

**CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL AREA  
ASSEMBLY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES FOR  
2017 FALL ASSEMBLY**

The Fall Assembly Business meeting of CNCA was held November 4, 2017 at the Petaluma Veteran's Hall in Petaluma, California. Jennifer B. opened the meeting at 9:15, followed by the Serenity Prayer. The AA Preamble was read by Elijah H. (District 02). Jason W. (District 12) read the 12 Traditions in English, and Raymundo F. (District 17) read the 12 Traditions in Spanish. There were 8 past delegates present: Diane O. (Panel 35), Woody R. (Panel 50, Area 07), Sharon A. (Panel 57), David N. (Panel 59), Jim F. (Panel 59, Area 38), Ken M. (Panel 61), Lela M. (Panel 62, Area 07), and Raymundo L. (Panel 65). David N. currently serves as a General Service Trustee. There were also two past trustees present, Bob W. and Tom M., and one visiting delegate, Vikki R., who currently serves Area 07. The minutes from the 2017 Summer Assembly were accepted as printed in the *CNCA Comments*.

Registered attendance: Voting (244) / Non-voting (159)

**Third Legacy Election**

Ken M. was selected to be the CNCA Nominee for Pacific Regional Trustee. The Pacific Regional Trustee will be selected at the General Service Conference in April 2018.

**Officer Reports**

DELEGATE – JOANN L.: My Delegate's Reports are all done. We are making progress on the bid for the 2030 International Convention in Santa Clara; it will be submitted by the end of the month. I received an email from GSO that the Trustees discussed our motion to add text back to *Living Sober* and will discuss it more at the January Board meeting.

ALTERNATE DELEGATE – TEDDY B-W: The buzz for CNCA to host the 2030 International Convention increases. As of today, we have letters of support from numerous Intergroup offices, the rest of the Pacific Region, and pledges for more than 1600 volunteers, not bad for an event 13 years away when our slogan is one day at a time.

CHAIR – JENNIFER B.: I want to thank you for all the love and support you have shown since David and I lost our home in the Tubbs fire. Your kindness means the world. When I first got sober, I was told to trust the process, and the same tools I was given in the beginning still work today if I pick them up and use them. I am still struggling with gratitude and silver linings. But it is good to be here, it is good to be sober, and it is good to be of service.

TREASURER – CHRIS H.: We have \$34,200 in our Checking Account used for Operating Expenses and \$10,117 in our Savings Account that represents our Prudent Reserve. Year to date, we had budgeted for \$99,500 in contributions and received a total of \$112,200. We had budgeted \$107,700 in expenses and have spent \$88,400. We are well ahead of budget. Please thank your groups for their contributions.

REGISTRAR – LAURA W.: Knowing how many people are attending our Assemblies helps us plan for the business meeting and the event – including making sure we have enough food for everyone. I continue processing changes as they

come in from District Registrars and have been collecting feedback to make the process more efficient.

RECORDING SECRETARY – ERIC L.: I have been able to visit every District in our Area and have been inspired by the passion and commitment to service and to the AA program.

ASSEMBLY COORDINATOR – ERICA S.: Our Pre-Conference Assembly will be in April at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds. Districts 40 and 02 are looking forward to hosting all of us and are well underway with planning. There are currently seven assemblies available for bidding.

LITERATURE/GRAPEVINE/LA VIÑA – MIGUEL H.: In the early 1940s, the *Grapevine* served AA as a communication tool. And the magazine continues to communicate in a way that AAWS cannot. We can participate by sharing our experiences, sending in photos or artwork, sharing the magazine and buying subscriptions.

**Area Standing Committees and Sub-Committees**

ARCHIVES – RICHARD W.: We collect, store, protect, catalog and organize CNCA's historical material. Many committee members recently returned from the National AA Archives Workshop in Winnipeg, Canada. The committee is now preparing to host our third biennial Archives Open House on December 9, which will include presentations, hands-on trainings and a live oral history of a past Delegate.

BRIDGING THE GAP – LARRY B.: Your Area and District BTG committees gave 245 presentations and received 927 requests for help this year. Committee officers continue to visit District and BTG meetings and events, and we have seen enthusiasm growing, along with clear evidence that the need for the hand of AA to be there remains strong.

FINANCE – CLAUDIA N.: We continue working on the upcoming budget for 2018 and hope to have this ready by the next Area Committee meeting. Upcoming discussions will include reviewing our Finance webpage and committee guidelines.

PI/CPC – TEDDY B-W: The Area's PI/CPC committee is working on a template letter that individual members of AA can hand to their doctor. At our last meeting, we had a roundtable about carrying the message to veterans. I have been in contact with other PI/CPC chairs around the state and we now have a system in place to ensure that AA will have a presence at the conventions of statewide professional organizations.

