity is our strength. Dialogue, dissent, asking questions are part of what keeps us healthy as long as this is done with mutual respect of each other. Serving as Delegate has been and continues to be a journey of transformation for me by challenging me to do and be more, providing spiritual experiences, opening my mind to new ideas and letting go of the old ones. Old ideas and limitations shaped by old experiences and serving A.A. or anyone else besides myself is a new idea. Strong and sober. God doesn't call the qualified he qualifies the called and that certainly has been the case for me. Each step of this journey in General Service from GSR, DCM, Area Chair and Delegate I am asked to do more than I thought I could possibly do. Those were old ideas.

General Service asks us to hold a vision beyond our self, our home group, and our immediate recoveries and even beyond the General Service Conference in the U.S. and Canada to carry the message of hope to all suffering alcoholics in the world. Wow!!! And people say that general service is all politics!! The General Service structure was put in place in 1955 after a five year experiment and approved at the 20th Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous in St. Louis with 5,000 in attendance including Bill W. where the care of A.A. and its future was turned over to the fellowship. Forums, PRAASAs, Area Assemblies, district and home group meetings are all a part of keeping the membership connected to the General Service Board and our Trustees. The actions of the trustees need to directly reflect a response to the needs of our fellowship. A Delegate, Area officers, DCMs, GSRS and members of A.A. groups actively involved in the discussion and decision making through group conscience is a vital part of carrying the message so that we continue to hold the vision of this worldwide fellowship called Alcoholics Anonymous. There is no us and them, there is only us.

In A.A. love and service,  
Vernon G.

## Aloha to everyone in Hawaii Area 17!

It's that time in the rotation and elections are upon you. I wanted to share my own experience, strength and hope regarding service since it is probably on many of your minds right now.

I hate it when I hear people in our fellowship refer to General Service as "politics" and often reply, "Only if we let it become politics!"

What is politics in AA? Well, I believe it describes when someone seeks personal involvement in order to seek authority or power, when we lobby or "politic" others to vote our way. What is service? I believe this describes what we should always strive for in Alcoholics Anonymous – to work for the benefit of another, the greater good. We should always remember that with the service authority, we are given an equal service responsibility. Whatever service position we are elected or appointed to fulfill, we should do it for the good of Alcoholics Anonymous.

My job and yours as well, is to stay out of HP's way and just make myself available. The results are not up to me but the action is. So I encourage all of you to make yourself available and leave to rest up to your HP. I know the results will be awesome. I look forward to seeing you all in Kauai!

Your grateful servant in recovery,

Madeleine P.

Pacific Region Trustee



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### Leadership in A.A.

**The Second Tradition states: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."**

From this I deduce that there ought to be leaders in AA; that these leaders ought to consult the group conscience regularly; that these leaders ought to be trustworthy; and that these leaders ought not to be governors, dictators, or prescribers. This brings to mind the word "good" in the Ninth Concept for World Service: "Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety."

If I want to stand for election as a leader, I ought to take an inventory of my motives. Do I truly want to be the executive

arm of the group conscience? Do I want to serve--or do I want power? Am I searching for status? Do I think that a service leader in AA is a higher class of member than the ordinary members? If my answers aren't clear, it may be better for me and for AA that I don't stand for election.

A person's sobriety does matter--but not length in years. (My observation is that some members who are, say, ten years sober are in fact only one year sober, ten times repeated.) What really matters is that I've used my time to work on my ego. The book Alcoholics Anonymous says that "selfishness and self-centeredness are the root of our troubles." It is not for nothing that the service Step, Step Twelve, comes after eleven other Steps--these eleven are supposed to make my ego smaller so that I can serve better.

The Third Step Prayer in the Big Book says "Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will." And the Big Book, in treating Steps Eight and Nine, clearly states the ultimate purpose of our program: "At the moment we are trying to get our lives in order. But this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."

Because a leader ought to see to the "future functioning and safety" of an AA group (Concept IX), he ought to be in AA long enough to have done as many of the Twelve Steps as possible, so that his ego is troubling him minimally, and he has become as serviceable as possible. If I want to stand for election as a leader, I ought to take an inventory of my practicing of the Twelve Steps. How much have I really worked on my ego? How many of the Twelve Steps have I really done consciously? Is my ego small enough so that I am serviceable enough to fill this service position? How trustworthy am I? How consistently do I distinguish between principles and personalities in all of my affairs?

