

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

The Post-Conference Assembly Business meeting of CNCA was held May 13, 2017 at the Lake County Fairgrounds in Lakeport, California. Jennifer B. opened the meeting at 9:15, followed by the Serenity Prayer. The AA Preamble was read by Linda G. (District 13). Nora H. (District 70) read the 12 Traditions in English, and Oscar R. (District 40) read the 12 Traditions in Spanish. There were 7 past delegates present: Nancy H. (Panel 49), 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. currently serves as a General Service Trustee, 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 Nancy H. The minutes from the 2017 Pre-Conference Assembly were accepted as printed in the electronic version of the *CNCA Comments*.

Registered attendance: Voting (211) / Non-voting (82)

Officer Reports

DELEGATE – JOANN L.: It feels so good to be home. I have sent out to all of the DCMCs copies of the Conference Advisory Actions, as well as information on additional Committee Considerations and Floor Actions that did not result in Advisory Actions. If anyone did not receive these, please let me know. I also have digital files of all Board reports and GSO staff reports. These will be in the final Conference Report, but if anyone wants these files sooner, I can send them to you. I also have a statistics sheet with information on the Conference this year. The Conference Report this year will be available in hard copy and digitally (which will be anonymity-protected and can go on our Area's website). In the AAWS report, you can find a complete review of current business practices. The takeaway is that the current business model is sustainable as long as the fellowship continues its contributions. At the Conference, we discussed how to improve information about online contributions on the website. We also were given information about a pending Safety Card that is being developed with language from the safety service materials. Right now, we seem to be addressing some of the things that can frighten us – like the safety issue and the money issue. Facing these problems is how we will be responsible for them in the future.

ALTERNATE DELEGATE – TEDDY B-W: Your delegate and I continue to meet monthly for lunch to ensure that we continue to work effectively on your behalf. I also pray for the health of the delegate, which, of course, you can do also if you want. The GSO Quarterly Report has just been published; you can let your groups know that for 2016, group contributions were a record – up approximately 12 percent to just under \$8 million. If that rate of increase continues for the next two or three years, the cost of group services could be fully-funded by group contributions.

CHAIR – JENNIFER B.: Today is going to be a fun day. I think all assemblies are fun, but the one everyone calls the 'fun assembly' is our Summer Assembly coming up in August. We will have our usual business meeting in the morning, but we then break out into smaller groups for workshops in the afternoon. Please submit ideas for topics you would want to talk about and learn about to me or any Area Officer by June 24.

Past topics have included Concepts, Service Sponsorship, Working with Intergroup and Central Offices, Technology, Safety and so much more. We also have an opening on the area's Web Committee. Members of the committee are appointed by the area officers, but we need to know who is available. If you are interested, please put your name on the clipboard or send me an email.

TREASURER – CHRIS H.: As of today, we have \$41,183 in our checking account (used for operating expenses) and \$10,117 in our savings account (representing our prudent reserve). Year-to-date contributions are \$3000 ahead of budget, and expenses are \$17,000 ahead of budget. However, we are almost \$14,000 'in the black,' leaving us roughly \$20,000 ahead of budget. Please thank your groups for their continued contributions.

REGISTRAR – LAURA W.: I continue to process changes as they come in from districts and have been working with some AA members with technology backgrounds to repair some of the problems with the database. 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 delays in receiving GSR and DCM packets. If you haven't received your packet within two months of registering, please let your district registrar know so we can contact GSO on your behalf.

RECORDING SECRETARY – ERIC L.: So far this year, I've been able to visit 14 districts in our area, and am so grateful for the hospitality from all of you. It's so wonderful to see the love for AA – and for the alcoholic yet to walk through our doors – manifested at your district meetings and here at these assemblies. I continue making every effort to ensure all of the voices of the AA members you've come here to represent are accurately reflected in our minutes.

