

**CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL AREA  
ASSEMBLY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES FOR  
2017 SUMMER ASSEMBLY (MORNING)**

The Summer Assembly Business meeting of CNCA was held August 5, 2017 at the Petaluma Community Center in Petaluma, California. Jennifer B. opened the meeting at 9:45, followed by the Serenity Prayer. The AA Preamble was read by Laurie H. (District 13). Mary M. (District 04) read the 12 Traditions in English, and Jose F. (District 18) read the 12 Traditions in Spanish. There were 6 past delegates present: Diane O. (Panel 35), Woody R. (Panel 50, Area 07), Doug G. (Panel 53), David N. (Panel 59), Jim F. (Panel 59, Area 38), 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: Greg M. and Tom M. The minutes from the 2017 Post-Conference Assembly were accepted as printed in the *CNCA Comments*.

Registered attendance: Voting (230) / Non-voting (133)

**Officer Reports**

DELEGATE – JOANN L.: Doug G. has agreed to be the Hospital Chair for the upcoming Pacific Regional Forum in San Jose in September 2018. I really want every one of us to bring someone to the Forum who does not know anything about General Service. I sent out Spanish and English versions of the digital, anonymity-protected Conference Report. Hard copies will be available mid-August. The translation of the *Big Book* into Croatian has been approved. A revised translation of the Slovakian *Big Book* has been submitted for review. And the Navajo *Big Book* is proceeding with the translation of the final two chapters. Finally, I received a request from a member in Santa Clara County to put in a bid for the 2030 International Convention. After checking with GSO, I was told that I need to find out if there is interest in hosting an International Convention, since we would have to provide 4000 volunteers. If you think your groups would like to volunteer, let me know. (Assembly cheers in response).

ALTERNATE DELEGATE – TEDDY B-W: Your Delegate and I meet monthly to ensure that we continue to work effectively on your behalf. At our July Area Committee Meeting, we decided to fund our Area's participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hispanic Women's Workshop in Pasadena on December 3. Our liaisons will be Emma M. (District 16) and Maria Luisa S. (District 20).

CHAIR – JENNIFER B.: Thank you to those individuals and districts who submitted workshop ideas for the Summer Assembly. We received more than 60 suggestions, and the six we have to choose from and enjoy today are the result of your participation. Your input is needed again to prepare inventory questions for our Fall Assembly on November 4, where we will take our Area inventory. Please submit your ideas for inventory questions by September 23.

TREASURER – CHRIS H: We currently have \$32,283 in our checking account (used for operating expenses) and \$10,117 in our savings account (which represents our prudent reserve). Year-to-date, we had budgeted approximately \$75,000 in contributions and received approximately \$84,000. We had budgeted \$78,000 in expenses, and spent \$63,000. We are now about \$24,000 ahead of budget.

REGISTRAR – LAURA W.: I continue to process changes as they come in from our District Registrars and have been collecting

feedback to make the process more efficient. I am working on reconciling differences and discrepancies, and am on track to complete this project by December.

RECORDING SECRETARY – ERIC L.: The next Motions Book will include a brief history of our Accessibilities Sharing Session. It will also highlight our months-long discussion about the Area's technology needs and include information about workshop topics at previous Summer Assemblies.

ASSEMBLY COORDINATOR – ERICA S.: I would like to thank District 18 for hosting all of us today. They put lots of time, energy and love into putting this assembly together, and they have done a fantastic job. Our Fall Inventory Assembly will be on November 4 at the Petaluma Veterans Building. There are eight assemblies available for bidding.

LITERATURE/GRAPEVINE/LA VIÑA – MIGUEL H.: If anyone wants to sponsor a *Grapevine* or *La Viña* subscription, please purchase one and give me the information so I can make sure it gets to a future member of AA through H&I, BTG or PI/CPC. We will hold a Writing Stories workshop at the Literature/*Grapevine*/*La Viña* Sharing Session.

**Area Standing Committees and Sub-Committees**

ARCHIVES – RICHARD W.: The Archives committee has been working on digitizing our reel-to-reel recordings, created a CNCA Delegates display board, and attended several Unity Days. We have also participated in several members' research on various topics. We also continue collecting group and oral histories. All of your information adds to the treasure of experience we have in our archives.