If I'm standing for election as a leader, I ought to see to the "common welfare" of a group of AAs, so it is necessary that I know the Twelve Traditions. I ought to have experienced how they are being applied. It's even better if I've learned to apply them myself, both in my group and in all my affairs. I ought to take an inventory of my knowledge of the Twelve Traditions. What do I know about the Twelve Traditions? Which Traditions have I experienced being applied? Which Traditions have I myself applied consciously? To which Traditions does my group not pay enough attention? (With what results?) To which Traditions do I not pay enough attention? (With what results?)

There are degrees of responsibility in AA: in the beginning I'm responsible only for myself and my own sobriety. After a while,

if I've worked sufficiently on my ego, I'm fit to function as a service leader in my home group. When I've worked in my AA group for a while (and my ego hasn't been mortally wounded by criticism), I'm fit to function beyond the group level. And after I've served, it's good for me to become a very ordinary member of my group once again.

If I want to stand for election as a leader, I ought to take an honest and humble inventory of my true talents versus the talents demanded by such a service position. For example, the secretary of a group must be able to spell and must have overcome procrastination. The chairperson must know something about meeting procedures. A member of the literature committee must know something about printing. I must remember: enthusiasm is no substitute for talent or skills.

If a leader-to-be has asked himself or herself all the questions above, then quite possibly he or she may exclaim: "What an order! I can't go through with it." But I keep something in mind from "How It Works": "Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. . . ." And so I come to what, for me, is the most important characteristic of an AA leader: does he or she continue to be willing "to grow along spiritual lines"?

Johan C.

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## GRATITUDE IN SERVICE

This is a thank you note to the fellowship of Hawaii Area AA, Serving as an officer on Panel 57 has been an amazing experience. Several years ago, one of our past Delegates and a then area officer encouraged me to become our home group's GSR. I unenthusiastically agreed and a new adventure for me began. I became totally captivated and impressed by the assembly process and wanted to remain a part of this vital part of our AA society. According to the "Spirit of Rotation," remaining on as the group GSR was not appropriate, so I had to find another service position if I were to remain a part of the process. When, at the November 2006 Election Assembly, the chair asked who was willing to remain standing for Area Treasurer, there I stood. And I stand before you today a changed person.

I set goals to improve the practical side of fulfilling the position of Area Treasurer, and I believe I have achieved those goals. However, along the way, something else happened. Fear of people left me! That is God working through each of you. So I thank

each of you for your patience and support, but most of all for allowing me to learn the true spirit of love and service in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Truly in love & service,  
Linda McD  
Area 17 Treasurer, Panel 57



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## Spirit of Rotation

As we come to the end of Panel 57, I reflect on the spiritual value and rewards of the Spirit of Rotation. I have heard it said many times that just as we understand our service jobs and become efficient in that position, it's time to rotate! What a beautiful thing for this Alcoholic, it keeps me right sized. A few things for me to meditate on as we come up on our Area Elections are:

- It's not about the person, it's about the position
- Placing principles before personalities in service lets me serve AA the very best I can
- My Higher Power knows where I need to be in service
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Legacy Elections are the spiritual vehicle of selecting our service leaders
- Our ultimate authority is a loving higher power as he/she/it expresses him/her/itself in our group conscience, our leaders are but trusted servants (tradition 2)

I love AA, I love General Service and I love life. It is an incredible honor and privilege to serve you all. Thank you.

Elizabeth M.  
Palolo Discussion  
Hawaii Area 17 / Panel 57 Alternate Chairperson



### GSR Reports from Kauai

**Hui Ohana** - Michelle is new GSR  
**Koloa Aloha** - Kathy is new GSR. Mike V is Alt. Mathea is Intrgrp.  
**Northshore Aloha** - New GSR and Alt!! Tom C and Ele  
**Happy Hour** - Alejandro is GSR, Heather Alt. Pali is Sec, Jane Intergroup Rep  
**Princeville/Hanalei** - David A is new GSR.  
**Young People's Mtg** - James new Alt GSR.  
**Hui Lokahi** - May have new GSR.  
**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Tradition**-- is Not Kathy G  
**Sunday Serenity** - Nancy M is new GSR  
**Came to Believe** - Mike B is GSR, Alt Mike C  
**Sobriety in Paradise** - No election yet.  
**Sunrise Sobriety** - Kathryn GSR.

