

## **Pacific "Additional" Regional Forum**

August 19 - 21, 2011  
Woodland Hills, California  
Area Chair Report

First, I want to thank all of you in Area 17 for sending me to the Pacific Regional Forum last month. This was my very first forum and it was indeed a 'magical' experience for me. As the flyer for the forum says, "Forums are designed to enhance communication and participation among AA members, the General Service Board and staff and directors from the General Service Office Staff and the AA Grapevine. Forums offer a meeting place to ask questions and spark new ideas to help carry the AA message of hope to the still-suffering Alcoholic." There were a total of 8 people from the General Service Board, staff, directors, and AA Grapevine/LaVina including Rod Betonney, our Pacific Regional Trustee. Rod attended our Orientation Assembly and PRAASA earlier this year and many of you had an opportunity to meet and visit with him then.

In addition to presentations by representatives and workshops from GSO, GV/LV, and Pacific Region Delegates, there were sharing sessions and two workshops on Saturday evening. I attended "Rotating Leadership" and "Area Inventory - How, When and What Happens After?" and found both to be informative and it sparked lots of ideas for Area 17.

Some thought provoking ideas and amazing facts that I learned are:

- Grapevine/La Vina print issues will **continue**. They are here to stay!!
- In 2011, GV/LV not only reduced their deficit with many cost cutting measures including reducing their staff by 30%, but at the same time they launched a new website which expanded digital options and continued a high level of quality.
- The new digital grapevine is available at [aagrapevine.org](http://aagrapevine.org).
- Some of the features that are available to everyone with/without a subscription:
  - New stories daily
  - Feedback and forms available on "I Say" - you can connect with other alcoholics all over the world and exchange ideas, experience, strength and hope.
  - Section for GV/LV reps - support, GVR handbook, etc all available online.
  - Grapevine Complete is a subscription for both digital and print versions of GV and includes current issues of both the print and digital versions, access to Audio Grapevine, Story Archive, and previously unpublished members' stories and costs \$49.97 per year.

- How can I be a better leader and follower? - Lead by example and action, inform those we've served of our actions and let others lead when it is their responsibility.
- Re being self supporting through voluntary contributions - let people know what services are being provided for their contributions.
  - Big Book has been translated into 62 languages.
  - There is literature available for Buddhists, Hindu, Muslims, agnostics and atheists.
  - AA World Services is going online with eBooks for the Big Book and 12 Steps & 12 Traditions in English, French & Spanish. They will be launching applications for iPhone and iPad followed by droid products later this fall. Revenue from these sales will go to GSO.
- Rotating leadership benefits the fellowship by increasing diversity, having high level of enthusiasm and willingness to learn, humility.
  - 'Spirit of Rotation' vs. 'Spirit of Stagnation.'
  - 'God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called.' But the service manual says the GSR is the most important job in AA and we choose the most qualified individual - not the person who happens to step out of the room when the vote is taken or the one who missed the home group business meeting.
- Keys to successful group/District/Area inventories
  - Stay positive. Try turning shortcomings into assets.
  - Stay in the solution.
  - No votes, no judgments.
  - Try to get as many to participate as possible. Otherwise what you will have is a minority opinion.
  - Keep a sense of humor.
  - Practice love and tolerance.
  - Look at your strengths and weaknesses. Summarize and review items that come up. Divide into urgent, less urgent and anytime and make a plan to address.

In closing, I once again experienced the magic of AA. I felt the unity, singleness of purpose and dedication from over 700 AAs who are working to insure that AA continues to be there for the still suffering alcoholic. I saw firsthand the commitment of the GSO directors & staff to spreading our message of hope and solutions for a new way of life. I heard that 'Hope comes from hearing my story told by another alcoholic.' I remembered the first time that happened for me and I knew I belonged. A glimmer of hope appeared where there had only been despair, loneliness and gloom. And I know that 'I am responsible - when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there - and for that, I AM RESPONSIBLE.

Mahalo for allowing me to represent Area 17 at the forum.