



# MYNAH BIRD

## HAWAII AREA #17 NEWSLETTER

P67 Issue #10 May 2018



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

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Honolulu, HI 96814-1822  
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General Service Board  
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163  
*(Please include group service # and group name)*

This, too, is service to AA!

**Next Issue of the Mynah Bird will be published  
for the August 25 & 26 Budget Assembly  
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE  
August 18, 2018**

### UPCOMING AREA ASSEMBLIES AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS for Panel 67

(Please purchase tickets early and use the Area's code for Hawaiian Air if you purchase air travel from Hawaiian. It can be found at [Area17aa.org](http://Area17aa.org))

August 25 & 26, 2018

Budget Assembly

Hilo/Hamakua District #7

October 20 & 21, 2018

Election Assembly

Central North Shore District #9

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Alcoholics Anonymous works great if we don't drink!

### **When All Else Fails, Get a Coffee Commitment**

There is a feeling of comfort and belonging that comes with making coffee in a home group. After my 21-day rehab, I was told to go to AA. I did not immediately feel comfortable in the rooms. I did not want to drink, but my whole life had been divided between the only 2 bars that I wasn't flagged from. I found a home group as suggested and tried to be as invisible as possible. I spoke when spoken to and was awed by the relaxed interaction among members. At a meeting it was announced that my group needed a coffee maker. A small Irish spitfire named Teresa nominated me and the group elected me. I was given a key to the church and my first thought was "you must be crazy to trust me by giving me a key to the church." My home group trusted me long before I trusted myself. Many times, during those early months when the thought of a drink came, I asked God to give me the strength not to drink because I didn't want to disappoint my home group. Slowly I started to move from the fringe to the middle of my group. By arriving early and hanging with you guys, I started to feel like I belonged and felt useful. After my initial 6-month commitment, my group allowed me to make coffee for 6 more months. I thought it was because I made great coffee only to find out later that no one else wanted the job.

As years went by, my group allowed me to serve in other group positions. As our group grew, new members took over group officer positions. I became less involved and as my meetings dwindled, the more judgmental I became. I was sober 12 years and had become one of those members who sat arms folded and dispensed wisdom. I even started taking my sponsor's inventory. I thought I was an AA guru. I was moving toward a drink and my ego (easing God out) was telling me I was fine.

At this point I moved to a small town in another state. I went to my first meeting to dispense wisdom. To my dismay, did not have a position for a guru, but they had a coffee maker position. My higher Power flipped a switch and the light went on. An Irish spitfire named Ginger nominated me for coffee maker.

My sponsor was trying to teach me about humility. For me the vehicle to keep me right sized is in a coffee pot. I no longer dispense wisdom (though my wife of 36 years may dispute this). I dispense coffee. I am grateful that for the last 39 years you guys have trusted me with the key to a sober life.

Jack T. Kihei

### **GRUPO DAS ANTAS**

I'd been a few days without a meeting in Northern Portugal on a recent bicycling trip. While I like to think there are meetings everywhere I might travel, the truth is that in some places they can be spread a little thinner than others. Portugal is such a place.

It's a lovely country with friendly people, a long, long history, great food, and...few meetings for A.A. members. There are some English-speaking meetings available I'd discovered online, but they were to the south of where I was traveling with my non-alcoholic cycling partner. We were on a five-day cycling tour down the Rio Minho which separates Portugal and Spain and is one of the oldest borders in Europe dating from medieval times.

I'd just spent ten days in New York surrounded by fellow alcoholics at the 68th General Service Conference where I as privileged to serve as my home's Area 17 Panel 67 Delegate so I wasn't feeling like I'd been away from the Fellowship for very long. Further my fellow cyclist Erich is not a big drinker by any means, so I wasn't even around alcohol, though they region has a long

history of making wines known the world over. I'd just celebrated my fourteenth anniversary and drinking was not an issue on the trip. And yet...after a few days away from fellow alcoholics had me wishing that I could hit a meeting before it was time to fly home.

By now, after five days of cycling through ancient towns like Melgaço, Monção, Valença do Minho, and the truly lovely Ponte de Lima, we'd arrived in the city of Porto to wind down from our ride, sightsee, eat way too much great food, and play tourist. I've often said that one of the very first things I try to do when traveling is getting to meeting early in the trip. It reminds me that I need to stay conscious of our program of recovery and continue to practice all those things that keep me, and all of us, sober. I hadn't been able to get a meeting yet on this trip because there simply weren't any along the route, at least not on the days we were passing through.