BRIDGING THE GAP – KELLY H.: So far this year, your BTG committees gave 158 presentations and handled 703 requests for help. Committee officers continue to visit District and BTG meetings and events, and we have seen interest and enthusiasm for this service growing. Interest in the Pre-Release Contact correspondence program is also growing. We are now preparing for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual BTG Forum.

FINANCE – CLAUDIA N.: We continue trying to improve the use of Square at the ACM and at assemblies. We are informing contributors about the email option for receipts, and we hope that it will eventually decrease the paperwork and save the Area some of the cost. The motion to send \$10,000 to the General Service Board passed after much discussion, and we hope to commence work on the 2018 budget soon.

PI/CPC – TEDDY B-W: I have been in contact with other PI/CPC Chairs around California to see if they will be spearheading AA's presence at conferences for probation administrators, school psychologists and psychiatrists, and, if so, to see if our help is needed. The Area already approved financial support for an exhibitor booth to be staffed by our siblings in California Northern Interior Area at the CalPsych conference in Yosemite later this year.

WEBSITE – ROBERT E.: The Web committee is working on creating a new website using Drupal software. Our spam problem continues, but has diminished. We have corrected some problems with email forwarding, and we recently added an hour-long training session. We are now looking forward to the National AA Technology Workshop in Sacramento in September.

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION – MICHAEL Q.: I want to thank our interpreters. English to Spanish and Spanish to

English interpretation is available on FM station 96.9; Assisted Listening is at FM station 92.5. We have FM radios to loan. All workshops today will be interpreted. Please check with workshop presenters for the FM station being broadcast in each workshop room.

2018 PACIFIC REGIONAL FORUM – DOUG G.: The Regional Forums are intended to be a weekend of sharing and information and to let the Board and staff be in touch with the Fellowship. It is not just for people in General Service but also for the Fellowship at large so that they can meet those who work at the General Service Office and on the General Service Board on our behalf. The next Pacific Regional Forum will be September 7-9, 2018 in San Jose. I am forming a welcome committee, and I have been in contact with GSO to develop short-term goals and a long-term action plan.

### Area Business

#### 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: This passage would help inform people. // This pamphlet should stay focused on the groups and not involve so much information about General Service. // This passage was too specific about how our Area does business, not necessarily how other Areas do business. // This passage informs GSRs about the process at the Conference. // Participating in the General Service Conference process is one of the most important functions of a group (other than helping people stay sober). It is important for individual members to see what happens on an international level. // I spoke with many people from other Areas who don't follow this process because their areas do things in a different manner. They don't want to change how they do business, and they didn't think that doing things the way outlined in this passage would be appropriate for them. // This has too much detail that isn't necessary. To educate GSRs, we can have conversations with GSRs. // I find some of the grammar and capitalization in this passage to be wrong. // I have a number of groups in my District that willfully do not want to participate in General Service. They do not think that it accurately represents AA, and they are as much a part of AA as groups with a GSR. This

paragraph could be seen as telling groups what they have to do. // The more information is available, the better.

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 (116) / No (55) / Abstained (3). Motion passes.**

Minority Opinion: My concern is that this implies that our Area's way is the only way to gather group consciences, and that we are dictating our procedure. I think every Area has a different way of doing things, and it is up to the Delegate, their DCMs, and their Chairs how they handle business. This smacks too much of Area 06 telling the U.S. and Canada to do things our way. // This passage is far too detailed and too specific to our Area. I don't know how spending time (and money) on this revision helps the still-suffering alcoholic. Members who are curious about this process can find information in the GSR pamphlet and the *Service Manual*. // Other Areas do things differently, and it would be incorrect information in a pamphlet carried all over the country. // I like the idea of having more information about the Agenda Topics process in a pamphlet. But I look back to Concept 3, which gives each Delegate a Right of Decision.

Motion to reconsider; seconded.

