



# MYNAH BIRD

## HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER

Area Website: [www.area17aa.org](http://www.area17aa.org)

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# Notes from PRAASA HAWAII



## PRAASA REPORT-BACK 2011

I cannot express the thrill that I experienced during the 2011 PRAASA, hosted by Hawaii Area the first weekend in March. I again thank all the hard working folks in service and all the attendees for making this the best PRAASA ever! Among the purposes of PRAASA is the consideration of some of the topics for the General Service Conference that we have reviewed this weekend. In fact, I had the unique benefit of being able to work with the PRAASA program chair in coming up with not only the PRAASA presentation subjects but also our discussion topics for this assembly. Believe me, it is no simple task to prepare the PRAASA program and then select and notify the presenters, moderators, timers, and readers. Everything was beautifully scripted and executed.

Another purpose of PRAASA is to help the delegates of the Pacific Region prepare for the General Service Conference, not only in a practical way by reviewing topics, but also in an insightful way by having the Panel 60 delegates share some of their experiences from last year. It was a kind of delegate school. The delegates met each evening with the regional trustee during roundtables so the first-year delegates would be better oriented when we arrive in the New York area. I have heard that the Pacific Region delegates are better prepared than those who do not have a pre-conference regional assembly.

As you can imagine, I was floating off the ground for much of the PRAASA weekend, but I did manage to touch Earth and jot down a few ideas heard during the panel presentations:

Conformity and unity have nothing to do with each other.

There is no emergency here.

When individual's money combines with other contributions, it becomes spiritual.

Communicate to the Fellowship skillfully.

The conference process favors no one person over another.

It's not about us; it's about the people who are not here.

Once again I thank my Source and you for the privilege of serving Alcoholics Anonymous.

In love & service,

Linda McD

Delegate Panel 61, Area 17



## **PRAASA 2011 on the Web**

The opening day of PRAASA 2011 was not the beginning of my fifth PRAASA as much as it was the final chapter in a journey that began three years ago in Anchorage Alaska at PRAASA 2008. Hawaii Area 17 had chosen Keith H., a past delegate, to chair PRAASA 2011 after Hawaii was selected to host. Keith asked me if could take notes for him at the wrap-up meeting as he could not attend that particular PRAASA. Little did I know what was in store.

At PRAASA 2009, held in Oakland California, Keith, who was in attendance, asked if he could join me for dinner on the final Sunday after I'd gotten back from a long bicycle ride in the hills beyond the city. Over Indian food he asked if I would be willing to serve as the webmaster for PRAASA 2011, then two years away. I accepted with a mixture of pride, fear, and I trust, some measure of humility.

I began exploring possibilities during the following year, while still serving Panel 59 as the chair of the Area 17 Web Standing Committee and webmaster. There wasn't a lot to do during that time till the end of 2009 as we approached PRAASA 2010 to be held in Los Angeles. I made contact with Ian T., the PRAASA 2010 webmaster, and he graciously allowed me to explore the system they were using. At that point I made the decision to follow in the footsteps of those who'd gone before, in this case Ian and PRAASA 2010, and not reinvent the wheel. Instead of designing a whole new website, I'd still theirs and update it for our use.

At PRAASA 2010 I was grateful to spend some time with Ian and the rest of the 2010 committee. I began to get an idea of just how big a job our 2011 committee would have to tackle. At this point I really didn't know everyone who'd be on the committee, something that was going to change over the course of the next year as we worked together to put on PRAASA 2011.

Putting on a PRAASA is a big job and I only had a small part in it. Even a small part can be a lot of work as I was to learn over the course of the year. However we had a great team and I learned from them how to be a team player. That is certainly one of the greatest lessons I've learned so far in my journey in sobriety.

We broke some new ground in our committee work. Vernon and Colin, our program chair and co-chair, live on Maui and we were able to use internet technology to bring them to many of our meetings so that they could be a real part of our deliberations and decisions. We are a remote community made up of remote communities and using the internet like this really made cooperation across long distances possible and very fruitful.

