



MYNAH BIRD

HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER

Area Website:

www.area17aa.org



Budget Assembly

August 18 & 19th, 2012

Pahoa Neighborhood Facility
15-2710 Kauhale St.
Hosted by Puna District #12



FINANCE COMMITTEE

The finance committee has been working together and have finalized the 2012 Proposed Budget. Copies were given to the DCM's at the committee meeting to take back to their districts. They also planned to visit all Area 17 districts to present the proposed budget at the district meetings. In addition, the proposed budget is posted on the area website. If there are any questions, feedback, or concerns, please contact a member of the Finance Committee. You can find their contact information on the Area 17 website contact list.

Other business the Finance Committee has been discussing is ways to increase contributions. They are formatting an informational flyer for districts and had samples to look at for the DCM's at the last committee meeting in Maui. They will be emailed to DCM's as an opportunity to open the dialogue to increasing the 7th tradition contributions.

Continuing with the topic of increasing 7th tradition contributions, there is a financial packet available from GSO that has resources created for that purpose. One of the items in the packet is the Green Card. The papers that are being passed around have the wording of that Green Card. On the back side is a flyer included in the packet to help increase awareness of 7th tradition contributions.

Self Support

The 7th tradition states: "Every group out to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

While contributions cover each group's rent and other expenses, the 7th tradition is essential at every level of A.A. service. It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to ensure that not only their group, but also their intergroup, central office, local services, district, area, and the General Service Office remain self-supporting. This keeps A.A. free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose—to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

The amount of our contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around the world.



The Finance Committee and Budget Presentations

As a member of the Finance Committee, I recently had the honor of presenting the Area 17 Proposed Budget to four districts on Oahu.

On June 6, 2011, I went to the first budget presentation at Waianae. DCM Bart had recently decided to move the District 17 meeting to Pokai Bay. This move may have been a simple decision, but it had a profound effect that I was privileged to observe. Scheduling the meeting directly after the Pokai Bay meeting was a great idea in my opinion. Many members of the fellowship ambled over to the meeting to listen to the district business and new GSRs attended their first meeting.

The next night I went to Leeward District I was amazed how District 3 has embraced technology. The meeting was virtually paperless, with lap tops and Ipads working their magic! They spoke with excitement of the coming district activities being planned and I was amazed at the increased participation in District 3.

My next stop was Central North Shore district. This is my home group's district and my service heart is here. As past DCM of district 9, I felt like I was home. The district decided to host a Food, Fun and Fellowship Day on September 16th at Kaiaka Beach Park after the 10 @ 10 meeting.

In July, I attended the district meeting for Windward district. Besides the joy of traveling on H3 on one of the beautiful drives on Oahu, I was able to observe a large group of service minded alcoholics who were very passionate and thoughtful about their service responsibilities and the district's and area's financial condition.

As the end of Panel 61 fast approaches, I hope that many GSRs stand for the DCM position within their district. If one day in the future, you are asked to serve on the Finance Committee, please don't hesitate in saying yes. Besides getting fed first at Committee meeting and Assemblies, which is big perk in itself (it even trumps vegetarians), there are so many more benefits. For me these growth benefits include learning to listen to others, understanding the spiritual value of our 7th tradition contributions, bonding with other members of the Finance Committee, and my personal favorite, traveling to different districts and observing how they perform their service responsibilities. Observing all the different districts in action helps me to see and better understand how AA works as a whole and it has been a true joy to be a small part of it.