## Service at the Lana'i Crossing

When Matt from Lahaina (that's how he's listed in my Treo) called and asked about PI outreach to Lana'i, and would I be interested in participating in The Crossing, I thought, "Yes! Awesome! I've never been to Lana'i. This will be fun." Then, of course, I realized we'd be camping out. Okay, I can do that. But I still had visions of giving a workshop to a bunch of willing workers in Lana'i, telling them how to do PI work. Then letting them go do it. Fortunately, Matt was on the ball, and started educating me immediately. He gave me a little overview of the type of small remote community that Lana'i really is. And just how important anonymity can be in such a community. So we brainstormed a little, and he obtained a list of places that may want some literature, or want to hear about AA, and their contact numbers, and we decided on an approach. I would contact these folks in advance, get the name of a person that would receive the information, and someone, either a Lana'i representative, a Maui representative, or myself, would bring the literature by. Matt managed, with the help of local AA folks, to obtain a great list – current numbers and friendly people – and many of them welcomed AA literature. A few of them wanted to meet on the weekend of The Crossing. I just kept calling, and when I added up all the literature I had to take with me, that's when the panic set in! There were 10 sets of literature, everywhere from the Hospital to the Police Station. I went to Central Office, got literature from the Hospitals Chair, from the CPC Chair, and cleaned out my stock, to fill the need!

Friday night, Pat and I set to packing. First thing we noticed was that we didn't have enough luggage. Well, thank God for spon-sees. A few phone calls later, I had another huge suitcase to fill. In all, we took over more than 150 pounds of literature in our luggage. Each site wanted slightly different quantities and pamphlets, but a typical dispersion was:

- (2) *Alcoholics Anonymous*
- (20) Schedule of AA Meetings on Lana'i
- (6) "Understanding Anonymity"
- (20) "Alcoholics Anonymous in your Community"
- (6) "Alcoholics Anonymous 2004 Membership Survey"
- (12) "A brief guide to Alcoholics Anonymous"
- (12) "Information on Alcoholics Anonymous"
- (20) "Is AA for You?"
- (20) "AA for the Woman"
- (20) "Too Young?"
- (20) "A Message to Teenagers"
- (20) "Young People and AA"
- (20) "44 Questions"
- (21)

This was the packet that was given to Aloha House. Each piece of literature was marked with a label that has the number of

the 24/7 hotline of central office on Maui. I didn't meet personally with every one of the persons I talked with, but they all told me where to put the literature, and I dropped it off, and some of it I left with Lanai'i AA members to deliver. But those institutions that I did meet with were very appreciative and excited to receive resources.

While we were there, we also went into one of the other hotels, and delivered schedules, which were gratefully received. I also gathered information on other places that can be contacted to receive literature that were not on the list for follow up or the next Crossing.

In a small remote community, what we found is that it is easier for someone from the outside to come and deliver the message in such an open forum than for someone from the community to break their anonymity to do this type of work. I am hoping that someone from Maui will pick of the ball and continue the ongoing service to Lanai'i of this type.

After our work in Lana'i City, we went to the campsite for fellowship and sun. The meetings were awesome and it was wonderful to meet the Lana'i AA community. On Sunday we had a service panel, in which I was blessed to participate. The people there are so hungry for our experience, strength, and hope. It's paradoxical...I was in a beautiful place, sharing and doing what I need to stay sober, even got a swim or two in, saw the biggest most beautiful fish I'd ever seen, met wonderful people, both from Lana'i and other islands, and they treated me as if I were doing them a favor! What can be better than that? It's a wonderful life in AA. Thank you for being a part of mine.

Sue B.

PI Chair



Save the date!

**45th International Women's  
A.A. Conference  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
February 12-15, 2009**

<http://www.internationalwomensconference.org/>



### Thoughts and Reflection From Panel 57 GSR for Kihei Morning Serenity

After spending some time reflecting on my service as GSR, my thoughts drift back to my first assembly in January of 2007, the Orientation Assembly. Even with twenty-six years of recovery I felt like and must have looked like a deer in the headlights of an on coming semi-truck.

Interesting the analogy that comes to mind is a semi, because the tools and experience I have gained the last two years feel like it could fill a big truck. Also, the fact that trucks often move very slowly, when the load is full and moving uphill. For the most part, I have learned that there are no big deals in AA, there is enough time and that nearly all things in AA move slowly by design, so we can truly have an informed group conscience on every level of our structure.

From that first Orientation Assembly up to and including this very moment, I have found myself amazed and more and more grateful for each experience. Which also includes those that have given me the opportunity to grow and change as well as reframe some of my old attitudes regarding general service.

First, I have such respect and I truly honor those who have served as GSR's prior to this panel and have continued to serve in the general service structure in one way or another. The value of their input is beyond measure because during the past two years, with every interaction I have had, no matter what position they currently hold, whether it be a past GSR or a delegate, each one has been filled with their personal experience, strength, hope and wisdom. Mahalo nui loa to each of you.