Putting up the website in May 2010 was a big milestone, though we weren't ready to being accepting online registrations. That didn't happen until all the details of hotel contract were worked out and we could set the prices for the various options. In September 2010, six months before PRAASA 2011, we "went live" and were off and running.

At this point lots of other things were going on besides my work on the web. Suffice to say everyone was busy and I was by no means the busiest. The pace continued to pick up as we got closer. More volunteers were brought on board to help with the myriad details that must be handled to stage such a large event. Everyone who participated, in whatever capacity, gave selflessly and I can't think of anyone who didn't come through.

And finally, a week before our PRAASA, we turned off online registrations and my work was, in many ways done. I still had reports to create and things to do but I could see the end in sight.

As it turns out, there was still more for me to do as I was asked to present on the topic of "Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age." I had put my name down on our delegates list, but given my participation in other areas I hadn't expected to be chosen. If I had fear about being webmaster, this upped the ante by mile. It's an honor and more importantly a obligation not to be taken lightly. I would be presenting at a panel in front of hundreds of attendees, many of them delegates past and present, trustees, and all of them folks committed to General Service. I've submitted my presentation to the Mynah Bird and if our editor needs some filler, you can read it in this issue. If not, feel free to contact me and I'll make it available.

In addition I was asked to facilitate a round table discussion for other webmasters and those interested in A.A. websites. Here was a real challenge. The job of the facilitator is to encourage a discussion, not dominate it. It was an opportunity for me to learn another skill, keeping quiet

and letting others talk. I'm not sure I've completely learned that lesson, but I did my best. I think it helped that the discussion didn't start until 10pm and I was exhausted after everything that had already happened.

And then, on Sunday we had our wrap up meeting, well attended by folks from Bellevue Washington where PRAASA 2012 will be held and it was over. We'd done it. Sure there was, and is, some follow-up work to do, but PRAASA 2011 had closed.

Now that I've had a couple of weeks to contemplate what happened, I realize that this journey was not just about using some skills I already had. It was about learning new ones, and not those needed to put up a website. I learned about teamwork and being a small part of a big whole. I learned to trust the judgment of others. I may even have learned a bit of humility when I had to take responsibility for the numerous mistakes I made along the way. And ultimately I learned that when we A.A.s get together in fellowship and trust in our group conscience and each other, it's possible to things I never dreamed of being part of when I was still drinking, or even just a year or two sober.

I want to thank you all for letting me be of service, to the Pacific Region, Hawaii Area 17, and to each of you individually. Whether or not you volunteered your time or even attended PRAASA 2011, you, as part of our Hawaii fellowship, made PRAASA 2011 possible. For that, and the benefits I received and continue to receive, thank you.

Bob H.



## **Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age**

[Panel 3 - Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age](#)

Aloha! My name is Bob and I am an alcoholic.

**In case you are wondering why I'm up here. I've been playing with computers since I was eleven and I started drinking at about the same age. I'm pretty sure they're not related though.**

**When I got sober seven years ago I remember promising myself that I wasn't going to become the webmaster for Hawaii Area 17. I just stepped down from that position after four years on the job.**

**When I received this topic, "Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age", my first thoughts were of Traditions Eleven and Twelve and social media sites such as Face book. However many of you will remember that at PRAASA 2010, Joel C. from San Diego Imperial did a great job on the topic of "Anonymity in the Digital Age" specifically covering social media.**

**Joel reminded us that ultimately the responsibility of safeguarding our Traditions "needs to reside with the whole Fellowship." The GSO Guidelines on the Internet, MG-18, are a great resource for this, especially the section on social media.**

Joel reminded us that ultimately the responsibility of safeguarding our Traditions “needs to reside with the whole Fellowship.” The GSO Guidelines on the Internet, MG-18, are a great resource for this, especially the section on social media.

I'm not going to rehash or repeat his fine talk, but I do want you to remember my favorite quote :

To be honest, I believe there is something inherently narcissistic about Face book. If Tradition Twelve is really about humility, then it might be virtually impossible to practice Tradition Twelve on Face book at all.