Sheri B
Panel 61 Treasurer



THE GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE AGENDA

The 62nd General Service Conference was held in Rye, NY at the Hilton Rye Town April 22nd-28th. The theme this year was "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age." I wish I had the words to describe to you that, while the week-long schedule is grueling, the work is satisfying and spiritually fulfilling. I think Ward Ewing, Chair of the General Service Board, put it best in his opening report, *"I have always viewed the General Service Conference as a spiritual adventure – at once exciting and a lot of hard work, but also uplifting as we seek to reach an informed group conscience for A.A. in the U.S. and Canada."* This part of my journey is so amazing to me that anyone who drank like I drank and felt like I felt would have evolved to be a member of the General Service Conference that develops and improves means of reaching people who are still drinking and feeling that pitiful, incomprehensible demoralization. I believe that we are all here because of the General Service Structure and our trust in the processes of the GSC. I know today that I am sober in Alcoholics Anonymous because someone took the responsibility to reach out to me with the hand of A.A. We hope that hand will always be there in fulfillment of our responsibility.

I was asked to share at the Delegate-only dinner the night before the Conference began. My share was to be about the full conference process. While writing that talk, I realized that even though the Conference meets only once a year, the process has been continuous since 1960, when our co-founders turned over to us, the Fellowship, the responsibilities of continuing the work of A.A. Our sole purpose, as we know, is to reach the still suffering alcoholic. Many years ago now, the results of the General Service process reached me in a tiny detox in Dana Point, California.

GSO estimates that there are 1,423,689 members of A.A. throughout the U.S. and Canada. We reach the outermost places from isolated corners of the Arctic to the Islands of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and more. Each of us carries the spiritual and fiscal responsibility of making sure that we will always be able to provide literature and services to all members so that we can continue to reach out. All during this rotation, I have encouraged you to see the spiritual value of your dollars. During the Conference, I heard the phrase, "money problems vs. money opportunities." And the latter is exactly what we have thanks to the 7th Tradition. Our money in the "basket" represents opportunities to extend our reach to every corner of the world. I was amazed to hear that members in Iran are working on the development of their own GSO! But that would not have happened without aid offered by our GSO. Last year, the unaudited net revenues for A.A.W.S. were about \$819K. Sounds great, yeah? That number is down \$1,280K from 2010. While it's true that the 2010 net revenue was in part due to the \$844K in contributions from the 2010 International., according to membership estimates, if each member sent slightly less than \$1.00 to GSO, we may have been able to complete some unfunded projects.

While we are on the subject of money, I am very pleased to inform you that the Grapevine, Inc. showed a profit of over \$22K for 2011. Every effort is being made to keep Grapevine, Inc. profitable. You can help by subscribing to the Grapevine magazine.



So now to the business of the Conference:

AGENDA:

The inventory questions approved by the 61st GSC were assigned to the three succeeding conferences for discussion (District 03)

The committee recommended that the trustees Committee on the General Service Conference reduce the number of presentation topics to allow for scheduling for the inventory process.

The committee recommended that the normal time allotted for workshops be replaced with inventory group meetings to discuss inventory questions.

ARCHIVES:

The committee recommended that the trustees' Archives Committee develop a new section in the Archives Workbook on digitizing archival collections, intending to provide guidance to local archives committees responsible for maintaining Area or District archival collections.

CORRECTIONS:

The revised pamphlet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" was approved.

The section on "Release and paroles" in the pamphlet "A Message to Corrections Professionals will be revised and the section title will be changed to "Re-entry and Parole."

FINANCE:

The annual delegate's requested contribution is increased from \$1,200 to \$1,600 (District 02).

The recommendation made by the committee to increase the annual \$3,000 contributions limit be increased to \$5,000 failed to pass. (District 17)

The recommendation that the one-time bequest limit of \$3,000 be increased to \$25,000 failed. However, a Floor Action to increase the limit to \$5,000 passed. (District 17)

The committee reviewed the proposed Self-Support Kit and agreed that the current Self-Support Packet is sufficient. They suggested adding "Services Provided by G.S.O./A.A.W.S." to the packet. (District 06)

The committee reviewed and acknowledged the 21 Self-Support Talking Points presented for use by the Fellowship and suggested one additional point to be included: "What is the value of your sobriety?" The committee also suggested that they be added to the Finance Section of the Website. (District 04)

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The committee recommended that La Vina become self-supporting within three years beginning January 1, 2013. If La Vina has not become self-supporting by December 31, 2015, General Service Board funding will cease. (District 08) The recommendation failed. There was a Floor Action brought that the GSC recommend that the GSB form a subcommittee comprised of stakeholders to develop a plan to address publication, distribution and finances of La Vina with the objective of self-support by 2/31/15. The Floor Action also failed.