**Vote: Yes (92) / No (88) // Motion to reconsider passes.**

**Motion remains Old Business at the 2017 Fall Inventory Assembly.**

#### OLD 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: We responded positively to videos with full faces. But there were concerns about the honesty of using actors and concerns that PSAs cannot cover the scope of AA experience. // Could we obtain a licensing agreement with Australia's General Service Board to use already-produced videos here in the United States? // This is too much promotion rather than attraction. // We were concerned about the perception of anonymity breaks. // Some members wanted real alcoholics rather than actors because that is the only way to truthfully convey the message. // Full faces could show more emotion. But bringing up similar motions so closely together (a recent Agenda Topic did not pass) seems to be pushing an agenda. // Actors are often hired for different commercials. It would be troubling to have one of the actors in our PSA featured in a commercial for alcoholic drinks. // Some said using full faces could cheapen our message. Others felt that excluding AA members from participating in this PSA felt mean; we should not prohibit members of AA from participating in their work. // We want people who are hearing-impaired to be able to read the lips of actors in full-face videos. // Videos with full faces would be more engaging and have a more powerful impact. Videos with actors in shadows encourage people to not pay attention. // We wanted a new PSA with actors' faces to reach younger people. // PSAs with darkened faces makes me think that alcoholics are shameful and guilty. Full faces would remove that stigma. // If I want someone to portray a real-life experience, I go to an actor. // Most of my group felt that videos were another tool in our 12<sup>th</sup> Step

toolbox. Movies like *Days of Wine and Roses* had a dramatic effect because they showed full faces. // My personal opinion is that the Australia videos told dramatic stories in a brief time. The disheartening thing for me is to keep hearing that this "breaks our Traditions." Public Information has been around for a long time. We are not a secret society. // Could the video just say "these are paid actors" and not mention they are or aren't AA members? // Using actors highlights our commitment to anonymity. // It is my understanding that promotion would be "I guarantee this." These videos do not guarantee that you will get sober, but they attract you to a way of getting sober. // We are anonymous not because of shame, but because we want to protect AA. We are not hiding in shadows. // Why not hire professional speakers to recite our shares from podiums? I watched the videos on AA's website, and I really liked one video with young people on a beach. They speak from the heart. I am not sure actors could convey that message as well. // Using actors is a good idea because they can represent the desperation of those who suffer from alcoholism. // The traditions talks about personal anonymity, and there is no list of credits on a PSA. // I am not a person who gets a lot out of books. I have a hard time retaining information. But when I see something in front of me, I respond well and pursue it. // I would like information about how this video worked in Australia. // The first time I considered going to an AA meeting was after watching a TV show. It resonated with me. The only other times I have had that experience are in AA meetings. Full faces are more powerful. But there is something unique about one alcoholic communicating with another that a PSA won't be able to do. // When I was in jail, guys from H&I came in and they didn't wear ski masks. They sacrificed their anonymity to bring the message to guys trying to get out of work duty by going to AA. They weren't always the most exciting speakers (like an actor could be). // We should not let fear prevent us from doing something. // Someone from the hearing-impaired community came to the ACM and pleaded with us from the microphone to consider this, noting that hearing-impaired people benefit from seeing our full faces and our lips move. We are trying to address a need that was brought to us by people who are hearing-impaired. // I had to attend DUI classes. They showed me the movie *My Name is Bill W.* That helped me see I needed help. // I did not find these rooms through late-night ads. I went to my parents and asked for help. They got me to AA, where I heard other people's stories, and that resonated with me. Had I seen a PSA, I may have gotten here sooner. // Public Information is one way to reach as many people who are suffering as possible. There are a variety of PSAs that AA uses. Some of them have partial faces, some of them have stick people, and there are specific announcements for professionals. This motion fills a gap and reaches a need, and this proposed video will reach the suffering alcoholic that other PSAs are not reaching. // The AA message is profound. When I saw these videos, I was deeply moved.

### **Motion remains Old Business at the 2017 Fall Inventory Assembly.**

#### PRESENTATION: PARTING WORDS FROM A PAST TRUSTEE

Aloha. I lived in Hawaii 32 years. It was where I got sober. I served Hawaii as Delegate. Aloha means hello, goodbye, I love you, let's have dinner. Having this opportunity say aloha to you is very special to me. I got introduced to the Three Legacies from the very beginning of my sobriety. I was on Twelfth Step calls and I was making coffee, and within a couple weeks we were forming a General Service structure in