So if individually we sometimes fall short, especially when it comes to humility, how are we as a Fellowship doing with some of our other Traditions in this Digital Age? I'm happy to report, the sky is not falling. In some areas we are doing quite well. Let me give you some examples.

The long form of Tradition Three says in part:

Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group...

As early as the 1980's A.A.'s were getting together online using Bulletin Board Systems. Back then these computers were not linked together by the internet. Instead you called them over the phone, logged in, read new messages and left your own.

Today there's an internet Online Intergroup and you can find meetings pretty much anywhere, any-time in languages from Czech to Swedish.

One caveat I must add is that no matter how wonderful our technology is or may become, we must not forget that we aren't gathering together for the sake of that technology.

We come together for recovery, for unity, and in service, our Legacies, to pass on what we have been given. Individually and collectively, we must always remember that not everyone has or wants access to our “Digital Age.” It's not good enough to say, “oh, it's on our website.”

Moving on.

The Long Form of Tradition Five says:

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Carrying that message online is more than simply having meetings or chatting. It's making our literature available, putting meeting schedules online, and making sure a host of other resources are available. How are we doing there?

Now I'm not going to talk about unofficial or personal sites; some are fine places to visit and others are not. I'm talking about recognized A.A. websites that are responsible to the groups they represent.

Our own AA.org website began in 1995 and has, over the years, made more and more information available. Interestingly the Big Book was not part of that original website and as late as 2002 there was still discussion putting it up. This is from the October 2002 issue of the Grapevine:

“The question of whether the GSO website should publish the Big Book online also has come up among the Fellowship. While some are concerned that doing so might keep people from turning to local A.A.s or affect a central office's self-support, others feel it would help carry the AA message further. Again, GSO is letting caution be its by-word and has no plans to do this, for today.”

I called GSO to double check the date and sure enough, we put the Big Book online in January 2004, just over a year later.

By the way, that quote came from the A.A. Grapevine Digital Archive, another wonderful online resource making generations of knowledge and information available. Now we can carry the message not only across town but across time as well.

And the Grapevine itself has had to adapt to the Digital Age too. In the April 1999 issue I found :

Let me just say, we've got nothing against the Internet; in fact, we've got a website at <[www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)>. But when it comes to having a meeting in your pocket, close to your heart, you just can't beat the "meeting in print."

Of course today we are being asked to switch to the digital edition to save the cost of printing and mailing. Times do change.

Again a word of caution is in order. There are some places that a “meeting in print” is always going to be welcome and a computer is not: prisons and treatment centers come to mind. Let's be sure that in carrying the message we make it available to everyone who suffers from alcoholism and not just those with access to technology.

Also on AA.org I found links to all the Area websites in the US and Canada except Area 31, Western Massachusetts. I did a search for Area 31 online and, sure enough, came up with a website that is part of their local Intergroup.

So how well do our websites practice our Traditions? Well when our Area Web Standing Committee was creating our usage guidelines, we stole, I mean adapted, those guidelines from other Areas. We read a lot of them. I can't say all 93 Areas have website guidelines, nor can I say they all follow them. We didn't check them all. But every one we checked did and appeared to be following them well.

Still there are a few things out there that give pause. Once in a while you'll find a website with a footer naming a web design company or specific software, which brings me to:

**Tradition Six - An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise...**

One could even question the GSO site on this. When delivering the Big Book online one may install a plug-in to view the text. Clicking on the FAQ for the plug-in brings up a document on the software company that created it. Here's how it starts:

**FileOpen Systems is a software development company based in New York..**

**Are we lending our name to this company? It is a fair question: one that must be asked in any discussion of Practicing Our Traditions in a Digital Age.**

We had a similar situation involving some postcards we had made with our website address as well as the mail address for our area contributions. In a corner the postcard carried the manufacturers name. It was decided to move forward but I thanked the person who questioned it.

**Moving from Tradition Six to Seven:**

**Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

Recently it became possible to make donations online at AA.org. I gave it a try and discovered that I had to create a confidential user profile and state categorically that I am an alcoholic before I could donate. Clearly this is to be sure that we do not accept money from outside sources.