Second, the opportunity and being given the responsibility of researching and gathering information on conference topics and presenting it to the Inform the Delegate assembly each year. This has widened my knowledge of several different areas of AA, which also gives me the opportunity to share with others in the fellowship an additional aspect of experience, strength and hope. Another way of reaching out and carrying the message to alcoholics who still suffer in and out of the rooms of AA.

Third, being the link between the general service office in New York and my home group. So many times I have had to stick to principle, when everything in me wanted to be in someone's personality. Participating in a Concepts Study Group really enlightened me in this area. Always go to the principle of whatever issue and it becomes a win, win for all those involved.

And finally, serving as GSR has enriched the way I am able to live in the world. Being able to actually listen to the minority

opinion, ponder it and even change my view because of it. Wow! Realizing on a deeper level that we are all connected no matter our prospective or opinion at the moment. I am looking forward to the next panel and am excited about what is in store for our Hawaii Area in the coming two years.

Aloha and mahalo everyone I have served with on Panel 57. See you around the AA neighborhood!

In the spirit of service,  
Juddee K.



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#### Service at MCCC

On September 26 I hostessed [*sic*] in my home a gathering of the women involved in the process of carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the women who are incarcerated in MCCC.

The turnout was excellent. There was a total of nineteen people – a combination of the women who are currently going into the prison on Wednesday nights, some who have taken the Volunteer Training classes this week and several women who have been released from MCCC and are now attending A.A. meetings. The object of having this function was to give prospective volunteers an opportunity to meet with the currently active volunteers for an exchange of information and ideas.

The women from the prison were particularly encouraging as they stated that our coming in so regularly to hold A.A. meetings was quite meaningful to them.

This meeting did present an opportunity to stress the importance of keeping our commitment to be present on the assigned nights and to comply completely with the rules and regulations of MCCC.

We now have almost a surplus of women volunteers: 9 active, 4 inactive and 6 more who have recently taken the training course and are waiting for clearance to go in. I have been concerned about how best to utilize their services. Our regular rotation of three at a time going in once a week means that weeks will go by without a person being allowed in to be of service.

Therefore, I have petitioned the prison to allocate a second night for us to take an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting into the

women's prison. I discussed this with the inmates and they assured me that we would be very welcome twice a week. Hopefully, the officials will make a positive decision.

Joan C.  
Liaison A.A./Women's Prison MCCC



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**SERENITY BEHIND BARS**

Since July 13, 1998, my 1<sup>st</sup> sober day, I have enjoyed the great roller coaster ride of a truly real, and wonderful, life in sobriety. One of the many gifts in sobriety, has been observing those living this spiritual way of life – to the best of their ability – and the way in which they receive so much more in return.

To this day, after celebrating ten years of continuous sobriety, I've yet to find anything more rewarding than carrying the AA message into a lockdown environment. The ultimate reward is when someone behind bars finds refreshment in our effort of carrying this message. Throughout my corrections service (in NJ, PA, NYC and Maui), most of my efforts have often seemed like thankless tasks filled with prison logistics. My experience of bringing AA meetings into Riker's Island, while living in New York City, presented many opportunities to practice sober principles in all my affairs. Needing photo IDs and fingerprinting renewed annually; finding willing AA guests who will actually show up; calling in the names for clearance a week in advance; a subway ride, to a bus ride, to an in-house bus; arriving at the prison to be greeted by guards ridiculing us for our service; on many occasions, finding the guest approval list missing and being sent home; passing through multiple levels of security (as it is a maximum security prison) to arrive at a unit that may, or may not, even want a meeting; these are just a few of the challenges we were faced with. In most cases, a one-hour meeting turned into a four-hour commitment of service. I learned that it may be the meeting-before-the-meeting, or presenting an attractive AA spirit of service to the guards, or the ever-incredible experience of reaching an inmate that was praying for some relief from the unmanageable insanity that keeps him locked up in his cell. I would doubt that anyone's life's experience could be more rewarding than a successful 12<sup>th</sup> step call brought behind bars. It far surpasses any pleasure, or relief, that I have received prior to sobriety.

When my wife, and I, decided that our Higher Power approved of our desire to live on Maui, we immediately signed up for the orientation to bring AA meetings into the Maui County Correctional Center. We attended the orientation in October of 2007 and weren't cleared to bring meetings into the prison until May. It sure seemed like a long wait for clearance. Now that we are cleared though, the experience has been rewarding, and sim-

ple. A one-hour meeting, actually only takes one hour – getting in and out takes no longer than it does our home group. A walk through a tropical court-yard with a view of the mountains and chickens wandering, makes you wonder if you are in fact at a prison. The guards are usually quite friendly. On the men's side about 15-20 guys show up at the meeting (on the women's side 10-15). An hour later, you walk back out, showing by example how AA has set you free.