Hawaii. This will be my fourth move in sobriety, and every time I have moved, a fellowship has grown up around me. It happened when I moved from Hawaii to New York to serve as the General Manager. It happened when I moved here after I retired from the Office. Thank you to those of you here who pulled me in, hugged me, welcomed me and nurtured me. It has been a wonderful 10 years. I will be here a little longer, but we are now building a home in Las Vegas. I still love my home group in Half Moon Bay, and I am sure I will meet you again traveling the road of happy destiny. I am not concerned and I am not viewing with alarm, but I find it interesting to be in an Area of creativity, of technology and of social media hubs. I do think we maybe have gotten too rigid, too dense, too focused on paper. What really touches my heart is the face-to-face sharing. I will be doing a lot of that because it creates vitality. If you are new to this Third Legacy procedure, hang in there. There is a lot of paperwork going on. Just follow your heart. I have been really blessed with having attended 16 General Service Conferences (about) and in that process, I am always reminded that whenever we gather together, the purpose is to search out and find God's will for us and to share it with others. The thing I really like about our process is that we make decisions today, for today, and that it is always subject to be changed tomorrow. The process is what matters. I have an obligation to drag people out of their chairs and to tell them to share, and that is how together we find the will of God for all of us. Thank you for being such a good host area for me. I am looking forward to having the same experience in Area 42.

– presented by Greg M.

The meeting was closed at 12:04 pm with the Responsibility Statement.

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### **CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL AREA ASSEMBLY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES FOR 2017 SUMMER ASSEMBLY (AFTERNOON)**

Every Summer Assembly holds workshops at which members of the Area are asked to present on specific topics and facilitate a sharing session. This year, we are including summaries of these workshops, as presented in the afternoon at the Summer Assembly, in the minutes.

#### WORKSHOP: FIFTH EDITION OF THE *BIG BOOK*... WHEN?

The first 164 pages of the *Big Book* have not changed; only the stories and the appendices have. The stories in the current Fourth Edition are meant to reflect our current membership and represent the still-suffering alcoholic. The process of change takes time. When the Fourth Edition was created, it was the first time that the Fellowship was asked for stories. Some 1200 people contributed. Sharing at the microphone suggested many people feel a new edition should be considered soon. It has been 16 years since the Fourth Edition was published, and it takes many years for a new edition to be prepared. Our Fellowship is changing, and a new edition could reflect AA today. Possible new stories could highlight how we get to AA and include writers with a dual diagnosis or who are 'angry alcoholics.' There was also some discussion about language in the *Big Book*, particularly in the chapter 'To Wives.'

– presentation by Justin H. (District 07); summary by Judy W. (District 13)

#### WORKSHOP: TRADITIONS AND CONCEPTS IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS

After introducing the idea that the Steps are to the individual what the Traditions are to the group and the Concepts to the General Service structure, the presenter shared her story of how the Concepts gave her a voice and a vote. It was a moving session that spoke the language of the heart. Our presenter shared how she came to be of service, initially losing a bid for election at her District. A few weeks later, a new service opportunity presented itself, leading to her presentation here today. Discussion focused on the Concepts and Traditions in our lives, and touched on how Hispanic women are considered a remote community and on their right to recover and to have a voice.

—presentation by *Maria Luisa S. (District 20)*; summary by *Rocio H. (District 07)*

#### WORKSHOP: A COMMON SOLUTION FOR A DIVERSE FELLOWSHIP: INCLUDING ALL WHO SUFFER FROM ALCOHOLISM

The presenter spoke about how it is easier to hear the message when you go to a meeting where people 'look like you,' and the importance of being aware of how being exclusive toward those who look, act or think differently can be detrimental. Among the things we do well are the accessibility of the *Big Book* in various languages and formats and the availability of alternative meeting types and formats. Areas in which we could improve include a lack of understanding about what people with disabilities need, challenges meeting the needs of people with different backgrounds (financial, cultural, spiritual), and meeting the needs of people who identify as dually-addicted. The general message was that we want to be mindful of these various factors potentially pushing people out of AA, which could be a death sentence for them. The overarching themes were of personal responsibility, working to be inclusive of people from different backgrounds, accepting difficult conversations, and trying to be aware of ways to be more inclusive.