How are other A.A. websites doing? It's hard to know as I'm not quite ready to make a donation on every possible A.A. website. At my local intergroup we did have a discussion about this very topic though. We wanted to accept contributions and a link had been put up for that purpose. At first there was no disclaimer or instructions, just a button allowing contributions. After discussion, and a visit to AA.org, we made some changes and now the link brings up a page which gives the Seventh Tradition in the long form and states that, “In keeping with Tradition Seven, you must be an A.A. Member to make a contribution.”

**Is this good enough or should we require confidential profiles like GSO? I don't know.**

I could go on and discuss each of our Traditions in light of the “Digital Age” and it is my sincere belief that we must have those discussions. I'm out of time but I hope I've shown that there's a lot more to Practicing Our Traditions in the Digital Age than simply being careful on Face book.

And now I'll leave you where I started. The sky is not falling. If we are careful, if we have informed discussions and especially if we rely on Tradition Two, “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience,” eventually, to paraphrase the words of Greg M. our past General Service Office Manager when we discussed this at PRAASA 2010, “we will work it out”.

**Mahalo for letting me be of service.**

## Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Services Assembly 2011

P.R.A.A.S.A. is the acronym for Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Services Assembly. The 44th annual P.R.A.A.S.A. was themed:

### **"WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR AA's FUTURE-LET IT BEGIN WITH US"**

Honolulu, Hawaii the Ala Moana Hotel was the setting for this years services assembly. The assembly attendance was down 52% from the previous year even though there were over 800 men and women in attendance. We used the Hibiscus Ballroom with overflow sent to the Garden Lanai room to watch on the plasma monitor provided by the Ala Moana Hotel.

P.R.A.A.S.A. was a workshop for all our area servants, from the Delegates to the volunteer committees that were there to help. G.S.R.s from all over the Pacific Region came to go over the high lights of the region, the 12 tradition and the concepts for world services. These articles of subject are, our principles to the fellowship of men and women know as alcoholics anonymous. In helping to keep the doors open, and the coffee brewing...for the ones that still suffers, those who have not found their way into the fellowship yet. For the hand that Reaches out for help, we are still here.

At P.R.A.A.S.A. we listened to six different panels, delegates, past delegates, trustees and past trustees. Panelist used 10 minutes to talk on topics that they had been given to cover, topic ranged from humility to warranties. Each panel of topic, had five topics to cover: The first panel covered area services highlights within the pacific region, making AA more user friendly. Subjects like disabled accessible, ramps, interpreters for the hearing impaired or speak foreign languages, and help for the senior who is looking for sobriety in our community.....

These are some of the ways that groups in our region have been reaching out to the ones who still suffer. Each delegate told of group activities highlighting their area. The panelists represented over 3000 groups in 16 areas of the pacific region.

D.J.H.

## **BEDSIDE MATTERS. . .**

My name is Jim and I'm serving as the Hospitals Chair for Panel 61. For reasons included in a lower paragraph, I'm writing this article as a first thrust at increasing communication within our fellowship about this work.

At the Orientation Assembly a committee was created to help "co-ordinate the service work of A.A. groups and individuals who carry the message to alcoholics in hospitals and medical clinics." The discussion among the six of us was exciting and revealed a broad range of activities across the islands. In Kona, for example, there is a meeting in the hospital which has been existent for fifteen years and nurses on most wards are aware of it! In other places we are just beginning to develop mechanisms for getting literature into waiting rooms.

Similarly, some groups are highly responsive to a hospital near their meeting spots and other hospitals have no particular group claiming responsibility for activity there.

Because of these broad ranges of organization and activity, we chose two objectives for this panel's focus in carrying the message to hospitalized alcoholics: (1) improving communication between Central offices/Intergroups and those doing the work in medical facilities, and (2) improving communication between the local groups and the hospitals they serve.

At this point we assume there will be significant overlap with CPC and CEC committees as well as PI and Grapevine activity.

Personally, I will make every effort to maintain this column under this heading throughout the panel and I encourage anyone interested to contact me at [hospitals@area17aa.org](mailto:hospitals@area17aa.org).

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service.