Bringing an AA meeting into MCCC doesn't provide as many obstacles, nor as many opportunities, but it does provide a simple way to bring serenity behind the bars, and a breath of fresh spiritual air into any alcoholic's sobriety.

Erik T.



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**Men and women who have an interest in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into the correctional facility on Kauai are encouraged to participate in a training session on November 15, 2008 from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at the Lihue Missionary Church. This training is a pre-requisite for going into the facility. In order to attend: Call Diane M @ 651-0412 You must have 5 years sobriety You must have a clean record with the courts -- NO prior record**

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**Chicken Skin Story**

April 1986

**CLOSING TALK - 36th General Service Conference Bob . G.S.O. Senior Advisor**

This is my 18th General Service Conference, the first two as a director of the Grapevine and A.A.W.S., followed by four as a general service trustee. In 1972 I rotated out completely--only to be called back two years later as general manager of G.S.O., the-service job I held until late 1984. Since the International Convention last year, of course, I have been senior advisor.

This is also my last Conference so this is a special moment for me, an emotionally charged experience, so I have taken the liberty of writing out this talk. Since this is listed on your agenda as a closing talk, you might reasonably expect it to relate to what has taken place at this Conference. But it won't. I'm not even going to refer to this fine Conference theme, except to say it is very appropriate, and I will express my personal thoughts on A.A.'s future in a few minutes.



I wish had time to express my thanks to everyone--in this room and elsewhere--to whom I am indebted for my sobriety and for the joyous life with which I have been blessed for the past nearly 25 years. But since this is obviously impossible, I will fall back on the Arab saying that Bill quoted in his last message, "I thank you for your life." For without your lives, I most certainly would have no life at all, much less the incredibly rich life I have enjoyed.

I came into A.A. in 1961, so I have lived through nearly half of our Fellowship's history. And with each passing year, I feel more and more blessed to have come in when many of the early giants of A.A. were still around. I knew Bill, of course, and literally sat at his feet as he spun his famous "bedtime story." I heard Bernard Smith deliver his last talk at the Miami International Convention. Brilliant and articulate, his contributions were tremendous. Marty M. helped me in my early sobriety and I even lunched frequently at the ANSA Club with "Popsie" M. who took Marty to her first meeting at 182 Clinton Street. Also with Bert T. whose loan from his mortgaged shop enabled the Big Book to be published. It was Dr. Harry Tiebout who sent me to A.A.

They are all gone now and legions more like them. The memories bring tears to my eyes. But there is one remarkable A.A. pioneer still with us today - Dr. Jack Norris.. He has been a tower of strength for over 36 years. He has lived more A.A. history than the rest of us put together; indeed he not only lived it, he helped make it. Cherish him. We will not see his like again.

The other person here I must thank by name is John B. He came on board at G.S.O. in May 1984 and in due course succeeded me. Thanks to his tolerance and understanding, the succession has been affected without a harsh word or an uncomfortable situation between us. John has a fine mind and a wealth of management know-how, and he is a very active and faithful member of A.A. We are fortunate to have him in this period of some serious problems. G.S.O.'s affairs are in good hands.

Some years ago, the Conference had as its theme "Service -- the Heart of A.A." If service is indeed the heart of A.A., then truly our staff members are the heart of service. Working with them these past 12 years has been not only a unique privilege, but one of richest pleasures of my A.A. life. I will always be grateful to them for having taught me so much -- and for giving me so much support and love. And when I speak of the staff, I am, of course, including those devoted and able people at the Grapevine. Nor can I let this opportunity pass without thanking another group of people: our nonalcoholic friends and coworkers at G.S.O. Dennis Manders and Nell Wing, with both of whom I have just been spending considerable time in connection with my current and continuing project of writing the indepth history of

our Fellowship. Ed Gordon and Madeline Whitlock Jordan and Shirley Grant and Dotty McGinity. Yes, and Tony and Elizabeth and Lynda (whom you all know!) and all the others to whom we all owe so much. For the rest of my life, when I refer to these extraordinary, dedicated friends,

I'll write "Nonalcoholic" with a capital "N." They, too, have given me the great gift of their friendship and love.

