

Hawaii Area 17 Panel 67

Delegate's Report – 2017 Orientation Assembly

Aloha Kakou! My name is Bob, I am an alcoholic, and it is an honor, a privilege, and a pleasure to be allowed to serve as your Panel 67 Hawaii Area 17 Delegate. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

So here we are at the beginning of our two year journey together. I suspect most of us don't have more than a general idea of what it is we'll be doing in our position for the next two years. You may, like me, be wondering if you are a good fit for the job. You are. In A.A. we have a grand 'small t' tradition, not of electing the qualified, but of qualifying the elect. At the end of this panel, in December 2019 you'll know just what the next servant to step into your shoes should do; they will not.

The good news is that there's a lot of help out there to guide us. The first and most obvious is simply to ask someone else who has done or is doing your job. If you don't already have one, please consider getting a service sponsor, someone who can guide you, not through the Recovery side of our Triangle, but through the Service side. Your immediate predecessor and those before them, in your current position make great resources. My heartfelt thanks goes to several of our past delegates who've been listening to my questions, answering them, and assuring me it'll all be okay, since I was elected. Most especially I'd like to thank Cheryl N., our immediate past delegate in whose footsteps I've followed for most of a decade and with whom I've talked, sometimes daily, over the past weeks. Mahalo nui loa!

In A.A. we also have a wealth of written resources you can access any time. On our [own Area 17 website](#) we have [our Structures and Guidelines](#) which gives us guidance in both our jobs and how to conduct area business. And further, the A.A. Service Manual is available both in print and online as a PDF and is invaluable in giving us the collected wisdom of those who've gone before and really thought about this stuff.

What then is a delegate? What is it I'm going to be doing for the next two years? Let's take a quick look. From our S&G I learned (section 2.6):

2.6 Delegate's Duties

The delegate should:

- A. Read and adhere to the delegate's duties outlined in the [A.A. Service Manual](#).
- B. Serve as a voting member of the Oahu Intergroup when invited.
- C. Appoint the area's standing committee chairs in conjunction with other officers.

I'm also supposed to attend all our assemblies, like this Orientation Assembly, and all our committee meetings. I also happen to know that when our budget permits it I'm asked to attend the Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA), and the biennial Pacific Regional Forum like the one we were honored to host at the end of Panel 65 in Waikoloa. I'll have more on those later in this report.

That all seems simple enough. In fact, that list is shorter than the duties for other officers so there must be something in the Service Manual to give me a clue. And then there's that title, Delegate; delegate to what? Let's check the Service Manual.

And wow, the Service Manual has an entire chapter on The Delegate (Chapter 6, S49-S54 2016-2018 Edition). I'm not going to quote it all here. I will quote this though:

The delegate has a demanding job, not only because a large amount of time and work are involved, but because it is the delegate's responsibility to serve the US/Canada Conference as a whole. As voting members of the Conference, delegates bring to its deliberations the experience and viewpoints of their own areas. Yet they are not representatives of their areas in the usual political sense; after hearing all points of view and becoming fully informed during Conference discussion, they vote in the best interest of A.A. as a whole.

That gets to the heart of the matter. The delegate goes to the conference and is charged with working for the best interest of A.A. as a whole. In fact, not only does this description get to the core of the delegate's job, it gets to the core of your job here in General Service work for Area 17.

None of us can do this alone. That's a key principle in Alcoholics Anonymous. We don't even mark the founding of A.A. with Bill W.'s sobriety and insights into the steps necessary to find and maintain sobriety. We mark our founding with his sharing that knowledge with and the sobriety of Dr. Bob, both considered co-founders A.A. Without each other, we aren't. It's that simple. We are involved in this work together. So your job is as big as mine, bigger really, because you have to let me know what we should do and how we should do it. And then you have to help me do it.

To carry on this work we do have specific duties, but the aim is the same, the good of A.A.