ASSEMBLY COORDINATOR – ERICA S.: I would like to thank District 13 for all their hard work putting this assembly together for all of us. They have been planning for a long time, and they have done an awesome job. Our next assembly, the Summer Assembly, will be on August 5 at the Petaluma Community Center. As you can see today, hosting an assembly is a joyous experience. If you would like to find out more, please see me.

LITERATURE/GRAPEVINE/LA VIÑA – MIGUEL H.: The Grapevine Story Archive includes every Grapevine article published since 1944. You can find stories and articles by date, region or state, or topic. Grapevine is currently accepting articles for upcoming issues including topics like AA in the Military and Service during the Holidays. The newest translation of AA literature is the Raratongan language Big Book, and revised translations of the Hebrew and Thai editions have been approved.

Area Standing Committees and Sub-Committees

ARCHIVES – RICHARD W.: The function of the Archives Committee is to give members a sense of our past and an opportunity to study it. We will be taking a display to the upcoming Past Delegates' Reunion in San Jose, and are creating a new display and having a lot of fun seeing a timeline of our past delegates in this area. A member of our committee will be attending the National AA Archives Workshop in Winnipeg, Canada, at the end of September, and our area's Archives Repository in Walnut Creek will be open for our workday next Saturday from noon to 4 PM. Our next quarterly training will be held June 17.

BRIDGING THE GAP – KELLY H.: Bridging the Gap officers continue to visit districts, something we prioritized this panel in order to support and help strengthen your district BTG committees and increase awareness of the service, especially of our new Pre-Release Contact Service. Thank you to everyone who commented on the brochure distributed at the last area meeting, and please consider holding a recruiting and orientation workshop if you would like your district, fellowship or meeting to have a chance to participate.

FINANCE – CLAUDIA N.: We talked as an area last year about collecting contributions digitally; our trial run using Square to collect contributions at the ACM in April was a big success, and we are improving the process. We are hoping to eliminate some of the busy work that keeps the committee engrossed in envelopes and paper-stuffing and save the Area some money on the costs involved, and we are now discussing how to streamline the process of check requests and reviewing our Finance web page.

PI/CPC – TEDDY B-W: The Area's PI/CPC Committee meets monthly at 11:00 a.m., prior to the Area Committee Meeting in Petaluma. In Panel 67, on even months, we have roundtables where districts can share successes and challenges on a given topic. On odd months, we alternate between presentations and a CPC focus. We also represent AA at national, regional and statewide conventions held in our area, and I have reached out to professional organizations in the state to obtain information about their activities. Please stop by our table and find out more.

WEBSITE – ROBERT E.: Problems with email forwarding have been fixed, though we are aware of continuing spam to cnca06.org emails. We continue working on a new website, and, on our current website, we have added a new heading in the sidebar to post minutes from past assemblies.

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION – MICHAEL Q.: I want to thank our interpreters, Mateo and Molly, for coming to Lake County today. English to Spanish and Spanish to English interpretation is available on FM station 91.9; Assisted Listening is at FM station 103.5. There will be CD copies of the Delegate Report available in English and Spanish at the end of today's assembly, and a DVD of the ASL interpretation will be available at the May ACM.

Area Business

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):

'Some alcoholics require medication. We recognize that alcoholics are not immune to other diseases. Some of us have had to cope with depressions that can be suicidal; schizophrenia that sometimes requires hospitalization; bipolar disorder, and other mental and biological illnesses. Also among us are diabetics, epileptics, members with heart trouble, cancer, allergies, hypertension, and many other serious physical conditions. Because of the difficulties that many alcoholics have with drugs, some members have taken the position that no one in A.A. should take any medication. While this position has undoubtedly prevented relapses for some it has meant disaster for others. A.A. members and many of their

physicians have described situations in which depressed patients have been told by A.A.s to throw away the pills, only to have depression return with all its difficulties, sometimes resulting in suicide. We have heard, too, from members with other conditions, including schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, epilepsy and others requiring medication, that well-meaning A.A. friends discourage them from taking any prescribed medication. Unfortunately, by following a layperson's advice, the sufferers find that their conditions can return with all their previous intensity. On top of that, they feel guilty because they are convinced that 'A.A. is against pills.' It becomes clear that just as it is wrong to enable or support any alcoholic to become readdicted to any drug, it's equally wrong to deprive any alcoholic of medication, which can alleviate or control other disabling physical and/or emotional problems.' – presented by District 07

