

## CALIFORNIA NORTHERN COASTAL AREA SUMMER ASSEMBLY 2023 MINUTES

The Summer Assembly business meeting of CNCA was held at The Redwood Acres Fairgrounds in Eureka on August 12, 2023, with members attending and participating in person and virtually. Chitra S. opened the meeting at 10:00 followed by the Serenity Prayer and an acknowledgment of the memory of Jennifer K. who passed away. Assembly orientation was presented online by past delegate Barbara M. The AA Preamble was read by Michael M. from District 15, Dave C. from District 05 read the Twelve Traditions, and Nora M. from District 18 read the Traditions in Spanish. There were nine past Delegates present: Joann L. (P67), Bob D. (P36), Jennifer B. (P71), Barbara M. (P41), Diane O. (P35), Ken M. (P61), Teddy B.W. (P69), David N. (P59 and past trustee), and Jim M. (P45). There were six Past Area Officers: Michael Q., Magdaleno O., Dennis H., Tim, Marta, and Margarete V. The minutes from the Post-Conference assembly were accepted as published in the CNCA Comments and Comentarios. **Registered attendance:** 235 in-person; 87 online

### **OFFICER REPORTS**

**DELEGATE – ERIC L.:** The Grapevine App is now in beta testing and expected to cost \$3 per month (or about \$30 a year); the General Service Board is beginning the process to prepare to conduct its inventory; the first draft of *A.A. in Plain Language: A Tool for Accessing the Big Book* has been completed. A working group is now reviewing it and providing additional feedback to incorporate prior to it being reviewed by the Conference, possibly next year. A.A. is being prudent with its expenses because contributions and income (from literature sales) are lower than expected.

**ALTERNATE DELEGATE – MIGUEL H.:** The General Service Office is looking for new staff members including a French-speaking Canadian residing in either the U.S. or Canada and willing to relocate to New York. Fluency in English and excellent English writing skills are required. This position is responsible for work specific to each of our 12 service desks, rotating to a new office and assignment every two years. Assignments include Treatment/Accessibilities/Remote Communities, Conference, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Corrections, Group Services, International, International Convention, Literature, Nominating, Public Information, Regional Forums, and Staff Coordinator. Candidates should have at least six years of continuous sobriety, strong writing and communication skills, and a good understanding of our service structure to be a "special worker." Contact me for information on duties and responsibilities.

**CHAIR – CHITRA S.:** Those of us in leadership positions are here to facilitate the needs of the Area. We provide the space to introduce principles, practice listening, and cultivate quiet voices. If you feel new here, we're here for you. The workshops today are meant to open your heart. We are learning how to speak eloquently about the things that bother us, the issues that make AA feel like it's not working, and to acknowledge where we are doing a good job and growing. There is time to participate during discussion of motions, the workshops, and on What's on your mind. After today, we may not have any more motions on our agenda. Please use today's thoughtful discussions to inspire you, to find the words to say what's hurting, what's creating resentment, and what could be looked at and brought into the open. To new and current GSRs: please create and turn in discussion items for our next assembly, so that we may have some healthy discussion at the area level. Reach out to me, and let's figure out a way to word what's in your heart. This is how we keep AA relevant so that it's still here for the next generation.

**TREASURER – CLAUDIA N.:** As of today, our checking account has \$33,718.67, and our prudent reserve (one month's operating expenses) has \$13,001.51. At the end of July, our actual contributions to date have been \$83,999.90, and our budgeted contributions were \$72,819.58. Actual expenses to date have been \$95,092.37; the budget was \$91,443.36. Some of the reasons for the differences were due to Assembly deposits that were not budgeted until later in the year, and our contribution to the GSC of \$9,000. Please thank your groups for their generous contributions and please let your groups and meetings know to send all disbursements, contributions, and correspondence to our new address (California Northern Coastal Area, 1390 N. McDowell Blvd., Suite G-339, Petaluma, CA 94954). The old P.O. box will close on November 30. Because the Finance Committee is reviewing ways to cut costs and simplify our processes, we will begin gradually replacing paper receipts with emailed receipts with a deadline of December 1st. You can make contributions in multiple ways today, by utilizing the QR Codes on the buckets, online at [cnca06.org/contribute/](https://cnca06.org/contribute/), on Square at the Finance table in the back, and even with cash!

**REGISTRAR – DREW B.:** With two new District registrars starting this last month (welcome Jan from District 13 and Patty from District 04), every district has a registrar. GSO has asked me to assist in an initiative to update "unknown" groups in the Area. They are calling it the "Data Integrity" project. I will be working closely with our District Registrars and the Member Services Team at GSO to ensure we are efficient and accurate with updates. At the ACM, I like to talk about some of the creative names for A.A. meetings in our area, so here is a list of some of my favorites: Dolphin Quest, Once a Drunken Whore, Girls Gone Mild, 12 Cubed, Sober Slugs, and Godless Heathens 2.