My specific duties include:

1. Attend the annual General Service Conference.
2. Communicate actions of the Conference to area committee members, that's you, and encourage you to pass it on.
3. Attend all area and regional service meetings and assemblies and learn to understand our area better.
4. Help our area obtain financial support for itself and G.S.O.
5. Provide leadership in solving local problems involving the A.A. Traditions.
6. Remind G.S.R.s to inform groups and individuals about the A.A. Grapevine (and La Vina) and Conference-approved literature.
7. Help G.S.O. get up-to-date information for our A.A. directory and membership surveys.
8. Visit groups and districts in their area whenever possible. And I want to note that all you have to do is ask. If you want me to visit your group or your district meeting and we can make it happen, we'll do our best.
9. Work closely with committee members and officers, sharing experience throughout the year. And that's not just me sharing my experience with you, it's you sharing your experience with me. Let me know how your groups respond to the information we give them and request from them.
10. And more...

It sounds like a lot and you know, it is, but so is your job. I've served as an Alternate G.S.R., a G.S.R., a Standing Committee Chair, our Alternate Chair, Chair, and Alternate Delegate and all of those are big jobs. All of them require your dedication and your best. And, I promise you this, all of them are rewarding.

But I do want to add a word of caution. We don't have 'degrees of service' in A.A. All service is important. Being in General Service is not special or more important than any other sort of service in A.A. It's all important and it's all service. I always like to think that the highest level of service in A.A., the biggest title we can achieve, is 'servant.' And, luckily for us, the Spirit of Rotation and our willingness to move on to the next thing insures we don't 'become the job' or become too attached to it.

At the very first General Service Conference in 1951, the late Bernard B. Smith, non-alcoholic, Chairman of the Board and of the Conference from 1951 to 1956 said this of rotation:

While the Trustees of the Foundation are theoretically self-perpetuating, the time has come to change – to adopt the basic principle of rotation which is important to A.A.’s survival and growth. It is important that there be no basic pride in office. “Even the pleasure of serving can become a proprietary right.”

Let’s heed his warning, do the best we can, and remember to place principles before personalities, and in two years, pass Hawaii Area 17 on to Panel 69 knowing that they, like us, will grow into the work, come to love it, and in their turn, pass it on.

I’ve spent a lot of time on this introduction because, here at the start of the panel there’s not a lot I can report on when it comes to my activities, as I haven’t had time to do much. But I haven’t been idle. Here’s what’s been on my plate.

After our Panel 65 elections assembly I began to acquaint myself with what’s to come. I’ve read and reread the service materials I’ve mentioned. I was also able to participate in a conference call with Joel C., our Pacific Region Trustee, and the Panel 65, 66, and incoming 67 Pacific Region Delegates. This is a regular practice Joel takes advantage of to stay in touch and bond with all the Pacific Region Delegates. I know many of these folks from past PRAASAs and Forums and it is a privilege to be able to serve with them.

I’ve also been contacted by GSO’s conference desk staff member, Rick W., and been given access to the GSO Dashboard. The dashboard is a secure online tool that is used to distribute conference materials. I’ve been going through what’s there and though it’s not complete, there’s quite a lot. Thank goodness there are a lot of tips and guides based on the experience of those who’ve done this before.

Besides being one of the 134 voting members of the 67th Conference, themed “Supporting Our Future,” delegates are also assigned to sit on one or more of several committees. Those committees are:

- Agenda
- Cooperation with the Professional Community
- Corrections
- Finance
- Grapevine
- Literature
- Policy/Admissions
- Public Information
- Report and Charter
- Treatment and Accessibilities
- Trustees
- Archives
- International Conventions/Regional Forums

Most of titles are self-explanatory and many match our own Area 17 Standing Committees. I’m not on one of those. I had to double check mine to be sure I knew what it was about. I’m on the Policy/Admissions Committee. As far as I know assignments are by region and luck. It’s not because someone thought I’d be a whiz on policy and admissions. What is it? Luckily the Service Manual knows:

POLICY/ADMISSIONS (*no corresponding trustees' committee*): Responsible for matter of policy pertaining to the Conference itself and for reviewing all requests for admissions to the annual meeting of the General Service Conference. All changes in the Conference plan, all steps in the expansion of the Conference, and all procedures affecting the cost of the Conference are taken to the Committee on Conference Policy and Admissions. This committee has the job of approving or disapproving requests for additional delegate areas.