GRAPEVINE:

It was recommended that AA Grapevine, Inc. move forward with an audio strategy to have members call in and record their stories on 3rd party recording technology. (District 12)

The stories will be subject to the same editorial process as print stories

The audio endeavor will, at a minimum break even financially

The committee requests that a status and financial report be submitted to the 2013 Conference Committee on the Grapevine, as background

The committee requests that the board ensure that all contracts protect our Traditions, with the option to discontinue any and all contracts at any time.

It was recommended that the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., carry out the "Sunset" proposal of Grapevine items. The "Sunset" proposal is a plan to phase out older or slow-moving Grapevine items and archive them digitally or make them available in another format.

The committee considered incorporating the service responsibilities and duties of the service position "Grapevine Representative" in the service responsibilities and duties of the "General Service Representative" and took no action. (District 13) There was another additional committee consideration requesting that groups that do not have a GVR or RLV consider incorporating these duties into the duties of the GSR.

The committee made an additional committee consideration requesting the AA Grapevine Board incorporate into all appropriate literature, the 1962 Advisory Action that: "retiring delegates become Grapevine Representatives (GvRs) in their areas, with the objective of a GvR in each group."

LITERATURE:

The revised pamphlet "A.A. and the Armed Services" was approved.

The final revision of *Living Sober*, with changes to outdated language or practice, was approved with minor editorial changes.

The pamphlet "Circles of Love and Service" will be revised, and a draft pamphlet or progress report will be brought to the Conference Committee on Literature next year. (District 10)

The committee reviewed with appreciation the progress report from the trustees' Committee on Literature on the development of literature that focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. The committee forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Literature, as requested, input and suggestions, and requested a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Literature



The committee discussed a request to add text from the dust jacket of the Third Edition of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, to the dust jacket of the Fourth Edition of the Big Book and took no action. (District 11)

The committee considered a request to add the "A.A. Preamble" to the front inside pages of the Big Book and took no action. (District 07)

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Following lengthy and thoughtful discussion related to adding language referring to current media to Tradition Eleven, the committee concluded that the spirit and principle of anonymity at the public level is conveyed adequately in the Long Form of Tradition Eleven. Recognizing that suggested changes to Tradition Eleven have come to the Conference several times, the committee requested the trustees' Public Information Committee gather Area sharing on the effectiveness of the language of the Short Form of Tradition Eleven in addressing the needs of the Fellowship today and report back to the 2013 Conference Committee on Public Information. (District 05)

The committee considered favorably the suggestion from the trustees' Public Information Committee that A.A. establish a presence on Face book for the purpose of providing information about A.A. to the public. Before proceeding, however, the committee requested that the General Service Board explore all aspects of this social media page and, if deemed that such a page would be feasible within our Traditions, provide the 2013 Conference Committee on Public Information an implementation plan that addresses the implications of such a page, including sample content and estimates for implementation cost and maintenance. (District 09)

TREATMENT/SPECIAL NEEDS-ACCESSIBILITIES:

The committee recommended that the pamphlet "A.A. for Alcoholics With Special Needs" be expanded to include additional stories of alcoholics with mental illness collected from the Fellowship, and that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation With The Professional Community/Treatment/Special Need-Accessibilities bring a progress report or draft pamphlet to the 2013 Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities. (District 01) This recommendation failed. There was then a Floor Action brought that the trustees' Committee on Literature develop a pamphlet for the alcoholic with mental illness, with a progress report provided to the 2013 appropriate committee with suggestions for content of the pamphlet, including breadth and scope of the pamphlet. *After more than 1 hour, 45 minutes of discussion, the motion carried with exactly two-thirds of the votes cast. However, after the minority opinion was heard, a motion to reconsider passed, and the motion then did not receive the required two-thirds to pass.*

Note: there were three other Floor Actions not included in this report. Of those three, two were "declined to be heard" and one failed.



