

**CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL AREA
ASSEMBLY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES FOR
2017 PRE-CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY**

The Pre-Conference Assembly Business meeting of CNCA was held April 8, 2017 at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, California. Jennifer B. opened the meeting at 9:15, followed by the Serenity Prayer. The AA Preamble was read by Tony W. (District 90). Barbara S. (District 12) read the 12 Traditions in English, and Mario S. (District 17) read the 12 Traditions in Spanish. There were 7 past delegates present: Diane O. (Panel 35), Woody R. (Panel 50, Area 07), Doug G. (Panel 53), Sharon A. (Panel 57), David N. Panel 59), Ken M. (Panel 61), and Raymundo L. (Panel 65). David N. also currently serves as a non-trustee director on the AAWS Board, and Doug G. serves as an appointed committee member of the Trustee's Literature Committee. There were also two past trustees present: Tom M. and Greg M. The minutes from the 2016 Summer Assembly were accepted as printed in the *CNCA Comments*.

Registered attendance: Voting (349) / Non-voting (113)

Officer Reports

DELEGATE – JOANN L.: I would like to extend a warm welcome to all new GSRs here for their first assembly. I have been trying to put into words what I would like to accomplish as the Panel 67 delegate, and I found the words last night while reading the Report of the General Service Inventory on page 6, under Engaging the Fellowship. "Engaging the fellowship with ongoing and relevant information about the Conference is not a new problem. Many reports recognize the historical gap between the individual AA member and the Conference itself. If we are not working locally to engage the full fellowship," said one report, "the disconnect between the General Service Conference and the average AA member will remain. The connection needs to be made between what happens at the Conference and how it helps the drunk on the corner." That is my goal. So today I sit quietly and listen to you with an open heart and an open mind. But when I come back from New York, my hope is to fully engage all of you.

ALTERNATE DELEGATE – TEDDY B-W: Your delegate and I meet monthly for lunch to ensure that we continue working effectively on your behalf. I also pray for the health of the delegate, which, of course, you can do too. I have also received a large quantity of reading material from GSO, which I have read. I suspect I will get to read it again many times, over this panel, and thank you all, in advance, for your patience. Currently, I am taking an inventory of the area's equipment and software so that we can have a list and can forecast our needs, and meet those needs in a prudent fashion. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve.

CHAIR – JENNIFER B.: I am full of nervous excitement for this first assembly of Panel 67. I thought I might share with you my goals and intention for the day. This morning, I hope to facilitate loving discussion on our Area business matters, in a way that is both efficient and that enables all points of view to be heard. Time constraints will see how far we get. The nice thing is that we meet again next month for the Post-Conference Assembly. In the afternoon, when we start on our General Service Conference Agenda Topics, our primary purpose here at this assembly is to inform our delegate before she goes to New York. But it is also very important to me that each of you gets a chance to participate and to have the experience of carrying your group's conscience at least once. It was a pretty big deal for me the first time when I was a new

AA Confidential

GSR. So please know that any decisions we make throughout this process are keeping both of those things in mind.

TREASURER – CHRIS H: In terms of our area's financial position, we currently have \$37,035 in our checking account (used for operating expenses) and \$10,117 in our savings account (our prudent reserve). In terms of group contributions, we have received about \$32,000; total contributions so far this year total \$43,200. Our expenses are under budget; we had budgeted to spend \$53,500 and have only spent \$29,000. As of right now, are in an excellent financial position. Please thank your groups for their contributions.

REGISTRAR – LAURA W.: I continue to process changes as they come in from districts and have been working with AA members with technology backgrounds to repair our database. I am optimistic that things will be running smoothly by next month. I am also working with the GSO Records Department to address the process of updating our area records. This should fix a few problems, including the delay in receiving GSR and DCM packets.

RECORDING SECRETARY – ERIC L.: I am moved to be able to help at this assembly, and am eager to make sure that all of your voices, and the voices of the members of A.A. whom you have traveled here to represent, are reflected in our area's business meeting minutes – and archived for the future. I know that for me, being heard at my first assembly was a profoundly moving experience, and I am here to listen and to ensure your words are accurately recorded.

ASSEMBLY COORDINATOR – ERICA S.: We are finally at the first assembly of the Panel. While I am called the Assembly Coordinator, I would like to be clear that the real work is done by our host Districts (20, Spanish East, and 08, Contra Costa). They have been working on this for a long time and I am grateful for the diligent planning, love and service that went into putting this on for all of us. Just around the corner, we will have our Post-Conference Assembly on May 13 at the Lake County Fairgrounds. If you stop and observe the volunteers today, lots of them will probably be having fun with one another. If this is appealing to you, you might wonder if you can be a part of something like that. You can. There are still three assemblies available for bidding during this Panel. Hosting is a great opportunity to increase unity, participation, and enthusiasm locally.