Discussion: This section continues to be Conference-approved text and is in other literature. We would like it placed in the booklet again. // My group was in favor because it is important information. We do not diagnose people or treat medical conditions, and this excerpt is important to include. // Most of the people in my group thought the more information available, the better. The topic of mental health is important, and we could add this information in a lot of our literature. One member of my group said it should be added into 'Appendix III: The Medical View on AA' in the *Big Book*. // Our group feels it is important because there have been personal opinions that can jeopardize people's sobriety and life. This would be helpful in dispelling misconceptions that exist. // We are in favor. // We were unanimously in support of this motion. That excerpt in the book helps increase visibility and lets people see how inclusive AA is. We give *Living Sober* out to newcomers, and as a newcomer, I saw that way before I saw this information in the pamphlets. // Our group was split three ways. One group of people was in favor, another group was in favor but had concerns about language, and the third group was not in favor. They expressed concerns that AA would be taking a stance on not taking a stance. // At our district meeting, there was unanimous support for the idea, but there were concerns about some of the language. Stating the same thing in multiple places is helpful because it is an important message. // Our district was adamantly in favor. Playing doctor with medication is harmful and can even lead to death. We want AA to be accessible to all people who want to stop drinking. // Initially we were in favor, but after some discussion, we were unanimously not in favor, because this information is already available in the pamphlet. We want something added to *Living Sober*, but for it to be simpler. // My district is making a concerted effort to do outreach to veterans. I have been calling counselors and medical staff. One of the comments I got was that veterans are put off from attending AA because some of them have heard that AA is opposed to medication. // *Living Sober* is one of the first books we have newcomers read. If they don't see it in the book, they may never see it. // My personal experience is that I have been on medication in sobriety and got to a point where I was suicidal even with medication, even with a therapist, and I lost contact with my Higher Power. I have now come off medication and it has forced me to realize that the solution is in the Steps. I need one solution, not multiple solutions. I am not in favor of putting it back in because this information is in other places. // My issue is not with the content, but with where it is being put. My concern is with its placement as a note to medical professionals. // Most people I talked to wanted this in more literature. The concern I hear about redundancy surprises me. I think about redundancy in our literature and so much of our literature is redundant. We have an

entire book, *As Bill Sees It*, which is redundant. This is an important enough issue that we can afford to be redundant. // Some people who take medication feel like they don't belong. I would like this information somewhere where it is visible. Having this text in there would make me feel like I belong. // I have lost two sponsors to suicide. Those men saved my life. All I know is redundancy is important and I want this information anywhere we can put it. // I have a brother who is an alcoholic and has Schizoaffective Disorder. A therapist he had told him that if he wanted to go to AA, he should not talk about his medication. Professionals should know that we are not opposed to medication and we should be clear about that by including it in our literature. // We had a workshop and I spoke about pain medication. I am proud to be a sober member of AA in good standing and I sometimes get funny looks because of my use of narcotics as prescribed. // I am not a doctor and I should not tell people to take medication or to not take medication. // When I was looking for a rehab, I was turned away from many possible rehabs because of my psychiatric diagnosis. It put me off of AA at the time. I got the impression that my psychiatric diagnosis was a barrier to my sobriety.

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 (Substantial Unanimity, No Count Taken) / No (7) / Abstained (3). Motion passes.