**RECORDING SECRETARY – SARAH B.:** Thanks to those who have reached out to me with feedback and questions on the minutes and/or motions book, allowing me to learn and grow. The first winner of the assembly word count competition was Meg B., DCMC from Contra Costa District 08. She used her prize to give a Grapevine print subscription to an alcoholic in need through the Carry the Message Project. At this month's ACM we will begin discussing whether we would like to financially support this effort to encourage engagement in the minutes and support Grapevine and La Viña. Regardless of the result of that motion, I intend to continue to support the competition with my own financial contribution. The Summer Assembly minutes in 2022 were 6,646 words, and the agenda had two items of old business that were both acted upon. While 2022 did not include reports back from the workshops, I intend to include them today. Please email me the word count guesses at [recordingsecretary@cnca06.org](mailto:recordingsecretary@cnca06.org). To close, some trivia: The first recorded summer assembly in the motions book was in 1966 at Union Hall in San Francisco, and the first assembly hosted at today's location was the post-conference in 2015.

**ASSEMBLY COORDINATOR – JACKIE B.:** Welcome to Eureka, which is Greek for "I have found it," and expresses the joy of new insights and discoveries. Today I think about the section of our Big Book that reads "Like a gaunt prospector, belt drawn in over the last ounce of food, we saw our pick strike gold!" This is fitting because the California Gold Rush brought colonial settlers to this land in the 1850s, the ancestral home of the Wiyot (WEE-yot), Yurok (YUR-aak), Hupa (hoo-pa), and (Karuk) KAR-uck peoples. Today I hope we have a Eureka moment when our hearts, minds, and spirits call out A-ha! because we have gleaned something precious and new about the program and fellowship that saved our lives. Thank you, District 15 Humboldt-Del Norte for hosting. We are testing some new accessibility strategies today. DCMCs provided advanced notice of members who would benefit from seating accommodations, and we were able to reserve appropriate tables. Some of the aisle chairs are designated as "Priority Seating." These seats can be used by anyone, but we ask that those with limited mobility or a special need be given priority. Today's assembly is at the northernmost border of our area, while the Fall Inventory Assembly will be at the southernmost border, hosted by District 01 Monterey, on November 2nd in Del Rey Oaks.

**LITERATURE/GRAPEVINE/LA VIÑA – MATT E.:** Before I came to AA, I was certain it wasn't going to work for me. One of the things that was critical to me staying long enough for the program to work was the sense of belonging I felt when I read the personal stories of alcoholics that I could relate to. Our literature, and its relatability for me, saved my life, and here in General Service, we get to work to make sure that every alcoholic has the opportunity for that same experience. Two years ago, our Area voted near-unanimously in favor of submitting a proposed agenda item for a new pamphlet: "Experience, Strength, and Hope: AA for the Transgender Alcoholic." However, it never made it onto the Conference agenda. Last month, at the ACM, we held an hour-long open sharing session, where about 35 members re-emphasized the need for this pamphlet, and shared their ideas for possible ways forward to support this remote community of alcoholics who are drinking and dying at disproportionately high rates. A general sense emerged that we can and should pursue as many paths forward as possible, simultaneously. On behalf of that sharing session, I am requesting that we take a sense of the room today, which you'll see in the business meeting agenda.

#### **AREA STANDING & SUB-COMMITTEES**

**ACCESSIBILITIES – ENRIQUE:** In our last committee meeting, we discussed various ways to improve accessibility, inclusivity, and community outreach within AA organizations. Key areas of focus include providing service manuals, ways to reach out to the Hispanic women's community, budget needs, and the need for a Spanish Sign Language (SSL) Big Book. Additionally, we are working on a skit to present at PRAASA 2024, and we will meet virtually on Saturday night August 26 at 7:00 or Sunday, August 27 at 7:00. If you are interested, please contact the Accessibilities Committee. We will hold our meetings on the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

**ARCHIVES – CAROL H.:** There is a beautiful and exciting display on the Archives table. We've highlighted information and a bit of history about Humboldt County. There is a new poster board of the five Hispanic districts displayed. Our monthly workdays are usually on the 2nd Saturday at 193 Mayhew Way, Walnut Creek, from noon to 4:00, but several events have resulted in us having to change the workday to the 3rd Saturday, including this month and September. We have exciting plans for our future workdays, so please consider dropping by. I'm sure you will find exciting information about your district.

**BRIDGING THE GAP – JOHN O.:** I finished and submitted the projected budget for 2024. Much of our expenses for 2023 were used toward getting all new district BTG chairs up and running with orientation binders, videos, and all other services-related literature. I don't see much of this cost to repeat next year. Currently, most chairs have enough literature on hand. However, more facilities are opening and requesting BTG services. We look forward to meeting those in need but cannot predict a cost increase. Planning has begun for the BTG Forum on September 30<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Center; 3245 Bowers Ave in Clearlake. I encourage all District DCMC and your fellowships to support your BTG chair to attend this year's event. The focus and goal of this year's Forum are to listen to the speakers from Treatment, Corrections, and Recovery Facilities to understand the challenges they face, and hopefully, we can then provide and expand on our proven BTG solutions.

