



MYNAH BIRD

HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER

General Service Conference 2009

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From our delegate....

**“Our Commitment to Carry A.A.’s Message – Enthusiasm and Gratitude in Action”
59th General Service Conference Report Backs for Hawaii Area 17**

After attending the 59th general Service Conference in New York City, it is then the Delegate’s responsibility to bring a report back to each and every district in Hawaii Area.

I returned back to Hawaii on May 9th after a small vacation following the Conference.

My first Report Back was hosted by District 6 on the island of Kaua'i on May 23, 2009. I flew in late Saturday morning, and the DCM Jim D. picked me up at the airport. We drove out to Kapa'a Neighborhood Center, where food, fellowship, and TAHITIAN dancing awaited me! I had a most enjoyable time visiting with Kaua'i District members, enjoying the ocean, and last but certainly not least giving my report. My apologies to those in attendance for losing my place a couple times, I have since added page numbers to my report! As this was my first time reporting, it was a bit long, nearly two hours. Thank you so much for listening! Excellent questions, good feedback and interested members made this truly a day to remember.

My next report was on the beautiful Big Island on June 13th and 14th, where I attended first West Hawaii's Founders' Day and the next day East Hawaii / Puna's Founders' Day. Saturday, June 13th I arrived at the Kona airport just in time to make it to Hapuna Beach Park before the festivities began. A clear blue sky, beautiful ocean, food, fellowship and even a game of AA Jeopardy were included in the celebrations. As I gave my report, I thought to myself how fortunate to serve such a diverse and yet unified fellowship here in Hawaii Area! I truly feel the love!

That night, my hostess from Hilo drove us through Waimea, and on down the Hamakua Coast to Hilo side. Sunday morning we head out to Carlsmith Park in Hilo for another fun, food and fellowship filled day. We had meetings, an Archives and Cooperation with the Elder Community displays and a lively report on the general Service Conference. Friends new and old sparked thoughtful discussion and much aloha in one on one conversations.

I was blessed with the presence of both our Hawaii Area Chair and Webmaster at both Big Island events. I was very grateful and happy to have my husband along for the weekend, who rarely gets to travel with me to functions.

Some of the exciting news from the conference we talked about at the reports included:

- Did the request for a second volume of Daily Reflections get approved?
- What happened to the request for literature on spirituality/atheist/agnostic?
- Are we going to have a procedure to file a minority appeal with the GSC?
- Is the pamphlet “It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell” going to be updated?
- Where is the 2010 Conference going to be held?
- Will the General Service Conference be taking an inventory if itself soon?
- How did Elizabeth like New York City!?!? (I know you all are really wondering about this)

If you haven't yet attended a Report Back, please choose from one of the following events - coming soon to a district near you.

- June 20, 2009 – St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Honolulu (Oahu) – Area Committee Meeting
- June 27, 2009 – Wailuku Union Church, Wailuku (Maui) - No Ka Oi, Tri-Island and Kihei Districts
- June 28, 2009 - Kaiaka Bay Beach, Haleiwa (Oahu) – Central North Shore District
- July 7, 2009 – 6 pm - St. Peter and Paul Church, Honolulu (Oahu) – Waikiki District (Regular District Meeting)
- July 18, 2009 – Oahu Vets Center, Honolulu (Oahu) – Diamond Head & Leeward
- July 30, 2009, 7 pm – St. Christopher's Church, Kailua (Oahu) – Windward District (Regular District Meeting)

Hope to see some of you soon, as we trudge this road of happy destiny.

Thank you for the incredible honor and privilege to serve you as your Panel 59, Hawaii Area 17 Delegate.

Love & Service,
Elizabeth M.
Delegate
Area 17, Panel 59



2009 Conference Advisory Actions

Conference Advisory Actions represent recommendations made by the standing committees and approved by the Conference body as a whole; or recommendations discussed and voted upon by all Conference members during general sessions. Here are some of the highlights. More detail can be found in the summer issue of Box 459. A complete list will be published in the Final Conference Report which will be distributed by our delegate.