LITERATURE/GRAPEVINE/LA VIÑA – MIGUEL H.: The Loners/International Meeting directories have been updated and mailed to LIM members. This service helps sea-going AAs and AA members in extremely remote areas of the world to stay connected and sober. With the publication of the Rarotongian language Big Book (a dialect of Maori spoken in the Cook Islands in the South Pacific), AA is now available in 70 languages. The Grapevine App is free. It was launched in 2016, and it is now available for Apple and Android devices, and it was developed to serve the needs of those who would prefer to read the *Grapevine* on electronic devices.

Area Standing Committees and Sub-Committees

ARCHIVES – RICHARD W.: We are having a ton of fun in Archives. We have been bringing our displays and participating at conferences, including PRAASA and the ACYPAA Conference that happened last weekend. We are now having quarterly trainings during our workdays. Our next quarterly training will be June 17 at our repository in Walnut Creek. We are also working on a lot of projects and taking oral histories. I want to thank your groups for sending in group histories and all of your districts for their ongoing support of archives.

BRIDGING THE GAP – KELLY H.: In the first quarter of this panel, your area and district BTG committees and officers reported 51 presentations and 256 requests for contact. It is great to see the article in April's edition of *Grapevine* highlighting AA in treatment centers. We are still looking for a district to host our 2017 BTG Forum. Visit the BTG table today, where we have samples of current Corrections and Treatment Kits, volunteer sign up pamphlets for the national Corrections Correspondence program, and other information on vital 12th Step work.

FINANCE – CLAUDIA N.: We will be electing a new Finance Committee chair at our next business meeting in April, as a few members had to step down. We are purchasing Square card readers soon with the intention of collecting 7th Tradition contributions at the April ACM and at the Post-Conference Assembly. We will present a motion at the ACM in April to disburse funds to the General Service Board, and, to reduce monthly postage costs, we will also begin offering group treasurers the option to receive electronic PDF receipts emailed directly from QuickBooks.

PI/CPC – TEDDY B-W: The work of public information is to provide information about what AA is, and what it is not, to the general public, either directly or via the media. Our cooperation with the professional community provides similar information to professionals who come into contact with problem drinkers in a professional capacity. According to our Triennial Membership Survey, 57 percent of our members said they were referred to AA by a counselor or by a medical or mental health professional. The area's PI/CPC committee represents AA as a whole at national, regional and statewide conventions held in our area. Recently, we attended the American Counselors Association annual convention in San Francisco, where we were visited by about 800 of the 4,139 counselors who attended. We distributed 544 pieces of AA literature and about 300 pieces of candy. We are here to inform and to ensure that correct information about AA reaches the people who will find it helpful. Even professionals can be misinformed about AA, and our work cooperating with them is vital.

WEBSITE – ROBERT E.: The web committee has increased our committee size, held elections and filled all of our positions. We are working on a brand new website using Drupal and are testing its capabilities. We are also investigating using third-party software to integrate with QuickBooks that would automatically enter group contributions and send out receipts. We are updating our policies and procedures, and looking forward to the National AA Technology Workshop, which will be held in Sacramento this September. We hope to send several committee members.

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION – MICHAEL Q.: The I&T Committee consists of seven appointed members and many volunteer translators and interpreters. We provide the area with written English to Spanish and Spanish to English document translation, and we facilitate instantaneous English to Spanish and Spanish to English interpretation at our area committee meetings and assemblies. Today, we are broadcasting that interpretation on FM radio frequency channel 91.9. We also provide Assisted Listening on channel 92.9. Our interpreters today, Mateo and Molly, are professional, but not super-human, and as there will be literally hundreds of voices at the mike today, please be mindful of their service.

Re-Subdistricting Request

That Sub-District 001 of District 11 (Napa Valley) be allowed to split into two (2) Sub-Districts for a District total of three (3) Sub-Districts. – *presented by District 11*

AA Confidential

Questions: Q: How would you divide the sub-districts? A: We would divide based on the number of groups rather than based on geography. Q: Do you have someone available to fill the position? A: Because this request has not been approved by the area, we have not made this position available. But there have been people who have expressed an interest in stepping up. Q: Will this improve communication in your district? A: Yes. We have a number of groups that have never been involved in General Service and DCMs have not been able to visit. By doing this, we will be able to have DCMs visit some of these groups. Q: Do you expect the number of groups to increase or decrease? A: I would hope that we can continue to increase the number of groups that are participating and represented at our district.