I was amused to learn that when we, Area 17, suggested to the Conference that they consider moving the General Service Conference to different geographic areas from time to time it was not the first time the suggestion had been made. In 1956 the Policy and Admissions Committee recommended that:

The proposal that the meetings of the General Service Conference be "rotated" from New York City in even years to a different geographical section in odd years be tabled for consideration at some future date.

As it turns out, all the advisory actions, recommendations, of the Policy/Admissions Committee as well as all the other committees are easily available in printed (and PDF) form as "Advisory Actions 1951-2012." They are, of course, available in each final conference report and that's what I turned to for the years 2013-2016. As it turns out, the work of this committee is really quite fascinating and I look forward to diving in.

Earlier in this report I suggested that in order to learn about your job you check with folks who've done it before. This is not, as you might surmise, an original thought. In fact, the General Service Conference takes it to heart. Hawaii Area 17 is an odd Panel; that is not a derogatory remark. It's fact. We seat our panel in odd year conference years. This is the start of Panel 67 and we'll vote at the end of Panel 68 for new Panel 69 servants. The conference runs every year. I'll sit on both the Panel 67 and 68 conferences. As I'm new this year, the Conference Desk has assigned me a buddy from Panel 66, a person who is in their second year. That way I'll have someone to show me the ropes. Next year I'll be expected to be a buddy. I'm not sure how buddies are chosen but for the record mine will be Andrew L. from Area 45, Southern New Jersey. I bring this up because Linda McD., our past Panel 61 delegate's buddy was also from Area 45.

And what will I be doing at the Conference besides the work on my committee? It is, of course, hard to describe something you haven't done and I'm reliably informed that until I have been there it's hard to fathom, but I can tell you one thing I will doing, and I'll be doing it at PRAASA too. Each incoming delegate must give area highlights and you've got just two minutes to do it. That means highlights only and as you can tell, being brief isn't my strong suit. Here's what I plan on saying, though it may change a bit before the late January due date:

From the first recorded meetings held in Hawai'i Nei in 1943 to the over 300 active groups spread across our main islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui and Hawai'i island, the fellowship of A.A. has blossomed to include all of our ethnically diverse population in fourteen service districts. We strengthen unity throughout Area 17 by doing our best to visit each district during every panel, drawing from the hat the locations for our assemblies, three in odd years, four in even, and committee meetings held between assemblies. Our groups sacrifice much to insure their voice is heard as air travel is the only viable option for many and we have excellent participation. So too is our participation at PRAASA and the Pacific Regional Forum, keeping us in touch with our fellows in the Pacific Region and A.A. as a whole. As a capstone to Panel 65, Area 17 was privileged to host the 2016 Pacific Regional Forum, where 449 attendees, 309 of them first timers, were treated to the beauty of our Kona coast, towering volcanoes, and island-style hospitality. A hui hou kākou.

If you want to see if I can keep that under two minutes in a “production setting” join me and many of our fellows at PRAASA, the [Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly](#). It will be held Friday March 3rd through Sunday March 5th in Sacramento, California, hosted by Area 07, California Northern Interior Area. PRAASA is a super opportunity to bond in unity and fellowship with others across the Pacific Region, learn more about A.A. service, share with others in the same service position as yours or one you’d like to know more about, and become part of A.A.

The purpose of PRAASA is to develop a greater unity among the members, groups and Areas of the Pacific Region, to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences; and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of AA. The Assembly and the PRAASA committee should always foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of A.A

If you haven’t been to PRAASA I encourage you to attend. I can honestly say I wouldn’t standing here as your delegate if I hadn’t fallen in love with PRAASA For more information check out [PRAASA.ORG](#). PRAASA is seeking people to be in service as presenters, panel moderators, timers, readers, roundtable moderators or roundtable secretaries and have asked me to submit a list. This is a great opportunity and I hope many of you will step up to be of service in this way. You must be registered at PRAASA to serve in one of these positions. I’ll be submitting it shortly after this assembly so please, if you want to take part and are registered, or are going to register very, very soon, use the signup sheet I’ve provided.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to serve. The next two years are going to a challenge for us all, a fun challenge. We’ll all have opportunities to grow, to excite, to encourage, and most of all to serve as we carry the message of hope and recovery that is A.A. here in Hawaii and into the fellowship as a whole.

Bob H., Delegate

Panel 67, Area 17