ADDITIONAL MOTION FROM THE BOARD:

The General Service Conference supports the General Service Board's development of a plan to restructure the current A.A. World Services, Inc. and A.A. Grapevine, Inc., corporate and governance structures. The plan may, among other things, address the separate corporate existence of both entities, as well as issues of governance and operations. The plan will be designed to increase unity, better reach and connect the General Service Office and The Grapevine, Inc to the broader Fellowship while addressing financial stability. The plan will be submitted to the 2013 General Service Conference for approval prior to implementation. This motion went through several "friendly" amendments and was discussed for more than three hours before being accepted in its current form. There were also two related motions that tried to change the manner in which the motion was brought, but neither was accepted. Please note that the Board has every right to explore develop a plan without the permission of the Conference. Neither are they required to gain approval of the Conference before implementation of a plan. However, it's a very classy move in the name of transparency.

I have been asked to report the results of the workshop, which you may remember was on "Safety in A.A.: Our Common Welfare." The following are the results of the workshop in which I participated:

How can we make our Home Group a welcoming and accessible place?

SMILE

Have both men and women greeters if mixed meeting

Have the meeting space set up early

Be ready to escort handicapped if necessary

Help newcomers find the coffee

**Be sure the secretary reads housekeeping items and guidelines for the meeting
(e.g. cell phones away, no smoking, crosstalk, etc.)**

Personally invite the newcomer back

Be sensitive to closing the meeting with a religious prayer

Don't leave any cleanup people alone to do the chores

SMILE

How can sponsorship aid in keeping our A.A. meetings safe?

Discourage profanity

Discourage sharing re sexuality

Educate as to pray vs. prey

Offer guidance in life skills

Be an example of appropriate conduct

Be aware that predators exist and speak up if see inappropriate behavior

In keeping with the Traditions, how would/does my group address matters that may arise, such as:

Conduct the disrupts the meeting

Be sure the secretary reads housekeeping items and guidelines for the meeting (e.g. cell phones away, no smoking, crosstalk, etc.)

Speak quietly with the person; if one-on-one is not effective, ask the person to leave the meeting (but not AA)

In group conscience, define disruptive behavior and develop a plan (snoring, texting, kids running around, pets running around)

Illegal activity

Any illegal activity that jeopardizes the health and well being of others needs to be reported

Call police

Take action, don't withdraw

Inappropriate behaviors towards vulnerable newcomers (e.g. "13 Stepping")

Be aware/mindful

Sponsors can alert newcomers to potentially harmful situations

Encourage newcomers that we need to change behavior in sobriety (i.e. appropriate dress and language)

Inappropriate behavior includes more than sexual predation; be mindful of monetary predation and so-called personal behaviors; watch for drug dealers

Emergencies (injury/accident/fire)

Have procedures in place

Call 911

Finally, here are two thoughts:

Inaction = condonation

Remember: what's good for the group comes first, but personal welfare follows close behind.



fyi

From the Area 17 February Committee Meeting

There was a moment of silence for one of the founding members of "Sober Over Sixty". Member Stan from West Hawaii passed on February 9, 2012.

We discussed the results of the Area 17 Inventory. The main issues were a lack of communication throughout the service structure, and the need for all in General Service to be responsible for their positions.

Proposal To Define The Scope of the Archive

The Proposal is to change the "Hawaii Area 17 Structures and Guidelines for the Hawaii Area Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous (S & G), page 4 paragraph 3.7, Item A, from "Archives* et al. to "Serves as a permanent repository of materials pertaining to Hawaii A.A. Area 17, its Districts, and its groups histories".



ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMING EVENTS 2012...