Tomorrow we will say good-bye to our rotating trustees -- an occasion that almost always breaks me up, because we at G.S.O. get to know the trustees so well. I have worked with literally scores of trustees over the years, and some of them are my dearest personal friends today. I am particularly grateful to have worked with such legendary Class A trustees as the great Austin McCormick, Archie Roosevelt, Travis Dancy, Arthur Miles, Mike Alexander and Jim Estelle. I had the unique opportunity to report to three chairmen of the General Service Board: Dr. Jack; Milton Maxwell, a dear man who advanced immeasurably the understanding of A.A. by professionals; and our present able, sensitive and dedicated chairman, Gordon Patrick. All three have given me generous support, have helped me grow and have enriched my life.

Now, what of you, the delegates? During my time on the boards and at G.S.O., I've known and worked with about 1,700 of you. You, of course, are what service is all about. You're the cornerstone of the whole service structure--not just here in this room, but back in your areas where the day-to-day work is done. Two past delegates--delegates who never went on to trusteeship and are, in fact, junior to me in sobriety--are today my valued and beloved A.A. sponsors: one in the East and one out West.

Actually, neither credit nor gratitude can be apportioned among the different kinds of service workers--so much to this group, so much to that. All are essential, regardless of title. In fact, the most important title in Alcoholics Anonymous--the only one that really counts--is "A.A. member." As they say, "The highest you can get in A.A. is sober." What is true throughout A.A. is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Just as in an A.A. group, a bunch of sick people are transformed into a healing force that has electrified the world, and a bunch of society's losers are transformed into winners--so all of us in this room--delegates, trustees, staff and directors--are more than just the sum of ourselves. We are transformed into the group conscience of A.A. as a whole. We are also the torchbearers for those who have gone before. Just as they passed the torch to us, so shall we pass it on to service workers yet to come.

What we have done here this week rests solidly on the actions of the 35 other Conferences that went before us. Likewise

what we did here will surely affect what future Conferences will do. Thus, all of us are part of the continuum of A.A. history. To some small degree then--as stated in our Conference theme--each of us is responsible for A.A.'s future.

Those last remarks are a direct quote from the closing talk which my predecessor, Bob H. delivered nine years ago. Some indication of his remarkable presence and wisdom! Indeed, there are a handful of people in this room who may have realized by now what a sneaky trick I have pulled here: I have lifted Bob Hitchens' own closing talk almost in its entirety, adapting it as my own, with my own experiences and my own feelings. Bob was only the third paid manager of G.S.O. after Bill turned the job over (Hank G. and Herb M. went before him); I was the fourth and you, John, are the fifth. Bob was also my service sponsor and my friend, whom I loved very much and to whom I owe probably the largest debt of gratitude of all. When I heard him deliver his talk to the 1977 Conference, I knew through my tears, what my own closing talk would be. Isn't that the way A.A. works?

But now let me conclude by offering my own thoughts about A.A.'s future. I have no truck with those bleeding deacons who decry every change and view the state of the Fellowship with pessimism and alarm. On the contrary, from my nearly quarter century's perspective, I see Alcoholics Anonymous as larger, healthier, more dynamic, faster growing, more global, more service minded, more back-to-basics, and more spiritual--by far--than when I came through the doors of my first meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut, just one year after the famous Long Beach Convention. A.A. has flourished beyond the wildest dreams of founding members--though perhaps not of Bill himself, for he was truly visionary. I echo those who feel that if this Fellowship ever falters or fails, it will not be because of any outside cause. No, it will not be because of treatment centers or professionals in the field or non-Conference-approved literature, or young people or the dually-addicted or even the druggies trying to come to our closed meetings. If we stick close to our Traditions and our Concepts and our Warranties--and if we keep an open mind and an open heart--we can deal with these and any other problems that we have or ever will have. If we ever falter and fail, it will be simply because of us. It will be because we can't control our own egos, nor get along well enough with each other. It will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense.

I mentioned rigidity. If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing Alcoholics Anonymous today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity that is so apparent to me and many others. The increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions. Pressure for G.S.O. to "enforce" our Tradi-

tions. Screening alcoholics at closed meetings. Prohibiting non-Conference-approved literature, i. e., "banning books." Laying more and more rules on groups and members.

The decline of the church at the end of the Middle Ages was symbolized by their neglect of human suffering and the souls of sinners to argue in their conclaves over "how many angels can stand on the head of a pin." My friends, at our conclave this week, I heard some arguments over "how many angels can stand on the head of a pin." And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for I remind you that he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was "Every group has the right to be wrong;" he was maddeningly tolerant of his critics; and he had absolute faith that faults in A.A. were self-correcting. And I believe this too, so in the final analysis, we're not going to fall apart. We 'won't falter or fail.