- The theme for the 2010 General Service Conference be "Practicing AA's Principles – the Pathway to Unity".
- The revised pamphlet "The AA Member – Medications and Other Drugs," be returned to committee for additional discussion and brought back to 2010 Conference Committee on Literature.
- That "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" be revised and a draft be brought back next year.
- That the trustees' Finance Committee gather input from the Fellowship for review by the 2010 Conference Committee on Finance:
 - If we continue to use literature profits to partially fund services, should there be a limit?
 - If there is a limit how do we continue to pay for services if there is a shortfall in contributions?
- That the revised draft pamphlet "AA for the Native North American" be approved.
- That "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" be reviewed and eliminate or revise outmoded ethnic, cultural and vocational references.
- That the title of "44 Questions." Be changed to "Frequently Asked Questions About AA."
- That the General Service Board develop a procedure for submission of Concept V minority appeals to the GSC for review in 2010.
- That a plan for the GSC to conduct an inventory of itself be developed by the General Service Board.
- That the 4 videos for young people & the wall poster with information about AA be approved.

2009 GSO Budget

- Projected gross sales of \$13.9 million.
- The gross profit is budgeted at \$7,729,900 or 57%. This profit helps fund AA services worldwide.
- Both manufacturing and shipping and warehousing costs of literature is 6% higher than 2008. GSO was hit hard during the last quarter of 2008, as was the country at large. Ongoing efforts are being made to control costs so services will not be affected.
- Contributions received from groups in 2008 were \$6,462,700. Percent of registered groups contributing to GSO remains around 44%.
- Total operating revenue for 2009 is budgeted at \$14.2 million, \$800,000 more than 2008 due to increased literature prices. The budget projects revenue will exceed expenses by \$900,000 and this will assist in maintain the prudent reserve at 9 months.

2009 Grapevine Budget

- 2009 circulation anticipated at 100,000, 7,000 less than 2008.
- Magazine income of \$2.0 million is expected, \$72,000 less than 2008. Income from books, cassette tapes and miscellaneous items is expected to be \$941,409, \$182,150 higher than last year.
- Total gross income is expected at \$1.7 million compared with expected expenses of \$1.9. A projected net loss for 2009 is projected to be \$167,358.

2009 La Vina Budget

- La Vina was first published in 1995. It was anticipated that as a new magazine, it would likely generate a net

loss, which it did. In 2001, the Grapevine Board and General Service Board decided to continue publishing La Vina but funding would be via General Service Board general funds.

- In 2009, La Vina projects a gross income of \$20,916, and additional publishing income (net) of \$29,029. Total costs and expenses are expected to be \$145,720 with a net loss of \$95,775. To date, losses of approximately \$1.21 million have been incurred.

Estimates of Groups and Members as of January 1, 2009¹

	Groups	Members
United States	55,244	1,248,394
Canada	<u>4,849</u>	<u>93,986</u>
Sub-Total	60,093	1,342,380
Correctional facilities ²	1,585	39,964
Internationalists	3	36
Lone Members	<u> </u>	<u>235</u>
Total	61,681	1,382,615
Outside U.S. & Canada ³	<u>55,092</u>	<u>702,510</u>
Grand Total	116,773	2,085,125

1. The General Service Office does not keep membership records. The information shown here is based on reports given by groups listed with G.S.O., and does not represent and actual count of those who consider themselves A.A. members.

2. U.S. and Canada only.

3. We are aware of A.A. activity in more than 180 countries, including 60 autonomous general service offices in other lands. Annually we attempt to contact those G.S.O.s and groups that request to be listed in our records. Where current data is lacking we use an earlier year's figure.

AGNOSTIC/ATHEIST LITERATURE

Proposals for special literature for agnostic and atheist members have been submitted to GSO with some regularity over the years. The background data on this question shows that, since 1989, pamphlet proposals have bounced back and forth between the Trustees' Literature Committee and the Conference Literature Committee. Studies have been made and all existing literature has been examined (our own David E. has participated in such studies and reviews). To date, no positive action has been taken on these proposals.