September

28-30

HICYPAA
Camp Naue, Kauai

hicypaa2012@kauaiaa.org

October

13

Committee Meeting

October

26-28

Annual Kauai Men's Retreat

www.kauaiaa.org

November

1-4

51st Annual State Convention
Honolulu
'Freedom From Bondage'

www.hawaiiconvention.com

November

17-18

Election Assembly
West Hawaii
KONA



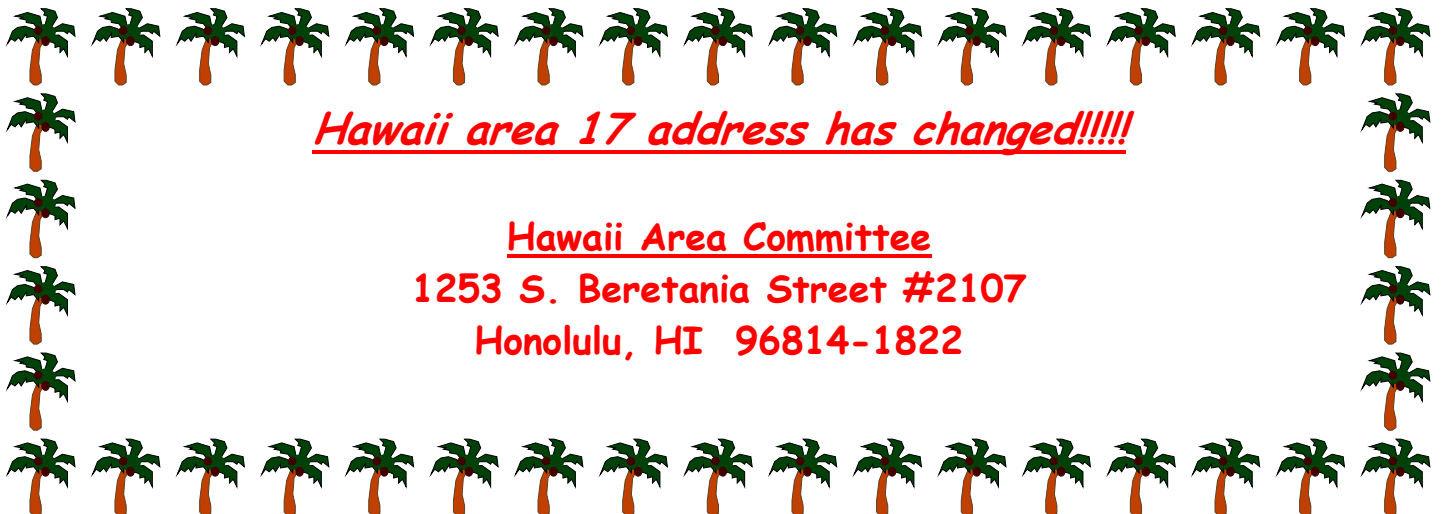
PROPSAL TO DEFINE THE SCOPE OF THE ARCHIVE

The proposal is to change the “Hawaii Are 17 Structure and Guideline for the Hawaii Area Assembly of Alcoholics Anonymous” (S & G), page 4, paragraph 3.7, Item A. from “Archives*: Serves as a permanent repository of every aspect of Hawaii A.A. history” to read “Archives*: Serves as a permanent repository of materials pertaining to Hawaii A.A. Area 17, its Districts, and its groups histories.”

Purpose: to define the scope of materials retained in a storage unit that is paid for with Area 17 funds as per the Annual Area Budget and to eliminate duplication of materials retained in the archive of other A.A. service entities, such as The Annual State Convention, Intergroups, the General Service Office in New York. etc.