At the 1970 International Convention in Miami, I was in the audience on that Sunday morning when Bill made his last brief public appearance--only a few minutes, really. He was too ill to take his scheduled part in any other Convention event, but now, unannounced, on Sunday morning; he was wheeled up from the back of the stage in a wheelchair, attached with tubes to an oxygen tank. Wearing a ridiculous bright orange host committee blazer, he heaved his angular body to his feet and grasped the podium--and all pandemonium broke loose. I thought the thunderous applause and the cheering would never stop, tears streaming down every cheek. Finally, in a firm voice like his old self, Bill spoke a few gracious sentences about the huge crowd (about one-fifth the number who were in Montreal) and the outpouring of love and the many members there from overseas and (as I remember) with these words: "As I look out over this crowd, I know that Alcoholics Anonymous will live a thousand years-- if it is God's will."

That's precisely how I feel as we part this afternoon. A.A. will indeed and surely live a thousand years. If it is God's will!

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I no sooner had put my foot through the door of A.A. then I was in service. First as Literature person then I jumped into the GSR position to take over for someone else. Now I face a term of my own with great delight because I now finally know what I am doing. It has been a rewarding, informative and interesting position.

When I first began they told me, "Oh, don't worry it's not hard." Then I went to my first Assembly, I was totally lost and confused

But as time went on, I joined a Service Manual study group that helped me tremendously. I thought at first I would have a lot of hardship balancing a full time job during the day, taking college classes at night and sorting my program, however with a bit of time management I have been able to pull it off. I only have just short of 2 years of sobriety, and have become somewhat of a service junkie. What a great way to stay sober. I don't have time for much else. I make sure each night to re-do step 10 and 4, and ask my Higher Power for another day of guidance. Thank You All for letting me be of service to my A.A. family.

Ellen K.



**SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE POTLUCK  
DINNER MEETING**

Date: Dec. 6, 2008

Where: Liholiho Elem.

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 pm

Bring your favorite dish to the Potluck Dinner.

If you want to get into service come to our  
home group meeting on

Oct, 18 & Nov, 15, 2008 at 6:45 pm

**CEC REPORT AREA COMMITTEE MEETING**

Aloha,

I'm Archie your C.E.C. Chair. It has been an eventful year for us all, never a dull moment with our committee. Full of high's and low's, perseverance and gratitude, we trudge forward toward progress, tolerance and love.

I'd like to present a new C.E.C. Work Book to be reviewed by all of Area 17 and voted on its approval at the Election Assembly in November. If passed I would ultimately like to send it to the General Conference for its approval so we can share it with the rest of the A.A. world.

We also have secured a spot at the Hawaii Convention, look for Seniors In Sobriety some time on Saturday morning, November 15<sup>th</sup>. We'll have a panel that will showcase the work C.E.C. and S.I.S. dose here in Hawaii and how it is connected to others on the Mainland and Canada. I hope to see you there.

The next S.I.S. Conference will be held in Vancouver Washington on June 2,3,4 and 5, 2009 at the Red Lion Hotel (1-800-Red Lion) or (360) 694-8341 Special Conference code 090601SE can be used for reservations. Single beds \$79 double beds \$89 river view upgrades \$20 per night. Rates are good for 3 days before and after Conference.

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If there is any way I may be of assistance to you please contact me.

In Service,  
Remigio A. (Archie) C.E.C. Chair-Area 17  
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**Aloha and Mahalo!**

It is with much gratitude and great relief that I close this last issue of the Mynah Bird for Panel 57. It has by far been the most challenging, creative and fun service position I have ever had. What a privilege it has been to serve you, I am forever changed by this, my sobriety enriched beyond measure. It is my hope that you make yourself available for a service position if you feel qualified to serve. I included a great article in this issue "Leadership in A.A." first published in the Grapevine and previously printed in the January 2008 Mynah Bird issue - food for thought.

Mahalos to the Mynah Bird District Chairs, Pat B., Marjorie (who stayed throughout this panel), for your hard work, patience and perseverance in getting the submissions in under the deadline. And to all who participated by sending your stories, sharing experience, strength and hope. I hope you show the next Mynah Bird Chair much support, we can't have a newsletter without your participation. Aloha, the end... all pau...