Seeing an objection, the re-subdistricting request has been moved to New Business at the Post-Conference Assembly.

Area Business

PRESENTATION OF NEW BUSINESS:

That the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous approve the development of a new public service announcement in video format that utilizes full-face actors (not members of A.A.). – *presented by the CNCA PI/CPC Committee*

Presentation: The PI/CPC Committee discussed this motion for several months after a proposal from a district PI/CPC Committee, and voted with substantial unanimity to forward the request to the area. Current GSO guidelines for PI/CPC videos require that a request for a video featuring the full faces of actors be made, and this motion would not change or rescind any existing policy, but instead request a PSA featuring actors' faces as is outlined in current policy. As part of the presentation, the presenters screened several videos to demonstrate the difference between videos with actors' faces (several of which have been made by the General Service structure of Australia) and current PSAs being screened in the United States (without the faces of actors). All videos – the ones made by GSO and the ones from Australia – are available online.

Questions: Q: If the video is made, would it state that these are actors? A: There are disclaimers on some of the videos we have seen from other countries. Q: We could not see the Australian videos from where we were sitting. Is it possible we could watch them again? A: During lunch and breaks, we will be playing these videos at the PI/CPC table. Q: Would actors who are also AA members be excluded? A: That is correct. Q: Is the intention to attract rather than promote AA? A: Absolutely. Seeing an actor's face and expressions makes it more relatable to people. Q: Do any of the videos currently on the AA.org website include actors? A: None of them have the full faces of actors. Q: Would you share the other PSAs with actors? A: People can see the videos on the AA.org website. Q: How would we know that the actors are not AA members? A: Hopefully they practice rigorous honesty. Q: How old are current PSAs, and are they reviewed? A: They are reviewed every couple of years, and the last time they were reviewed, the decision was made that there was no need for anything new. Q: Has any thought gone in to whether AA members could be involved in other production aspects (other than acting)? A: Yes, generally GSO hires a production company, but AA members do provide input.

Motion moved to New Business at the Post-Conference Assembly.

OLD BUSINESS:

That the General Service Conference develops a pamphlet sharing experience, strength and hope on group safety.

Discussion: Most of us would like to vote on this motion as soon as possible. // The majority opinion of my district wants this; most groups in our district have written their own safety material. The minority opinion is that alcoholics are not safe by definition. A newcomer who comes in may feel unwelcomed by this pamphlet. // We unanimously said 'yes.' We do need a pamphlet for unsafe situations. Safety is an important thing and there is a need for a pamphlet. However, nobody reads pamphlets. // Safety is not just about 'beating people up.' It can be about sex; it can be about anonymity. // Our group felt that a pamphlet was not needed, and that guidelines from GSO are a great starting point for discussion. // Originally when the motion was brought up, my group was for it. But with new information, my group changed their mind, and one of the main reasons is that they were worried that groups taking the experience of other groups and viewing them as a sort of law. // Every time we have an issue, we throw a pamphlet at it. Some people think pamphlets are doctrine. // We talked about this twice. My group was opposed because they didn't feel there was enough information about what safety meant. There were also concerns about the financial impact of creating new literature. // It seems like the premise of AA is one alcoholic talking to another to help him or her. Why is that not applicable at the group level, if there are elder statesmen or leaders in the group, who can be sought out and asked for guidance on safety issues? If they don't know, we have a worldwide network of people who can help resolve safety issues. // There is already some information about safety out there. // I would have liked some kind of literature to know that this is an issue and that there are ways to address it. // It may be a good idea to have some sort of guidelines. // We felt that the pamphlet, because there is a rack, make themselves known at meetings and clubhouses. Just having a pamphlet there that says 'safety,' rather than just the service piece (which does not have the same visibility) gives awareness to this being a topic to think about. // Our group would like a pamphlet to put into newcomer packets. // The problem I see with a pamphlet is that it would be very difficult to meet every group's needs. This discussion should be done at a local level. // A better solution would be to have *Grapevine* create a book of stories related to safety. // Folks in my district were amazed by the wide range of abuses that can occur, and all kinds of other safety issues (earthquakes, fires). At first, I heard a lot of people saying we didn't need this. But as we keep talking about this, people are more interested in gleaning from others their experience, strength and hope about this topic. // I am hesitant to take a vote until after the Conference. // I would like a pamphlet because once, at my group, we once had to call the police. We would have liked guidance from other groups. // Most of the folks in my meetings felt the safety guidelines did not go far enough, and that a pamphlet is necessary to make meetings more safe.

Vote: Yes (155) / No (125) / Abstained (8) / Motion fails.