Minority Opinion: I can't speak for other conditions. Thinking I know best for others is me being self-centered. But I do have experience with the depression aspect. Whether I am on medication or not, I am still self-centered. On medication, I got distracted from that. My solution was medication, and that allowed me to veer away from AA and nearly relapse. It may be necessary to struggle and experience pain in order to have the gift of desperation, which pushes us toward the solution that the steps offer. I worry about depriving alcoholics of that gift of desperation because they take medication that relieves their symptoms, but not their alcoholism.

No motion to reconsider. // **Motion passes.**

OLD BUSINESS:

That language similar to the following be added to the section "How Decisions Affecting A.A. Are Made" in *The A.A. Group* pamphlet at the conclusion of the following sentence: "Annually, groups from the U.S. and Canada elect delegates (serving two-year terms) from their areas to the yearly meeting of the Conference in New York — to hear the reports of the board's committees, G.S.O. and Grapevine staffs, and to recommend future directions, mainly in the form of Advisory Actions."

'Prior to the annual General Service Conference a list of important issues to be discussed during the Conference is published and made available to each and every Group in the U.S. and Canada. Because these issues make up a part of the entire General Service Conference Agenda, they are referred to as Agenda Topics. Every Group in the U.S. and Canada has the opportunity to review, discuss, and develop an informed Group Conscience on these Agenda Topics. The Group's GSR then carries the Group's Conscience on Conference Agenda Topics to the Area's Delegate, usually at an Area Assembly prior to the General Service Conference. The Area Delegate then represents the collective conscience of the Groups in the Area at the General Service Conference on

these matters vital to A.A. as a whole.' – *presented by District 11*

Discussion: We were unanimous in support. This information should be made readily available to demystify our process. // The wording of this motion looks great, but only for our area. My concern is that not all areas do business the way we do business here. Delegates have different ways of assembling information and gathering group consciences, and my concern is that we are imposing our way of doing business on AA as a whole. // If we had a pamphlet about the Conference process, this would be great. But this information is not about groups. Accurate information is available in the *Service Manual*. This motion feels like we're trying to cram more information about General Service into the pamphlet.

This motion will remain Old Business at the Summer Assembly.

NEW BUSINESS:

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*

Discussion: We (District 11) have been discussing how to split the district, and we would do it geographically. The western half of Sub-District 001 would remain Sub-District 001, and the eastern side would become Sub-District 003. They would become two sub-districts with about the same number of groups. // Right now you have a sub-district with 50-plus groups, which imposes a workload on the DCM that is fairly unreasonable. Groups would be better served by having a DCM who was able to be effective for them. The only effect on the area would be the addition of one voting member (a DCM). // Napa wants this. It seems like it would help them. Let's help them do it. // Why are we asking groups to do group consciences on this? Asking a group in San Jose to take a group conscience on how they feel about adding a sub-district in Napa does not make General Service attractive, and seems like a waste of time. // The reason I objected last month is that if this request is so important that we must discuss it at an assembly, it should not pass as a simple Housekeeping Motion.

Motion moved to Old Business.

The Assembly was asked if they were ready to vote, and members were ready to vote. Simple Majority (50% +1) was required for the motion to pass.

Vote: Yes (Substantial Unanimity, No Count Taken) / No (2) / Abstained (6). Motion passes.

Minority Opinion: We have had problems with this procedure in the past. // I have not heard anything from GSRs in Napa. I would like to hear from the people most affected.