Background: For several years, Hawaii Area was blessed with a non-rotating archivist who had such a passion for A.A. history in Hawaii that he had a room in his place of residence dedicated to the archive. About three years ago, he stepped down, and the archive was moved to an appropriate storage unit, which cost Hawaii Area over \$400 per month. At that time, a new non-rotating archivist stepped up and did a tremendous amount of work doing an initial sort of the material; unfortunately she had to step down in September of last year. Subsequently, a temporary archives committee was formed and set about sorting some of the materials kept in storage in order to eliminate duplicated documents and that material that was not pertinent to Hawaii. By the end of February this year, the archived was down-sized enough to be moved to a smaller storage unit, thus saving Hawaii Area about \$150 per month. There is still much work to be done in order to fully organize the archive and to make the archive available for displays and possibly digitizing so that we could eventually post some historical information on our Area 17 Website should the assembly decide to proceed with that process.

Financial impact: Hawaii Area now pays about \$250 per month to store our archive. The goal of the current archives committee is to further reduce duplicated documents and materials pertaining to other service entities so that the archive could be moved into a more cost effective storage space. Cost savings would depend upon storage rates at that time.



Hawaii area 17 address has changed!!!!

**Hawaii Area Committee
1253 S. Beretania Street #2107
Honolulu, HI 96814-1822**

Hawaii Area 17 address has changed!!!

Hawaii Mail Box Service, where the area post office box is located, has chosen to move after 30 years at the same location. The high cost of rent at the old address forced them to choose a more affordable location. As a result, the area address will be changed. The date of this change is July 23, 2012. The new address for area contributions is listed below:

**Hawaii Area Committee
1253 S. Beretania Street #2107
Honolulu, HI 96814-1822**

The mail will be forwarded for twelve months, but it is important to notify everyone concerned as soon as possible. Please let all your group treasurers know of this change and Help us to get the word out to all of the Hawaii fellowship.

Contributions made after July 23, 2012 should use this new address. Thank you all for your service in announcing this important change.

51st Annual Hawaii Convention

November 1-4, 2012



..freedom from bondage

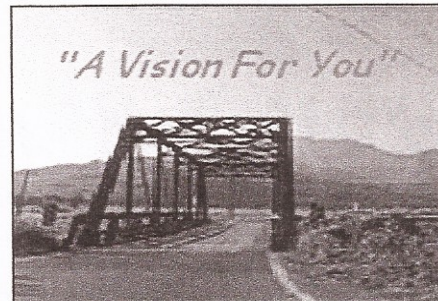
To Be Held At

**The Hilton Hawaiian Village
Waikiki Beach Resort**

<http://annualhawaiiconvention.com/>

H.I.C.Y.P.A.A. 2012

(Hawaiian Islands Conference of Young People in AA)



September 28th - 30th, Camp Naue

**Food, Fun, Fellowship, Camping, Hiking,
Swimming, Speakers, Meetings, Music
and Relaxation!**

Registration Form at: <http://www.kauaiaa.org>

Questions? Email: hicypaa2012@kauaiaa.org,

Hotline: 808 245-6677 or www.kauaiaa.org

My First Article to the Mynah Bird



Aloha, my name is Clifford and I am an alcoholic. After serving General Service quite a few years and hearing all the requests from our Mynah Bird Committee Chairs from Miranda to Cheryl and now to Kathy to submit articles I am finally submitting my very first article. Thank you Kathy for your continued loving persistence. At our last committee meeting roundtable of Area Committee Chairs I again thought I should write an article. This time though I voiced it. I have learned in this program I can think of a lot of things I should do and get nothing done or I can voice on a few things and act on them. Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, sometimes too long.

I am currently serving as the Hawaii Area 17 Panel 61 Grapevine Committee Chair. I officially started this commitment in September of 2011. Due to family obligations I did not stand for any Area service. The family situation changed and when I was approached by Coleen if I was interested in serving I said yes. "Please put my name in the hat". I committed to being available to serve and got confirmed by the Area body. Now the talk was done and the action started. Creating the Grapevine display was the first thing I worked on. Making it travel friendly was a goal, not just for me but for future Grapevine Chairs. The most difficult part of this position is the feeling that I am not doing enough. As a former DCM, I put in a lot of work planning our District Meetings, keeping our GSR's informed of upcoming events. This kept me very busy. I see our other Committee Chairs attending Health Fairs, going to the hospitals, treatment facilities, updating the Web, etc. I always hear in AA Service we will know what we are doing at the end of our commitment. So very true.