The recent proposal from the "We Agnostics Group," in Maui, was forwarded to GSO in February 2008 and, in November 2008, the Trustees' Literature Committee voted to take no action on the proposal. Nevertheless, in January 2009, it tasked the Conference Committee on

Literature to "discuss whether there is a need to develop A.A. Conference-approved literature that focuses on the topics of spirituality and agnostics or atheists/non-believers in A.A." It is my purpose, today, to speak against the proposal. I do not believe a special pamphlet for the atheist/agnostic community is a way "to do the most good for the most alcoholics," which must be the purpose of A.A.

My first draft of my presentation objected to special literature for agnostics or atheists/non-believers because it is unnecessary, it is already available, it would be divisive, and it is misdirected. I still believe these objections to be valid and politically correct. However, after many hours of reflection, I concluded that I was "tip-toeing around the elephant in the living room." I was failing to confront the chief objection head-on. I believe that it is largely an issue of religion (or lack thereof), and that A.A. cannot, under the First and Tenth Traditions, take a position on such an issue.

In the Foreword to the Second Edition of the Big Book, it is noted that "we are an accurate cross section of America." I believe that statement to be true, and I base my presentation on the belief that A.A. membership does reasonably accurately reflect the attitudes and opinions of the broader American population, as it is captured in surveys by the U.S. Census Bureau or other organizations. The U.S. Census Bureau is prohibited, under Public Law 94-521, from asking questions on religious affiliation. Instead, in its statistical abstracts, it utilizes data from large scale surveys conducted by reputable, non-partisan organizations. The largest, most comprehensive of these surveys is the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), conducted by City University of New York (in 1990 and 2001) and by Trinity College (in 2008). These surveys, respectively, involved 113,000, 50,000 and 54,000 Americans.

The most recent report, released in February 2009, reveals that when asked about "belonging," 76.0% of Americans self-identified as Christians, another 3.9% as having some other religion. The remaining 20.1% self-identified as either having no religion (15.0%) or not knowing, or refusing to state (5.2%). Only 0.9% self-identified as agnostics, and 0.7% self-identified as atheists. However, when asked about "believing," 69.5% believe that there is a personal God, 2.3% believe there is no God, 4.3% believe there is no way to know, 5.7% were not sure if there is a God, and 6.1% refused to respond to the question. If these data are correct, and if they accurately reflect the membership of A.A. in the U.S., then the A.A. membership is overwhelming Christian/religious – somewhere around 80%, and has a non-religious membership of around 20%. Atheists account for around 2.5% of the membership.

It can be argued that the non-religious constitute quite a large segment of the A.A. population and are the largest minority within A.A. to not have its own pamphlet. Black and African Americans have a special pamphlet (P-51), and they represent 13.4% of the population. Those who are 65 or older have their own pamphlet (P-22) and are 12.6% of the population. The Gay/Lesbian community has its own pamphlet (P-32) even though it represents only 4.1% of the population (according to the National Survey of Family Growth, conducted by UCLA in 2006). Finally, the Native North American has a pamphlet (P-21), despite representing on 0.68% of the population, almost exactly the same percentage as the self-identified atheist population.

Such an argument overlooks the fact that each of these minority groups (with the possible exception of the Native Americans) mirrors the general population in their religious beliefs and does not, therefore, pose a "threat" to the majority. However, there is a possibility, even a probability, that in opening society to atheism, American society will become more secular and less religious. The U.S. is currently the most religious of any developed country in the world, except Ireland. Although A.A. steadfastly denies that it is a religious organization, it is widely perceived to be, and at least 11 Federal and State Court judgments have found it to be religious.

The Tenth Tradition of A.A., in its long form, states that "No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous Groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever."