Motion to reconsider. Motion to reconsider fails. // **Motion passes.**

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*

Discussion: At first people expressed anonymity concerns. After I showed them PSAs from other countries with full-faces, people responded positively to those videos and wanted similar videos produced here. // We thought these videos could be a great service for people. // The majority felt it would introduce AA to people who don't know much about us. // There were concerns about the clause 'not members of AA.' We don't want to block people from their livelihood if they are actors who are also AA members. // When this motion was first made, I was against it. But one of the arguments in favor was that lip-readers could benefit from full-faced videos and that changed my opinion. // I have been making presentations for the BTG committee since 2006. I have experienced no controversy regarding full-faces in video. Seeing faces is an effective Twelfth Step tool. // We are trying to micro-manage the PI/CPC committee. There is a policy, and this motion is redundant and not necessary. // I feel strongly about full-face videos. The less you show of people's faces, the more meaningful the video can be. The videos we have are well-made, and they show silhouettes or lips. I used to watch a lot of daytime television, and there were a lot of full-face videos for the treatment industry. Our videos set us apart. // I don't like the full face. It creeps me out. It also creeps me out when I see TV shows with our banners. It doesn't set a good precedent. It encourages people to see the differences. Let faces be obscured and instead let our literature speak. // I am in favor because it lets professionals have a sense of what AA is. Hiding our faces contributes to the feeling that AA is strange and secretive. // PSAs are right against the line between attraction and promotion, and full faces cross over that line. // I feel strongly about not having actors speak for us. Every show or movie I have seen emulate what AA is doesn't feel real. If you haven't been to the Fourth Dimension, you can't fake it. // This motion reminds me of 'that guy' who comes to the business meeting and keeps coming back to the business meeting and making motions because what he wants to happen isn't happening. // This is just another tool. It may not reach everyone, but it will reach some people. I have been listening to the audio Grapevine for a decade. The message comes through because that is the most important thing. There is room for a PSA that can be very effective for some people. Let's add, not replace. // This is not a new thing. There was a similar motion several years ago that arose because of PI/CPC work with young people. Young people were more responsive to full-face videos, and while these may not be applicable to everyone, if we attract even a few, it can become one more tool in our arsenal of tools. // A great deal of my recovery is based on identification. I may identify better with someone I can identify. If it helps save one drunk, we should try it. // Those videos are really powerful. Seeing the face has a lot of identification for me, and this is something that can be one more tool. I also think the shadow thing is odd. // I just hope that we make a video that is tasteful. I would hope we could vote on the content that goes into the video before it is made. // I feel uncomfortable with full-face videos. But at ACYPAA, there was a panel with deaf people. And deaf people need full faces to be able to understand the message. // I am not sure where I stand on this. The full face thing feels like marketing. Are we sticking to our principles? But I don't know how someone considering coming to AA feels about this. We could also have a disclaimer that says that we don't show faces. // As alcoholics, aren't we all actors anyway? // The people portraying these alcoholics might be alcoholic also. // There is more we can do to make AA more accessible. // It is not good for some people to have their anonymity broken. But some people can handle it. They can be the ones in the video. // I see in our videos already our experience and hope.

But when I was drunk in my room, I wanted to identify. // I am new to AA, and what attracted me was the people I know and love who have found recovery. But this seems to me more promotion, not attraction. I would also like AA members in our videos, because only we can convey our experience, strength and hope. // It seems that the spirit here is to get more alcoholics into AA. I do worry about promotion, and my experience is that AA works best when one alcoholic works with another. The problem isn't about getting people here, but instead getting them to stay. // I don't think this motion is spiritual in nature. Alcohol will be the great persuader, and we need to have our hand ready to receive people. That hand shouldn't take the form of a television commercial. // Having seen the video, I felt moved. I have seen many videos with silhouettes or shadow people. The video we saw with full faces impacted me; it reminded me of my drinking and spoke to me in a way those other videos haven't. // I thought about what this could mean to people with less access to face-to-face meetings. This could mean a lot for them. // Attraction means we put information out so that people can have it. Promotion involves making guarantees of results and has a tone of a sales pitch. We can only say how AA has improved our lives. // There is something about one alcoholic talking to another that matters.

Motion moved to Old Business at the Summer Assembly.