WEBSITE – ROBERT E.: The Website committee continues to work on the new website, and we are getting ready to do our inventory later this month. Motions to purchase a projector and a hotspot device were approved, and several members of the committee attended the NAATW.

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION – MICHAEL Q.: We want to thank our professional interpreters. English to Spanish and Spanish to English interpretation is available on FM station 91.9; Assisted Listening is at FM station 100.7. We have a limited supply of FM radios to loan.

**Area Business**

PRESENTATION OF NEW BUSINESS:

That literature be developed sharing experience, strength and hope on meditation. – *presented by District 90*

Presentation: This motion originated at the Unity Group in Vacaville. The group forwarded the motion to the District, where it was discussed until it passed with substantial unanimity. The goal of this literature is to focus on people's experience, strength and hope on meditation rather than to be instructive.

Questions: Q: Does this motion intentionally exclude prayer?

A: The focus is solely on meditation. Q: Is the intent of the motion to share about different types of meditation practices?

A: The intent of the motion is to share experience, strength and hope on meditation. Q: Is this a request for a book, a pamphlet or a Grapevine collection? A: The request is for literature.

### **Motion moved to New Business at the 2018 Pre-Conference Assembly.**

#### 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: The motion is wordy, it dictates how other Area's should do their business, and it is not necessary. //The suggested language is too specific. // The information is available in other places. // There are typographical errors, and the passage is not well-written. The intent of the motion is well-spirited, but the language is inaccurate. // The original intent of this motion was to have clarity on the General Service Conference process. AA is shaped by the collective voice of the groups. Many new GSRs do not know what Agenda Topics are since they are not mentioned in our pamphlets. // This process is different in different parts of the country. // While I love the idea of clarity about the process, I have learned that the suggested language is not accurate everywhere. A good place to learn about Agenda Topics is at the District. // Concept 1 gives authority to the groups, and the purpose of the General Service Conference is to collect those group consciences to make policy decisions. This motion does not establish a new policy. It just puts that information in writing so that people understand that they have the ultimate authority in AA. Many groups do not have access to the *Service Manual*, and it is important to get the principles of Concept 1 to the groups. // When I served as Delegate, we did nothing like

what is described in this motion. // My favorite phrase in AA is 'Keep it simple.' But sometimes you have to be descriptive and use more words so that there is no confusion. It would be useful to give information to groups and to have the process explained in a pamphlet. // When we prepared for our group inventory and needed something in writing to validate the process to people, it was helpful to have background information available in a pamphlet. // When the Delegate arrives at the Conference, they are encouraged to vote for AA as a whole, not for their Area. We would do delegates a disservice by putting this text in the pamphlet.

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: Motion fails by show of hand; no count taken.**

#### 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: By keeping actors in silhouette, it demonstrates the importance of anonymity. // This would be an effective way of carrying the message to suffering alcoholics. But by showing faces, some alcoholics may focus on the differences rather than on the similarities. // Full face videos make it easier for people who read lips to understand. // Not hiring alcoholic actors would be illegal because it discriminates against alcoholics who happen to be actors. // Initially my group was divided. There were many concerns about anonymity and hiring actors. But after we watched public service announcements, everyone was in support. We thought they were impactful and effective. // Videos with faces may help people who have not heard about AA find recovery. // Only one alcoholic can truthfully convey the message of recovery to another alcoholic. // We would prefer if the best possible actors, whether they be alcoholic or not, be hired. // This motion has been so confusing. I thought videos with full faces had already been approved. // When we watched the videos from Australia, it was impactful to see the emotion on faces. // We watched videos from several countries. Even if we could not understand the language, we could understand the expressions on the actors' faces. // We often see representations of what AA looks like on television shows. But AA does not represent itself. // I have been making presentations for Bridging the Gap for 12 years. I spent a few years using videos without full faces, and I have used the newer video with full faces also. The newer video is more accessible and people identify more. // This discussion about anonymity is important. More important, though, is that by prohibiting alcoholics from working, we would be breaking the law and engaging in hiring discrimination. This motion forces actors who happen to be alcoholics to lie about their disease. // In this world of technology, some people do not read books. These videos with full faces have so much more impact. // I am anonymous but AA is not. I like the idea of producing a video because it shows that AA is available. // Showing faces in the video takes away shame. We do not need to hide faces to make an impact. Full faces suggest that alcoholics are real people who come in many shapes, sizes and looks. // To avoid discrimination, we could add a label to the video explaining that these actors 'may or may not be alcoholics.'