OLD BUSINESS:

That all Area business in CNCA be decided by substantial unanimity, usually 2/3.

Discussion: My group felt that a simple majority was good enough, but on some topics, a 2/3 vote may be necessary. // We have recently had a lot of discussion about the impor-

AA Confidential

tance of the minority opinion and our search for substantial unanimity. Substantial unanimity is important for making decisions, and not having substantial unanimity does not invite in the minority opinion as much. // This motion would stifle chair rules. We need to trust our trusted servants. The Service Manual says that, at some times, a simple majority is enough. // The wording suggests that this motion would stymie our ability to have housekeeping motions. // The fact that we get to rely on two-thirds substantial unanimity is really important to ensure that this is a voice of a loving God. // Though I agree with the motion at the assembly level, it is too broad and could handicap our area committee meeting and slow us down. // I think two-thirds is the best representation of what our area wants, and reminds me of Concept 12. // I do not like the word 'all.' // I don't want to add a new rule. // I am also wary of the word 'all.' // I have problems with some of the wording. The word 'all' troubles me, but so does the word 'usually.' // I've never been comfortable with two-thirds being substantial unanimity, but I do think that for the sake of unity, two-thirds is a lot closer than just over half. // The important thing about two-thirds is that we have less of a dissatisfied minority. // It is odd we have to vote on how to vote (majority or substantial unanimity). // Housekeeping motions are by definition completely unanimous so they are not affected by this motion. // If we have to do two-thirds on a vacuum cleaner in archives, we would be wasting a lot of time. // Voting by two-thirds doesn't take any longer than voting by simple majority This motion could bring more unity.

The Assembly was asked if they were ready to vote, and members were ready to vote. Substantial unanimity (2/3) was required for the motion to pass.

Vote: Yes (126) / No (113) / Abstained (17). Motion fails.

Minority Opinion: None; No motion to reconsider.

OLD BUSINESS:

That CNCA moves to reintroduce the following section (from page 6 of the *AA Member – Medications and Other Drugs*, revised 2011 and also from the 1998 edition of *Living Sober*, page 89) in "Appendix" in *Living Sober* (2012 edition). Placement of the below text will follow the current section Note to medical professionals (page 90). *Note:* Full motion printed in the 2015 Fall Assembly minutes.

Discussion: My group unanimously wants this text back, and in the more places this text appears, the better. // Our group unanimously wanted this text back into the book. // My group unanimously supported this request, especially considering the unclear circumstances in which it was removed. // It appears there was a typographical error or editing error. Since this book is often given to newcomers, and the pamphlet is not, we want this back in the book. // My group was in favor. The minority opinion of my group is that we usually have committees deciding why things are taken out of literature, and we should trust our trusted servants for the possible reasons they may have removed the text. // We were in favor of this being put back in to the book. // This text is as important for people giving advice on medication as to those who are receiving this advice. // Without my medication, I would not be here. // There are people that need that medicine. We had an incident in our town that a young man was given advice not to take medication, and he ended up in prison. // People who need medication should take it with the support of their doctor. // I'm conflicted. I do believe that this is an important issue, and that AA cannot fix a cavity. But I do feel that this text is somewhat incomplete, in that not all medications are made the same, and some cause more trouble for alcoholics. A lot of doctors also aren't educated in how to talk to alco-

holics, and language is missing about rigorous honesty with our doctors. // I am in favor of adding this text because of dual diagnosis, and I know people who needed herbal medicine or medical/psychiatric medicine. // The only thing I would request is that instead of epilepsy, they would change it to 'seizure disorder.' // I want to know whether the text was removed by omission or whether someone made a decision unilaterally. If that is what happened, that's not OK. // Without anti-depressants in sobriety, I would not be here. // We like this and we love the *Living Sober* book. // It is my personal opinion that it is covered in the Big Book very clearly. As alcoholics, we have no opinions on outside issues. I often hear alcoholics unqualified for anything giving advice that can kill someone. Stick to the book and follow the suggestions in the book. // If you are not depressed when you get to AA, God bless you. I did not need a pill, I used the steps. // I should have been thrown out as one of those disruptive people, but they let me stay. Finally, I got on medication and I am now weaning off of medication. Thank you AA. // I attended a meeting with a person who did not believe in taking medication. I had to find an old version of the *Living Sober* book, and want this text placed back in. // The steps have not cured my PTSD; they have been helpful but they do not cure mental illness. Having this paragraph would be useful.

This motion will remain Old Business at the Post-Conference Assembly.

The meeting was closed at 11:55 am with the Responsibility Statement.

Submitted with Love and Gratitude,

Eric L.

CNCA Panel 67 Recording Secretary