PRESENTATION:

The World Service Meeting – *presented by Doug G.*

I bring you greetings from the fellowships of Scandinavia. AA is alive and well in the Nordic countries. I was asked just now to speak about the World Service Meeting. It is mentioned in our current version of the *Service Manual*. It was established in 1969 and has been held every other year since 1972, and is held for countries (and regions) with service structures to share experience strength and hope with each other. I got involved in 1998, when the Japanese General Service Conference asked me to serve as an interpreter at the World Service Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand. That was my first time attending. I have now been to 10. The last one (the 24th) was in Rye, NY, in October 2016. The meeting alternates between New York and other countries. Recent meetings have been held in New Zealand, Spain, Ireland, Mexico and Poland. The next one will be in Durban, South Africa, the first time it has been on the African continent. South Africa has been working hard for many years to carry the AA message to sub-Saharan Africa. The theme last year was 'One World – One A.A. – One Language of the Heart,' and there were 61 delegates representing 40 different countries or linguistic zones around the world. Our North American representatives were our two trustees at large for the United States and for Canada. Over the course of five days, delegates cover a broad range of issues pertinent to the development of AA. They may make recommendations about how the World Service Meeting runs, but they do not make decisions binding on any country or service structure. Two countries this year were participating for the first time: Paraguay and Slovakia. AA continues to grow around the world, and a highlight is hearing delegates giving country highlights. Some of these countries have not had a service structure for more than a decade. Some (like Ukraine) have small budgets, and they do the best they can with their Seventh Tradition contributions. The delegates who came from Ukraine were sponsored by Great Britain. You hear a lot about country-to-country sponsorship. Initially, the United States sponsored Mexico. When AA started in Cuba, Mexico started to sponsor

them, along with Paraguay. Australia sponsors some South-east Asian countries (like Laos and Cambodia), New Zealand sponsors some of the Pacific island nations, and Japan helped Mongolia develop their service structure. At the World Service Meeting, the goal is to have one consistent message – and that the message of AA be available for sick alcoholics no matter where they may be or what language they speak. The language of the heart can thrive wherever the need for recovery exists. This past year, there were about twenty presentations on topics like anonymity, carrying the message to underserved populations, the effective use of technology, and how to work with professionals in the field of alcoholism. The International Literature fund (that helps develop translations) was a popular topic, and there were presentations on how to carry the message in a multilingual, multicultural society (like in India, with its many official languages and large population). AA is alive and well around the world. At the end of the meeting, all the delegates stand in a circle holding hands, and, in one language after the other, for the 28 languages present, the Serenity Prayer is recited, and, by the end, there is not a dry eye in the house.

The meeting was closed at 11:35 am with the Responsibility Statement.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? (AFTERNOON SESSION)

Thank you to Joann for being our link to the Conference. // The Regional Forum will be in San Jose in September, 2018. The Past Delegates' Reunion in San Jose will be this June, and if you are interested in knowing more, I can send you a flyer. // Thumpers is bidding to host the 2030 International Convention at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara. // Our groups should be self-supporting, and I came here with two women and I feel I am the only one being supported financially by my group. // I want to extend a thank you to all the folks who helped with this assembly. Just this afternoon, more than 40 people came just to support our hosting of this assembly. Thank you for making this event a success. // Speaking of the Self Support packet, I appreciated your description. When can we hear more about it? // When the topic of the YPAA subcommittee came up, I spoke to a lot of people. We noticed that our YPAA committee goes to a lot of service entities, but they don't come to us. We would love to see our area officers at our YPAA business meetings. // I want to mention that I have a meeting schedule for all of the secular meetings in Northern California. // We processed 10 electronic contributions today. The assembly cost about \$3800, and we brought in a little more than \$1400. Thank you for being so generous. // Thank you to Eric for taking our minutes. // The National AA Technology Workshop will be in Sacramento this September. They are soliciting workshop topics, and you can email the host committee with suggestions. // I want to invite all of you to the Summer Assembly which District 18 is hosting. We would be so grateful for your attendance and we are looking forward to seeing you on August 5.

Submitted with Love and Gratitude,

Eric L.

CNCA Panel 67 Recording Secretary