

PRAASA 2011

Area 17 Chair Report

Aloha. I want to start off my thanking Area 17 from the bottom of my heart for sending me to the 2011 PRAASA. Although I have attended 3 previous PRAASAs, this one was very special. Perhaps it's because of the Aloha of having it right here in Hawai'i or it could be that it's because this was my most recent PRAASA. Whatever the reason, I came away with a cup that "runneth over" with gratitude for the life I have as a result of this program; with a fire for doing everything in my power to stay sober and help others achieve sobriety and a recommitment to 'practicing these principles in all my affairs.'

As each new PRAASA starts, I am reminded by how I felt at the end of the previous one - like I was walking in the sunlight of the spirit, full of faith, light and love. As a good alcoholic, I want to feel that instantly again. But, what I experience instead, is a slow steady building of so many feelings - gratitude, identifying, trust, delight, tears, humility, open mindedness and yes, faith, light and love.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, I attended roundtables for Area Chairs and Alternate Chairs. These workshops were much smaller than the ones I had attended at previous PRAASAs and I learned about the differences and felt the similarities among the Areas in the Pacific region. Here's some of what I learned.

- Area 17 is the only Area to use homestays regularly. And I heard them referred to as "Bunk a Drunk."
- Western Washington has only one Assembly a year.
- In one Area, an area officer attends every District meeting.
- Being Area chair is like being a DCM 'on steroids.'
- Some Areas have GSR schools at every Assembly.
- Need to be willing to say 'I don't know.'
- On Trusted Servants who leave Assemblies early or don't attend - 'There will be no seat for them in the big meeting in the sky.'

Although I learned from and was touched by everyone's comments, here are some of the more memorable ones.

- When you put a dollar in the basket, it is no longer yours.
- We share the message, not the mess.
- How we communicate is evolving but what I communicate doesn't have to change.
- Quote from "The Great Wayne Gretsky" regarding Grapevine and media - "I skate to where the puck is going, not to where it's been."

- The most important characteristic of faith is having an open mind.
- To be fully informed involves listening to the minority opinion with an open mind.
- If you're not free to not believe, you're not free to believe.
- None of us is as smart as all of us. None of us is as powerful.
- "I think I'm either very special, or a worm. What I really am is a very special worm."

Mahalo nui loa,
Cheryl N.
Area17, Panel 61
Chair