Miranda K.  
Mynah Bird Chair, Panel 57



**Mark Your Calendars!**

- Orientation Assembly** Jan 24-25, 2009 Kauai
- Committee Meeting** Feb 28, 2009 Leeward Oahu
- Inform the Delegate Assembly** Apr 11-12, 2009 Honolulu
- Committee Meeting** June 20, 2009 Waikiki
- Budget Assembly** Aug 22-23, 2008 No Ka Oi Maui
- Committee Meeting** Oct 10, 2009 Optional Windward
- Assembly** Nov, 2009 Optional West Hawaii

### SAVE THE DATE

The 51st International Conference of Young People In AA (ICY-PAA) will be held May 21-24, 2008 in Atlanta, GA at the Marriott Atlanta Marquis.

### FROM OK TO GA

We'd like to thank Oklahoma for hosting an ebullient conference. We hope to carry over this past ICYPAA's energy to Georgia in 2009!

### RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

Since ICYPAA is only a short 8 months away, we'd like to encourage you to start making your travel and hotel arrangements. You can reserve your room online or by phone at (866) 469-5475. Please make sure you use the ICYPAA group code "icyicya" when reserving your room.

### ONLINE PRE-REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE

Online pre-registration is now available through our website. Please swing on by our site and pre-register if you haven't already. You can also mail in your registration. A downloadable version of the flyer is available at our website. Your pre-registration will help us better prepare to make this a big time conference.

### WE NEED YOUR HELP

If you are willing to help outreach the 51st ICYPAA in your area please contact our Outreach Team at outreach@icypaahost.org. We need your help to spread the word of ICYPAA and, in turn, give others a chance to have the experience so many of us have enjoyed.

### SEXY HALLOWEEN DANCE EXTRAVAGANZA

51st ICYPAA will be hosting a Halloween party in Atlanta, GA at the Galano Club on November 1st

The title for the speaker panel is: "Spooked Sober: Facing Terror Finding Faith in Sobriety"

**WHEN:** Nov. 1st 8PM

**WHERE:** Galano Club  
585 Dutch Valley Rd NE  
Atlanta, GA 30324

The Halloween dance will start after panel. \$5 suggested donation.

### MORE INFO

If you need any more info, you can check out our website or email us at one of the address listed on our contacts page.

Click [here](#) to learn about service in HICYPAA 2008.

[www.hicypaa08.com](http://www.hicypaa08.com)

- **Proposal: the C.E.C. Standing Committee of Area 17 proposes formal approval and acceptance of the updated C.E.C. workbook as Area 17 literature.**

- **Proposal: Reimbursement of Past Delegate's Assembly Expenses.**  
Effective with the first assembly of 2010, the registration fees and airfare or ferry travel costs of past Area 17 delegates who chose to attend and participate in Hawaii Area 17 assemblies, will be reimbursed and paid up to a total of \$500.00 per assembly. The \$500.00 is per assembly, not per delegate. Vehicle rental and shipping costs will not be included for reimbursement. Registration fees will be paid for all past delegates attending. These fees will be deducted from the \$500.00 budget per assembly. Past delegates, who choose to, will submit their airplane or ferry travel costs to the Treasurer for reimbursement by the beginning of the second day of the Assembly. Should the total costs exceed the balance remaining after the payment of the registration fees, the Treasurer will divide the remaining monies by the number of past delegates attending, who have submitted reimbursement receipts and distribute the money evenly, regardless of the amount spent by each individual delegate. The \$500.00 is a beginning amount subject to the annual budget recommendations of the Finance Committee.

- **Standing Committee Roundtable Proposal**

We, the Standing Committee Chairs of Area 17, Panel 57, for the good and betterment of our Area and to aid with our work in carrying the message of A.A. to the alcoholic who may be looking for our help, propose: "Starting with the Orientation Assembly of Panel 59 each G.S.R. is assigned to a Standing Committee. The assignment will be by draw of the hat, will be for the term of the Panel, and only during the Area Assembly. Participation of the G.S.R.s with their Standing Committee should be viewed as a means of brainstorming and helping the Standing Committee Chair with advice on how we can better get our message of recovery to the alcoholic who may need our help. Participation is not mandatory"

Hawaii Area will host PRAASA 2011  
(Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly)

The PRAASA Chair and Treasurer were elected  
at the August 2008 Assembly.

Keith H. Chair | Don A. Treasurer



### PRAASA 2009

Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous  
Service Assembly  
Oakland, California  
March 6-8, 2009

**"Our Commitment To Carry A.A.'s Message-  
"Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action"**

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 opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of AA. The Assembly and PRAASA committee should always foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of AA.

[www.praasa.org/](http://www.praasa.org/)