I am a Maui Boy, born and raised. Did majority of my drinking on Maui and got sober here. I am a court ordered drunk having to attend 14 AA meetings as a part of my sentence on a DUI conviction. My sober date is April 1, 1994. Not by choice. It's so ironic that at the time, a fool like me gets sober on April Fool's Day. April 1st just so happened to be the day I made an appointment for the court ordered substance abuse assessment. My higher power must have been with me then because I was assessed to abuse alcohol and entered an out-patient treatment program. In treatment, I learned about the disease of Alcoholism, not that I had the disease. It took the court ordered 14 meetings to get me to AA to realize I was an alcoholic and there is a solution to living sober. I came to realize all I wanted was to live a life without the uneasy feeling of not being a part of society/life. Through a loving/nurturing/tough love sponsor I grudgingly worked through the Steps and "as a result of these steps" I did have a spiritual awakening and a change in my attitude.

Today, I strive toward having balance in my life by using the AA program's Design for Living. I heard it said our three legacies – Unity, Service, Recovery is our program. Unity is the gift of my program. I have met so many people on the same journey and become close friends with many of them. Even those I seem not to like, I can be cordial and respectful of their journey. Recovery is in the Steps! Ahh, Service. To some this is a sore spot, especially General Service. "Why do we spend so much money on travel?"; "Just buy Literature with the money". ; "One Alcoholic talking to another is what this program is about", etc. I've heard it all.

My service in AA started when I was two months sober with answering phones at our Central Office. At that time we had no call forwarding service so we had to go to Central Office to answer phones. Another blessing. I read almost all of the literature (except the service manual), wrote my 4th step and did my 5th step there. I continued in service from coffee maker to literature person to secretary to Intergroup Representative to GSR for my home group, Up-country Speaker's Meeting. I am a sponsor and work with others one on one. There is a deep respect for our Program and all the different forms of service available to us. An old-timer once told me "Service is Gratitude in Action" and I take this to heart. I believe all of the different types of service are important, one not more important than any other. Having done a lot of the different types of service I sort of fell into General Service when a bunch of us decided to serve our respective Home Groups as GSR's for No Ka Oi district. I have loved it ever since.

I wish I could tell people who criticize General Service to try it first. Or at least tell them to keep their criticism to themselves and let others find out for themselves if General Service works for them. I wish I could "toot my horn" and tell everyone how great General Service is. I have learned otherwise. A dear friend told me in General Service "We are a part of making 12 Step work possible". Our part is to keep the rooms open for anyone who wants our Program, living by our Traditions does this.

I am grateful to be a part of Alcoholics Anonymous. It has given the direction I need to live a full life. Thank you AA and thanks to all in service in AA.

I'll close with my favorite quote from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous:
"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance – that principle is contempt prior to investigation." Herbert Spencer
Appendix II – Spiritual Experience from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

In Love and Service,
Clifford S.

2013 AREA ASSEMBLIES AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Orientation Assembly - January - District 4, Windward, Oahu



Committee Meeting - February - District 11, Kehei, Maui

Inform the Delegate - April - District 5, "No Ka Oi", Maui

Committee Meeting - May/June - District 10 - Waikiki, Oahu

Budget Assembly - August - District 2 - Honolulu, Oahu

Optional Committee Meeting - District 6 - Kauai



Optional Assembly - November - District 3 - Leeward, Oahu

When anyone, anywhere...

By Ken C.

Early in my sobriety I realized that the only way that I would remain sober was by following all of the "suggestions" that I read in the AA literature and herd in the rooms.

I knew to go to meetings, to trust in, and pray to, a Higher Power, and to work the steps (in order, and with my sponsor).

It was also suggested that I get into service. Someone at my Home group handed me the pamphlet about the GSR. "Could be the most important job in AA", claimed the cover!