## **BUDGET ASSEMBLY**

**Aloha everyone!**

We now have a **CONFIRMED** date for the fall Budget Assembly. It will be the last week-end of September, the 24-25th in Kaneohe on Oahu. I strongly encourage all trusted servants—GSR's, DCM's, Standing Committee chairs and Area Officers to make your reservations ASAP. Fares will only go up as the time approaches.

Please remember to book your flights so you arrive on time and do not need to leave before the Assembly is pau. The Assembly will begin at 9am on Saturday morning and will close at 4pm on Sunday. So, return flights should be scheduled after 5:45pm on Sunday to allow time to travel to the airport, check in, etc. As trusted servants, we are using Seventh Tradition funds to do this very important part of carrying the message, but I encourage you to be prudent. DCMs, please remind GSRs in your District and encourage them to book their flights ASAP so they have a wide range of flights to choose from.





## Announcements



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Grapevine Chair

Area 17 has an opening for [Treatment Chair](#). This is a great way to be in service on the Area level! If you are interested or have any questions, please contact me via email at [chair@area17aa.org](mailto:chair@area17aa.org).

Cheryl N.  
Area Chair

### 2011 Area Assemblies & Committee Meetings

May 21 Committee Meeting NoKaOi District 5 Maui

September 24—25 Budget Assembly Leeward District 3 Oahu



Mynah Bird  
**Hawaii Area 17 Newsletter  
NEEDS YOU!**

**Why not become a Mynah Bird  
Committee Chair  
for your District?  
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**Next Deadline: May 13**



- an AA event with Al-Anon participation -

***“I Can’t..... We Can”***  
**APRIL 15 - 17, 2011**

Kelly M. - Collingswood, NJ  
Karl M. - Covina, CA

Speakers include:

Robbie W. - Ocean City, NJ  
Larcine G. - Hawthorne, CA

See program information at

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**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:**



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email: [april15bash@gmail.com](mailto:april15bash@gmail.com)

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TENNIS TOURNAMENT

# "COURAGE TO CHANGE"

## 2011 Kauai Round Up

June 03, 04, 05 2011

Friday 2:00 P.M. – Sunday 12:00 P.M.

## 25<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HO'O LAU' LEA

*"The Kauai Roundup Committee's mission is: To foster fellowship, unity and recovery for the AA community by providing an entertaining and relaxing annual weekend retreat."*

Come join us in the beautiful **CAMP NAUE**

Location on Kuhio Hwy 4 miles west of Hanalei and 2 miles from Ke'e beach.

For information email: [kauairoundup2011@yahoo.com](mailto:kauairoundup2011@yahoo.com)

Prices: \$55.00 Includes 2 nights stay, 5 meals, and fun.

15.00 day pass. Meal pass 5.00 each meal

Children five and under free

Camping is allowed bring your tent

What to bring: blankets, pillow, and towels and toiletries.

Bring floaters, Snorkel gear, fins, boogie boards, beach chairs, fishing pole, sunscreen, canteen, hiking shoes, and backpacks.

Make checks payable to **KAUAI ROUNDUP COMMITTEE**

Mailing address: PO BOX1893 KAPAA HI 96746

Cut off the portion below and return it with your payment please.

(Note: Non-Refundable registration. However, it is transferable)

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Prefer Cabin \_\_\_\_\_ or, Own Tent \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ Vegan \_\_\_\_\_ Carnivore \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs (dietary or other) \_\_\_\_\_

# Heard in a Meeting...

## AT PRASSA...

By Diane L.

**"The heart of AA is the home group."**

**"How uncomfortable are you willing to be today so you can be comfortable the rest of your life?"**

**"My dependence on a Higher Power creates my independence from alcohol."**

**"If God were small enough for me to understand, He wouldn't be big enough to do me any good."**



**"Sobriety challenges me to be more than I thought I could be."**

**"The non-alcoholic changes their behavior to meet their goals. The alcoholic changes their goals to meet their behavior."**

**"Be grateful to people who didn't need a meeting, but came to create a meeting to help others."**

**"I have stood on the shoulders of giants— I have seen the face of God."**