In Porto though, I'd finally have a chance. I'd not been able to find an English-speaking meeting, but so far, my lack of Portuguese hadn't been an issue. The Portuguese, at least those I'd met, are multilingual and many have a very good grasp of English. I figured I'd be fine if I could make a meeting. My cycling partner has known me for several years and is well acquainted with my heading off to meetings whenever possible, often in tiny little towns along whatever route we'd happened to find ourselves on. In fact, on more than one occasion he's even suggested I get to one. I can't imagine whatever would prompt him to do that, can you?

As it turned out, the meeting I'd be able to make, six in the evening on a Sunday, coincided with both college graduation and big futebol rivalry. The streets were packed with revelers of all varieties, veritable sea of black and blue; black for the graduations grand capes and blue for the Porto team's colors. I had a few blocks to go myself and had equipped myself with a blue scarf, all the better to fit in with. There's no violence I could detect in any of the merry making, college or futebol, but fitting in kept me from standing out as a fan of "the other team."

Porto has outstanding public transportation, everything from metros to trams and everything in between. I took a bus, much like those back in Honolulu, and about the same price after converting from dollars to Euros. I only had about a ten-minute ride, not far at all. As I got closer to the meeting site I realized I was also getting closer to the stadium. Outside each café and bar along the way larger and larger crowds of fans in blue were gathering and preparing by...well you can guess. At one stop a few blue clad fans hopped on the bus and raced from the front entrance to the side door shouting "Porto."

I was soon on the street and headed to the meeting. Luckily my phone's mapping app worked fine in Porto, as it had pretty much everywhere else in Portugal as well. After getting off the blue packed main road for more residential side street I noticed a couple walking a bit ahead of me. After following them a bit I began to think, "could they be going to the meeting as well?"

This isn't the first time I've spied us from afar as it were. It's easy to spot a little crowd of us outside a meeting hall, but I've been known to do it from time to time just walking along as well. Sure enough they turned into a small multiuse building and I spied a little A.A. symbol. GRUPO DAS ANTAS, I had arrived.

Sure enough a few members were standing around outside talking and upon my arrival they switched to English, all quite good, and asked about me. It was, all in all, just like going to a meeting you've not been to before, or at least in a while, back home. As soon as I mentioned I

was from Hawaii I attracted even more attention than from being a “regular foreigner.” And then it was time for the meeting.

It was quite clearly a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, just like back home, or in truth, anywhere else I’ve ever been. There was a coffee pot and some bottles of water off to one side with a little basket for contributions. While we do it a bit differently back home, I’ve seen that before on the mainland. A rack of pamphlets, just like ours only in Portuguese of course. On the front table they had a banner draped down with the name of the group and holding it in place were heavier books, *Alcoólicos Anônimos* among them quite prominently displayed.

I was in the right place. I noticed a little sign saying “what you say here, what you hear here...” I don’t really read Portuguese, though if you’ve a little Spanish or Latin you’ll be able to make out some things, and that saying is pretty simple. The Serenity Prayer was also up front, along with the Steps and Traditions and pictures of Bill and Bob.

The format of the meeting was pretty much the same as one you might find anywhere as well. A secretary ran things asking for announcements, the preamble, How It Works, and the Traditions were read, and the basket passed; admittedly it was small bag at this meeting. Folks were asked if anyone wanted to say anything briefly and a few did, then we had a speaker who came to the front desk and sat to share for twenty minutes or so; in Portuguese. I think a few folks may have suggested that they hold the meeting in English for my benefit, but you know, I’m glad they didn’t. Portuguese is a lovely language and while I really didn’t pick up more than a word or two here and there, I was content simply to be at a meeting. I may not have understood a word, but I knew exactly what they said. You would too.

There was only a dozen of us at the meeting, including myself, a fitting number if you think about it. I later learned, though I’d already guessed, that about half of the members had some time, from a couple of years up to about twenty for the that day’s speaker, the rest had days or months at best; a great mix.