—presentation by *Katie G. (District 70)*; summary by *Sarah B. (District 06)*

#### WORKSHOP: JOY OF LIVING: FINDING HUMOR IN AA SERVICE

One doesn't get into service to find humor. Our presenter ended up going on a journey of research, especially by reading articles in the *Grapevine* and asking folks from the Fellowship about this topic. When you go to your Fellowship, you find answers. She shared anecdotes about her group, and discovered that laughter is a great part about AA. Service is a great way to make friends; service is fun, and it often leads to joy. Among her service highlights include working with sponsees and doing 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. Members at the workshop shared about their own humorous situations in service, and some tips to make service attractive, including using humor when sharing, remembering Rule 62, and insisting on absolutely enjoying life. We also talked about letting go and letting God and using humor to right-size ourselves. General Service is an adventure and an absolute joy.

—presentation by *Pat P. (District 10)*; summary by *Robert P. (District 10)*

#### WORKSHOP: UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN RECOVERY, UNITY AND SERVICE

Our presenter discussed how technology has helped him, starting at age 10 when he made his first phone call. Social networks have helped him connect with people, and YouTube has helpful study guides. Our presenter described how he uses what works for him, and that technology can bring unity to those who are using it. Technology has allowed him to share his experience, strength and hope with others. However, he cautioned us that anonymity still matters online, and that once something is on the Internet, it can't be erased. Some useful tools he suggested including the quick search on the AA website and websites that are helpful when sponsoring others. The discussion ranged across many topics. Most people spoke about the ability to connect with others, but some cautioned that some technology may be difficult to navigate and to use technology with safeguards in place.

—presentation by *Jose A. (District 40)*; summary by *Richard K. (District 90)*

#### WORKSHOP: GROUP AUTONOMY AND 'MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR AA AS A WHOLE'

This workshop highlighted 'the dark side' of Tradition 4, especially as it has sometimes dissuaded members or made AA inaccessible to some. Our presenter spoke about AA's tradition of inclusivity, and occasional attempts to exclude people (like the dually-addicted, the LGBT community, African American alcoholics during segregation, or 'difficult' newcomers). Other issues of group autonomy include the use of the Lord's Prayer in meetings, which some have likened to endorsement of certain religions and others consider a small-T tradition in AA. The discussion during the workshop went in many directions, with a lot of discussion about the Lord's Prayer, the group conscience (and how it keeps our groups running smoothly), and the differences between open and closed meetings (and whether a baby would be welcome at a closed meeting). Overall, there was an interest in not excluding anyone who is suffering or anyone who is still sick.

—presentation by *Trevor H. (District 40)*; summary by *Ashley C. (District 04)*

#### WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? (AFTERNOON SESSION)

A recovery play will be shown in Berkeley and then again in Santa Rosa. // District 02 will be hosting a Walk in the Park in Salinas on September 9, which will include a speaker, a lunch and a walk. // My heart is so full. When I first came to AA, I did not feel like I belonged anywhere. Hearing the sharing in the Traditions and Concepts workshop from Hispanic women moved me. I felt so connected. That feeling of connection is so important to me as an alcoholic, because it reminds me I am not alone. // Marin County's Unity Day will be on September 10 in San Rafael. // The National AA Technology Workshop will start on September 8 in Sacramento. // We want to thank District 18 for an absolutely wonderful assembly, and want to invite you all to the Fall Inventory Assembly on November 4 in Petaluma. // Please return FM radios that were loaned from the I&T committee. Please help us keep this going. // I want to thank all of the volunteers who participated in this assembly. Many events I attend stay in my mind, but this is an event that will stay in my heart. // ACYPAA will be in Santa Rosa this February. This is a huge event, and we anticipate 2000 to 3000 people. // I want to

thank District 18 for this assembly and for that awesome lunch. I have carne asada in my pockets. // I don't know if anyone is thinking about making a motion for a Fifth Edition, but that would be an awesome thing. If nothing else, those kinds of motions get people involved in General Service. // The Unity and Service Conference will start on August 18 in Concord, and will include many speakers with General Service experience. // I want to thank Area 06 for allowing District 18 to host this assembly. I did not think we would be able to do this, and I am so grateful and thankful for all of you being a part of our District's story. // Contribution in the 7<sup>th</sup> tradition today included \$231 for food, \$208 for coffee, and \$721.35 at registration. // Interpretation equipment is a technology tool that brings us all together.

The afternoon session was closed at 4:58 pm with the Responsibility Statement.

Submitted with Love and Gratitude,

Eric L., CNCA Panel 67 Recording Secretary