It cannot be argued that atheism is not a controversial issue. Indeed, a study by the Department of Sociology of the University of Minnesota, conducted in 2006, concluded that "Americans rate atheists below Muslims, recent immigrants, gays and lesbians and other minority groups in sharing their vision of American society. Atheists are also the minority group that Americans are least willing to allow their children to marry." In a recent Gallup Poll, 48% of Americans surveyed indicated their unwillingness to vote for an atheist under any circumstances, the highest of any minority group. Even the American Atheists president acknowledges that "Atheists are the 'others' in the current cultural and political milieu."

The First Tradition, in its long form, states that "Each member of Alcoholics is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die." Expanding on this in the 12X12, Bill W. has written: "Realization dawns that he (the individual) is but a small

part of a great whole; that no personal sacrifice is too great for preservation of the Fellowship. He learns that clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group."

In its original proposal, the Maui group asked for a pamphlet consisting of "a compilation of stories from people who have achieved long-term sobriety through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous while remaining atheists or agnostics". . .letting them "know that they do not have to change their beliefs in order to belong." Although I cannot deny that such a pamphlet would be very useful, I believe that it is unreasonable to ask A.A. to do it. It seems to me that A.A. is being asked to express an opinion on an outside issue, in violation of the Tenth Tradition, and is being asked to issue literature which could work to the disadvantage of the common welfare, in violation of the First Tradition. These may be factors in the failure of GSO to act on this matter in years past.

I would hope that our atheist/agnostic friends can see (1) that it is unreasonable to ask A.A. to produce such a pamphlet, (2) that a wealth of material is already available, especially through the Grapevine, and (3) they are not precluded from preparing and distributing their own pamphlet.

I would be happy to contribute to such a pamphlet; I will celebrate 17 years of continuous sobriety through A.A. later this month, and I have remained a non-believer. I am Ted K., a recovered alcoholic.

Ted K
Past Non Rotating Archives Chair
Area 17



Group Controversies

What do you do when your group comes up with a serious problem that threatens its unity? My first reaction is always from the gut: fear, anger, contempt and some other unpleasant feelings that leave me with a real hangover. I have learned through the years to take the suggestion out of the Big Book on page 87 and pause, remind myself that I am no longer running the show and ask for the right thought or action.

Then I like to review the issue in the context of our Traditions with simple questions like: Why is this issue affecting our unity? Have we had a group conscience process on this issue so we've had a chance to bring the Higher Power into our deliberations? Does this issue have a negative ripple effect on neighboring groups or AA as a whole? How important does this issue seem in light of our primary purpose? Are we somehow endorsing or af-

filiating ourselves with an outside enterprise even by implication? Is our group being self-supporting or going into business? Am I or are we acting as professionals without knowing it? Do we need to create a special committee to help resolve the issue? Are we expressing opinions on outside issues? Is there gossip or character assassination going on? Are we keeping the spirit of anonymity? I find it helpful to refer to the 12 Traditions Checklist published by the A.A. Grapevine and the 12 Concepts Checklist published by A.A.W.S. to review my own conduct and the conduct of the group. These are really useful tools for a Group Inventory. Speaking of which, when's the last time our group took its own inventory? Maybe it's time!

No matter what the issue that stirs up controversy, good can always come of it if we get involved in more discussions around the underlying principles of the Traditions and Concepts and growth both for the individuals and for the group will automatically take place. We need never fear a controversy inside A.A. with these tools at the ready. There are no new controversies in A.A. just new people learning about them for the first time. Let's continue to practice love and tolerance with each other as we learn how to handle these opportunities for growth.

In love and service

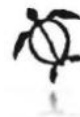
David E
Past Delegate Panel 41
Past Trustee



Aloha from Puna. The buzz is for caravanning these days in Puna. A group of 5 cars including 16 adults, 1 small child and an ukulele drove from lower Puna, up past Volcano and down to the Barbeque meeting in Kau. What a blast. Food was mentioned and alcoholics showed up. The food, fellowship, and meeting were held on a tap root farm that is becoming a center for recovery and farming. I got to hold a 2 day old baby goat, with its umbilical cord still attached. What a gift. I never had it so good. My heart smiled. Someone got to share his story and lead a meeting for the first time. We talked about steps two and five on the way home with a crew of the motley sort that normally would not mix. We shared about our conception of God and Carl Jung's response to Bill's letter. The trip to Kau was spawned through the laughter of four women driving back from the women's meeting up in Volcano, Ho'omaka'i. The caravan was so successful that we have been rolling with the energy and enthusiasm. We've made it to Jungle Bunch, Mountain View's monthly potluck, and we even organized a trip to Volcano National Park to see the lava. Again, several car loads of friends and family fellowshiped with corn chowder and music in the rain.