When the meeting neared the ninety-minute mark a fellow spoke up and suggested I be given a minute or two to share something. The topic of the meeting was our Firth Tradition, so I shared on how well I felt they’d carried the message to me that evening. Even if we spoke different words, we surely shared the language of the heart.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer. Though in Portuguese, I had no trouble following the familiar rhythm in my own English. We all picked up a bit and went outside to chat again. And, as so often happens, at least when someone new comes along, a ride is offered and accepted. I’d taken the bus to the meeting alone, but was being driven home, or at least to my hotel room, with friends.

My driver, a fellow servant involved in outreach, had great English and wanted to know if her meeting was okay and did they do things right. I assured that yes, they did it very, very well. She asked a few questions about what I found different and all I could say was that...we don’t speak Portuguese at meetings back home. Other than that...same, same. I gave her my card and said I’d love to come back to Portugal sometime, and I do, and she said she’d like me to let her know if I ever do. I sure hope so.

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I'll miss GRUPO DAS ANTAS a little. But I know I needn't worry about them. The Fellowship is small in Portugal and I was told, on that drive, that culturally it's still shameful to admit alcoholism, something that we've gotten over to some degree here in Hawaii, but only recently. I'd be exaggerating to say they are first hundred in Portugal, they aren't, and they have many resources our "first hundred" had to create from scratch. But I'm honored to have been able to spend time, even a little, with people for whom carrying the message is vital and real as they reach out to the many in their country who may need A.A. and don't have the luxury of daily meetings found everywhere. The topic of their meeting was "carrying the message" and their lives are proof of their doing just exactly that.

Bob H.  
May 2018



# GROUP HISTORY FORM

When completed, please return to:

[archivist@area17aa.org](mailto:archivist@area17aa.org) and [archives@area17aa.org](mailto:archives@area17aa.org)

Name of Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Founded: \_\_\_\_\_

Founders: \_\_\_\_\_

Early Members: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Place and time of first meeting:

Do the early members continue to attend?

Current Meeting (place/time/format):

Current Membership #'s: \_\_\_\_\_ each mtg \_\_\_\_\_ home group \_\_\_\_\_ business mtgs \_\_\_\_\_

Did the group move?

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Group History (such as anniversaries, special meetings, outside speakers, notes about the founders, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please include any/all information you may be aware of, not asked for on this form, as it will result in a clearer or more factual account of your group. Other pertinent details:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



**Long-Timers Interview**  
**\*\*Suggested questions \*\***

1. What is your full name and sobriety date? (last names will remain anonymous)
2. How did you first learn about AA?
3. Where and when did you attend your first meeting?
4. Have you stayed sober since your first meeting?
5. Were there many meetings that were active when you got sober?
6. Are they still active today?
7. Did you have a sponsor? Tell me about him/her.
8. Did someone take you to meetings in the beginning of sobriety?
9. What kind of service activities have you participated in?
10. Are you still active in AA today?
11. Have these activities aided in your sobriety?
12. What were the twelve step calls like in early sobriety?
13. Can you name some of the founders of your early group?
14. Do you have the names of any other long-time members who would like to share their stories with the Hawai'i Archives Committee?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share that has not been covered in this interview?
16. Please list suggested questions below to add to this Long-Timers interview for the Hawai'i Area 17 Archives.

**When completed, please return to:**

**[archivist@area17aa.org](mailto:archivist@area17aa.org), [archives@area17aa.org](mailto:archives@area17aa.org)**

## SPIRITUALITY

E B M F Q I J F G F E X F T K A H I P H  
 E X P E R I E N C E C U A L K W U Z X K  
 X O R U D S P E T S I Y J U C A I C Y Q  
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 J D R L A V Q A F R E E D O M N Q D I U  
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 K C P E H W L K B Y J V I L K S D L Y D  
 V O S C D X S Y E I G A E O Z T L O J M  
 H P J Q C A Q N J H G S P Q N K M P U Q  
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 G S Z J O D N G J F G L F E Z L N L B W  
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ACTION  
 AWAKENING  
 BELIEVE  
 BLESSINGS  
 EXPERIENCE  
 FAITH  
 FREEDOM  
 GRACE

HOPE  
 JOURNEY  
 LOVE  
 MEDITATION  
 SERENITY  
 SERVICE  
 STEPS  
 TRUST