

Hawai'i Area 17 Proposal for Consideration

Submitted by: O I G C h a i r
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Proposal: Create an Area 17 Standing Committee focused on Safety and Inclusion

Intent/Purpose:

- Support A.A.'s Primary Purpose by helping create meeting environments where all alcoholics feel safe, welcome, and able to participate
- Provide experience, resources, and shared best practices related to safety and inclusivity within A.A. meetings and service events
- Assist districts, groups and island intergroups without directing or governing them, in keeping with the Twelve Traditions
- Help to foster an environment in Area 17 service that is welcoming to everyone
- In this way help to create a more diverse Area 17 service body
- Be a resource to the Area Body regarding effective communication across difference so that everyone feels welcome and safe in A.A. This may include helping to create sessions for GSR and DCM schools, Group meeting Secretaries, Service Committee Sharing sessions, and Orientation.
- Research other Areas to see how they are doing in this effort.
- In this work, stay mindful of A.A. traditions and history to protect our common welfare.

Current Practice: No such committee exists at present.

Background:

The ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING COMMITTEE is necessary and prudent in the world we live in today! Area 17 Standing Committees are formed to serve the groups, districts, intergroups and central offices of Area 17. *Combining this work with another standing committee would dilute the focus needed to address the misunderstandings and unmet needs affecting many suffering alcoholics.*

The committee's work would reflect the Area 17's desire to learn how individually, and as the Body, we can communicate more effectively with other human beings—with all our differences and "in spite of all those kinds of pride and prejudice"—to protect our common welfare and break down barriers to participating in service.

As we consider this proposal: Some Thoughts from Bill W. in The Language of the Heart— Bill W's Grapevine Writings—From the 1950's and *For Today*

"Could A.A. really and fully transcend all of those formidable barriers of race, language, religion, and culture; all of those scars of wars, recent and ancient; all of those kinds of pride and prejudice

of which we knew we had our share in America?”

Here, Bill acknowledges that A.A. exists in and of a time and place. He asks if inside the rooms, we can transcend its divisions, and he suggests the following:

“We need to learn how to communicate across cultures not just language. We need to understand the difference between intention and impact and be sensitive to it in order to successfully carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We need to not worry about what other people are doing or not doing in this regard. We each need to take that responsibility on ourselves.”

He also gives an example to remind us that being able to communicate across differences doesn't mean we ignore them or pretend they don't exist. In fact, effective communication not only sees difference but honors it, uses what's unique about our differences to bring us together where we can then acknowledge our shared humanity and solve our common problem.

“In the beginning, for instance, it was four whole years before A.A. brought permanent sobriety to even **one** alcoholic woman. Like the high bottoms the women said they were different; A.A. couldn't be for them. But as the communication was perfected, mostly by the women themselves, the picture changed.

Traditions that would inform this committee:

Tradition 1

- Unity and personal recovery depend on each other.
- Personal responsibility supports group unity.

Tradition 3

- The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
- No one is excluded for who they are; all may share openly.

Tradition 4

- Groups are autonomous and responsible for member safety through informed group conscience.

Tradition 5

- Each group's primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Tradition 9

- A.A. is not organized but may create service boards or committees accountable to those they serve.

Tradition 10

- A.A. avoids public controversy.
- Personal identity and safety concerns inside meetings are *not* outside issues.

Budgetary Impact:

The potential budget impact on the 2027 Area budget should NOT be a key factor in considering the approval and creation of this standing committee. The objective is to begin discussions, provide education, and shine a light on objectionable behaviors that may create an unwelcoming atmosphere. Our goal is to better support the suffering alcoholic who seeks connection and solutions—not isolation.

In the short term: SCC chair for Committee attendance at Assemblies/additional person to annual budget. (approx. \$1,500). The initial Budget Line Items for Safety and Inclusivity should be considered for the 2028 Area budget. Some suggestions:

- Survey platform
- Workshops to conduct a panel/workshop on each island after a committee meeting with light refreshments
- Printing