This appealed to the still recovering control freak inside of me, so I stood for the position. Little did I know how little "control" our trusted servants actually have. Lucky for me, and everyone else, I surrendered to the process. Although I became involved in General Service for the wrong reason, I stayed for all the right ones.

This was a good start in my recovery. However, I was craving that one-on-one work with a newcomer. "Nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other Alcoholics", and "Frequent work with newcomers is the bright spot in our lives", states the Big Book in chapter 7, "Working With Others".

That's what I wanted, to find that bright spot! I wanted to work with newcomers, to be a sponsor! I set out to find someone to work the steps with. At meetings, I would announce that I was willing to be a sponsor. I pounced on anyone who claimed they had less than 90 days sober. I passed around meeting schedules with my phone number written in the section for "People who want you to call" everywhere I went. And I waited...and waited.

What was I doing wrong? What more could I do? I was willing to go to any length! Should I sit at a pay phone and call all the hospitals and churches, looking for a prospect? And then it hit me! Newcomers could call me! The best way to put myself in front of still suffering alcoholics was to volunteer with our local AA Hotline!

As soon as I signed up for a shift, I started getting calls, all right; mostly from members visiting Hawaii and looking for a beach meeting. Then, when I least expected it, it happened!

My phone rang at 3am. On the other end was someone who wanted help. We talked for a while and swapped stories. His story is one we hear all too often. He had found AA five years ago, went to meetings for a year. He then decided he would stay sober on his own. That worked well for him, until he "came to" with an empty vodka bottle on his nightstand.

I told him how grateful I was to hear his story, and that he might be able to help someone else by sharing at a meeting. I got out my list of meetings and asked him where in Hawaii he was living. He answered that he didn't live in Hawaii, he lived in upstate New York!

He had called his local hotline number and had gotten an answering machine. Then he tried a Central Office in California with the same results. Then, he dialed our East Hawaii Hotline, and I thank my Higher Power for allowing me to take his call.

This young man needed to work one-on-one with another alcoholic, and he was willing to go to any length to do so. I like to think that maybe our conversation helped him to find his way back to the rooms, but I don't know. I do know that he sure help me!

I have since had the pleasure of working with many newcomers, and it is true; it always will be the bright spot in my life.

I know that I must always remain willing to reach out a helping hand. To anyone, anywhere!

Heard in a Meeting...

“Focus on the good and it will grow.”

“You can't enjoy the beauty of a sunset unless you've been in the darkness.”

“Accept and adjust.”

**“I'm going to be 30 on the 9th of July.
How do you do that?
You don't drink or die, a day at a time.”**

“I'm the 'God Rocks' chick.”



“If the horse is dead, dismount.”

“I get to practice in here what I have to do “out there.”

“I come here uncomfortable and tell my story to get comfortable.”

“All I know, is where I've been.”

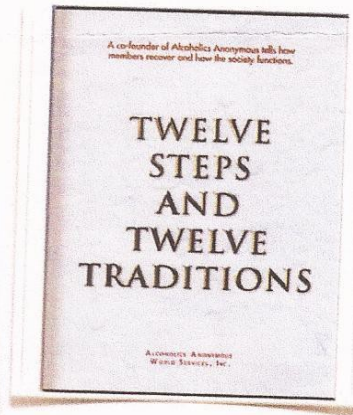
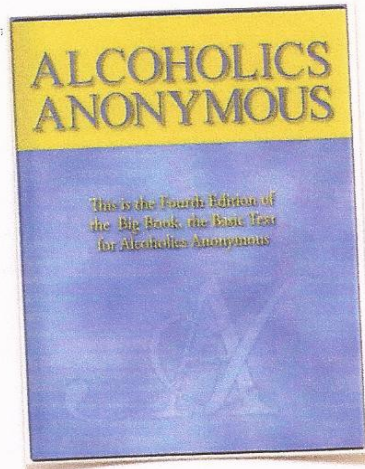
“If you stay sober long enough, you get your brain back. You may not like what you see.”

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