I feel so fortunate to be sharing this service and unity experience with you all.

Develyn
DCM, District 12
Puna



THIS IS HOW WE DID IT . . .
IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, WE ALL WORK TOGETHER
(From "CIRCLES OF LOVE AND SERVICE")

In 2008 several alcoholics from the Happy Hour group Kauai with all lengths of sobriety got together and started talking about new ways to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. They had been aware of meeting attendance, sponsors, and the completion of the Twelve Steps as vital tools to stay sober. They thought that more footwork had to be done. They began talking about workshops. Workshops are educational. And on our Island, participation on General Service positions is needed. AA information does not reach every corner of our fellowship. They thought that workshops could stimulate the AA community by presenting topics related to Alcoholics Anonymous. With the monetary assistance from Intergroup and District, last year eleven workshops were presented for the AA community at the Niunalu Pavilion.

In 2009, The Keep it Simple group did its contribution by presenting a series of "Last Sunday Workshops" for the first quarter of the year.

The Westside of Kauai has the most limited participation in service work and the fewest meetings. We surveyed the one stable group there over several weeks and discovered they wanted to know more about the twelve steps.

On May 31, 2009, Keep it Simple group, in liaison with Happy Hour presented the "Last Sunday Workshop" at the United Church of Christ in Hanapepe. The topic was the "Twelve Steps." This workshop was an amazing experience from the beginning to the end. It had an attendance of 39 members of Alcoholics Anonymous. A swift set up and breaking down of the workshop was performed with the help of all members.

We began at 2:15 pm. with a few announcements followed by the Serenity prayer. There was a panel of 12 speakers; 1 speaker for each step and each one shared for 5 minutes. The audience sat in three rows of chairs.

Literature was available. Pamphlets and schedules were on hand as well. Cold bottled water and light refreshments

were served too.

Comment cards contained these remarks: *Very informative and impressive, Mahalo for having a Westside event!* * *Keep it on the Westside, look what worked in the past and do it again. I love it we are growing.* Also, the cards had the following suggestions for future workshop topics: *Slips & family* * *something with the word Inspiration* * *Unity of purpose and how to facilitate that, instead of personality based division among groups and principles not personalities.*

**The Happy Hour Group
Kauai**



While walking around one hot afternoon during a canoe regatta, I passed by one of my former favorite "watering holes." No, I absolutely never drank any *water* there! I could hear the clink of glasses, the laughter, almost taste the mai tais, and imagined the mystique and adventure of romance across the bar. "Yikes--what is wrong with me? Is this one of those "H.A.L.T." (Hungry-Angry-Lonely-Tired) moments? NO! I'm NOT HUNGRY, for one!!! I'm damned THIRSTY!"

I kept walking past the bar, holding my breath lest I catch a whiff of chardonnay or something. "No, I'm Thirsty, Resentful, Ornerly, Lonely and Lusty! I'm a nasty T.R.O.L.L. and I'm trolling!" I laughed at myself and walked home instead of taking my old place at the bar.

I'm thankful God gave me a self-deprecating sense of humor and the good sense to keep walking. Most especially I'm grateful to be a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous and not a drunken TROLL!

**Sheryl W.
Kailua-Kona**



The 48th Annual Hawaii Convention

The 48th Annual Hawaii Convention will be held this year from Thursday October 29 through Sunday November 1; the theme this year is "New Beginnings". The convention through its featured events, offers four days of fun, food, entertainment, fellowship, workshops, meetings, and the opportunity to meet new friends from around the world. Al-Anon also participates in this event through Al-Anon workshops, and an Al-Anon luncheon.