## **Motion remains Old Business at the 2018 Pre-Conference Assembly.**

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

### PRESENTATION: REFLECTIONS FROM A PAST TRUSTEE

I became a Trustee 10 years after having rotated from being a Delegate. By that time, I thought that serving Alcoholics Anonymous as a Trustee may not have been in the cards. So when I received a letter from my Delegate and from GSO that a trusteeship was available, I meditated and contemplated for months and months to make sure I was making myself available for the right reasons. I talked to my family. I wrote a balance sheet of what I might be good at and what I might not be good at. I felt a little apprehension, but I made myself available and was selected to be my Area's nominee in October. My Delegate sent my resume to the Trustee's Nominating committee and then I waited; life went on. Two months after that Assembly, my mother died of alcoholism. When she died, my zeal to serve AA increased a thousand-fold. On the day of the Conference, I went to the best place I could be, the chapel where I had been in discernment and prayer before. I was sitting in that chapel waiting for my Delegate to call and let me know I had not been elected when a woman my mother used to sponsor walked in, holding a Big Book and bringing with her a newcomer. They did the Third Step prayer. Shortly thereafter, my Delegate called to let me know the delegates from my region had selected me as their candidate. I would be one of six names on the Conference floor. A while after, my Delegate called to let me know I had been elected Trustee-at-Large (United States). He later said it was the only time he had ever heard me speechless. I was stunned, grateful and scared. I served from April 2013 until April 2017; it was an absolute privilege. There are two Trustees-at-Large, one from the United States and one from Canada. We are the international Delegates, but also two of the 21 Trustees. There are four General Service Trustees chosen for their particular business acumen. Another eight are regional Trustees who bring a local perspective. There are seven non-alcoholic Trustees as well. The Trustees-at-Large represent our service structure at World Service meetings and at Zonal meetings. My first World Service meeting was in 2014. To my right was the Delegate from Ukraine and to his right was the Russian Delegate. There were conflicts at that time between the two countries. But there they were, coming together in the fellowship of the spirit, to love one another and to share with one another. There are often differences in AA from one country to another. But there is never a variation in our desire to help people who have a problem with alcohol. At my first World Service meeting, I also heard from the Iranian Delegate, who shared how AA came about in that country. AA operates underground; they hold meetings outside or in people's houses. They do not even call themselves AA; they call themselves 'Nameless Sobers' because the government thinks AA is a religious community. AA has grown to 8000 members in Iran. In my four years on the Board, I traveled to 15 countries. In Ukraine, I gave five presentations during a brief visit, and told my story five times. I was hoarse by the end, but the people there are starving for information. In El Salvador, after 26 hours of travel, I wanted to cool off after landing, and nearly got electrocuted when the shower I used had exposed wires. We go to any lengths to stay sober. One of my favorite memories was at a national convention in Latvia. In South America, everyone was always

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so happy and expressive. But in Latvia, everyone was stoic; the cultures are different. But the AA spirit comes out. Once the badges were on, the smiles started appearing. It is like any other convention. People came from all over. At the hotel I stayed in, my room had a bottle of water being sold for 2 Euros. The shot of whiskey was complimentary. I have been so grateful to see the love and joy and the fellowship of the spirit everywhere I go. Everyone does things a little differently, but there is one thing that is consistent: the love that the Fellowship has for the Steps, the Traditions and the Concepts. Our principles are timeless, and we need to allow them to continue to work in us. AA today is in about 180 countries, about the same number of countries in the world. Of those countries, 63 have General Service structures or boards or Intergroups or some other form of organization. 41 countries attend the World Service meeting. We still have work to do. What is happening between those 180 countries and the 63 with structures? In the United States, we talk about membership stagnation. It is interesting to ponder, though, the growth of the fellowship around the world. Many people are suffering in nations where there is no AA, or where the closest meeting is 400 miles or 4000 miles away. There is no hope where they are, dying and suffering from alcoholism. That is where our money and spirituality mix. I am so grateful for the opportunity I have had to serve the Fellowship. I often think of how desperate and dying I was, an empty shell seconds and inches from taking my life. And I made a decision to join AA. My Higher Power led me here and AA has saved my life in every way and given me this experience to serve. Do not quit when you get frustrated. I was tested and I did not quit. General Service is so important. It keeps our message consistent so that my children or your children or the child not yet born, or anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, if they reach out for help, the hand of AA will be there. And for that, we are all responsible.

— presented by Bob W., past Trustee-at-Large (United States)

The afternoon session was closed at 5:19 pm with the Responsibility Statement.

Submitted with Love and Gratitude,

Eric L.

CNCA Panel 67 Recording Secretary