There are also many outdoor activities to enjoy; in the past this has included surfing, hiking, volleyball, and catamaran rides, The activities program is still in the planning stage, and it will be posted on the website as soon as it is available. (<http://AnnualHawaiiConvention.com>)

The main event on each day is a speaker meeting on Friday and Saturday night, and also on Sunday morning. There is also an alkathon that features continuous meetings for all four days.

This year is particularly exciting since Saturday is Halloween, and the usual Saturday night dinner event has been made into a Halloween themed festive event, a Ghouls and Goblins Banquet, a costume contest, and a dance. Everyone who will be on stage for the Saturday night speaker meeting is requested to be in costume.

The price to register for the convention is \$65.00 through August 31, and \$75.00 after August 31; meals are additional. For further information on registration, or to download a registration form, go to You may also register online at : <http://AnnualHawaiiConvention.com>.

Why do you have to pay? While there are no dues or fees for membership in AA, there are many conferences around the world and the most common misconception of these gatherings are that they are AA meetings, and "there are no dues and fees for AA membership." However, Conventions and Conferences are special events, not regular AA meetings. This Convention requires months of planning, preparation and money to present. Since all of the events are held at the Hawaii Convention Center, there is a charge for the use of these facilities. Other expenses include travel and lodging for speakers, printing costs, postage and supplies. The event is paid for through the cost of the registration, and the sale of T-shirts and other items.

I currently serve as the webmaster for the convention website, and I hope to see you there this Halloween.

In love and service,

Hugh C.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

PRAASA 2010

March 5 – 7, 2010

Los Angeles, CA

Radisson Hotel at LAX
(LA International Airport)

Questions?? Go to www.aasca.org

Click on link to PRAASA 2010 Information

SAVE THE DATE!!!

RULE 62*

“Don't take yourself too damn seriously.”*

*Reprinted from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 149, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.



An artist was standing at a bar guzzling highballs when a friend came in and remarked, "I thought your doctor told you to stop all alcoholic drinks."

"Right!" said the painter. "I haven't let a single one get past me."

P. H. OF IOWA CITY reports that at most of the meetings she attends, the chairperson asks if there is anyone there for their first meeting. Well, recently, after a particularly "heavy" meeting, the chairperson asked, "Is there anyone here for their *last* meeting?"

Above reprinted from AA Grapevine with permission.



H.I.C.Y.P.A.A. 2009! Kauai, HI



“this is an experience you must not miss”
p 89 in the book **Alcoholics Anonymous**

The Hawaiian Islands Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous 2009 will Be held at Kahili Mountain Park On Kaua'i September 4th, 5th, & 6th, Labor day weekend.

For more information and registration go to: hicypaa09.org

To get involved in the host committee email hicypaa09@live.com

Hicypa'a no ka oi

48th Annual Hawai'i Convention *Ho'omaka Hou* New Beginnings

*That was the beginning of a new life, a fuller life, a happier life than I had ever known or believed possible.**

October 29 – November 1, 2009
Hawaii Convention Center

Online registration & information: www.annualhawaiiConvention.com

*Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 206

HANA CARAVAN 2009

Last Sunday of every month

June 28

October 25

July 26

November 29

August 30

December 27

September 27

Questions??? Email dcm5@area17aa.org

"Pick a Month and Go"

Talk to members in your group, plan a Day Trip to Hana, pick a month and GO!

WOW!!! WACYPAA Bid Committee

Wanna get in to service and have some fun in recovery???

WACYPAA, the Western Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous, has a bid committee meeting every 3rd Sunday of the month at noon at Paki Park and could use your support. All are welcome.

We also have an AA topic meeting every 2nd Saturday of the month at 2pm at Paki Park.

The purpose of WACYPAA is to build and strengthen unity in Young Peoples Groups in Alcoholics Anonymous in the western area of North America and Hawaii. The focus is especially to reach those areas which historically had little exposure to such conferences.

For more info email lilguy808@hotmail.com