**FINANCE – DAVID N.:** The members of our committee include Claudia N., our Treasurer, Russ A., Javier L., and Leslie W. We are in the middle of the process of drafting the proposed area budget for next year. We have worked with our standing and sub-committees to help them prepare their budgets. Our target, as always, is to present the first draft of the budget to the area officers in October. We then present the budget to the area committee meeting for their review in November with possible disapproval, if any, to follow at the December area committee meeting. Another one of our responsibilities is to review area motions with a financial impact and to provide information about that financial impact on the area. We continue to do this at our area committee meetings each month. We don't tell the area what to do, we simply provide information that the area may use as they decide what to do.

**INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION – JOSE L.:** Our committee exists to improve communication within CNCA. We have received 100 new digital radios and earphones, and a few old radios. We have translated approximately 165 documents for Area Officers and Committees, 32 miscellaneous emails, Comments, and Comentarios for February through July. We also helped with the Agenda Topics summaries, the Delegate Report, and PRAASA Steering Committee documents. The Interpretation Coordinator contacted all the needed interpreters and confirmed availability for ACM Monthly Sharing Sessions, Standing Committees, and assemblies for the panel. We have built two portable interpretation cubicles for the sharing session rooms at the ACM.

**PI/CPC – MIGUEL H.:** Our job is to be to the public and cooperate with the professionals that would like to know about AA. At the July 2023 Board meeting report on CPC / Treatment and Facility, they discussed the General Service Conference Committee Considerations. 1) Approval of the pamphlet "A.A. in Your Community" with minor editorial changes. The pamphlet has been forwarded to the Publishing department. 2) Review suggestions to develop a pamphlet for Mental Health Professionals. 3) Update on the progress of interviews with mental health professionals who are members of Twelve Step programs. The next step is to interview mental health professionals who are not members of Twelve Step programs. 4) Effectiveness of CPC exhibits. Publications that were popular with professionals, reflecting inclusivity, were "Hispanic Woman in A.A.," "A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic" and "LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A." The CPC Committee Kit and Workbook: "A Member's-Eye View of A.A." has been removed from the kit per the Conference Committee, as it may appear outdated and less effective for providing information about A.A. to the professional community. Our Area CPC members are hosting a PI/CPC hybrid / bilingual workshop on September 16 from 2:00-5:00 pm in Los Altos.

**PRAASA 2024 – JENNIFER B.:** I'm the new chairperson for PRAASA 2024. Our area is hosting the Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly next year, March 1-3, at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in San Francisco! Members from fifteen different areas in the nine states of the Pacific Region will join us for panel presentations, speaker meetings, and roundtable breakouts for just about every service position in the AA alphabet – from Accessibilities to Young People. We will also have Al-Anon participation. I've been hooked on service ever since I attended my first PRAASA in Oakland in 2009, and I have friends all over that I get to see at least once a year. Our website is live at [www.praasa.org](http://www.praasa.org) – where members can download flyers and sign up to be notified when registration and the hotel room block open in the Fall. Save-the-date flyers and buttons are available. Our attraction and outreach committee will also be handing them out at ICYPAA over Labor Day. We will have volunteers sit at our table for 2-hour shifts on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 10 am – 4 pm. Remember, attraction and outreach for PRAASA 2024 is everyone's job!

**TECHNOLOGY – JACQUELINE P.:** The committee submitted its second-ever budget to the Finance Committee. Our Hybrid Sub-Committee is working diligently on the logistics that allow me to present this report virtually. Thank you to our hard-working hybrid subcommittee members for transporting our equipment to and from Eureka. It was a large job. We polled the Area Officers and Committee Chairs for their technology needs for the rest of the panel. We continue to refine our guidelines, policies, and procedures to present to the Area for its approval. We will have an info table at the Fall Assembly. Thank you to our I&T Committee for helping us create a bilingual presentation.

**WEBSITE – JAMES B.:** The web committee maintains and updates our Area website ([cnca06.org](http://cnca06.org)). Since our last assembly, we have continued to patch and update the website. We had one moment in which a patch left the website broken, but it was resolved in a few minutes. The committee has been going through the media library to reduce, remove, and archive old material. We are working to simplify the initial page and refresh the look slightly. We have a few open positions on our committee. Please contact me or an Area officer if interested. You do not need a background in technology to help. If you see anything that needs updating, have suggestions, requests for changes, or constructive feedback, please let me know.

## **AREA BUSINESS**

### **SENSE OF THE ROOM:**

- Would you like the Delegate to write a letter to the General Service Board (GSB), asking them to revisit the proposed agenda item (PAI) that was submitted last year by our Area regarding the creation of a Transgender pamphlet? - *Presented by Matt E., CNCA 06 Literature/Grapevine/La Vina Chair*

Presentation: Matt E. provided history on this topic. The delegate wrote a letter requesting an agenda topic after approval by the Area. The Trustees' Literature Committee was not accepting any more agenda topics at that time. A second letter was sent in June 2022, with a response stating it would not be put on the agenda because there was not a widely expressed need. Since then, members from our area have expressed concern with this decision. At a highly attended sharing session at the ACM this July, the need continued to be expressed.

Questions: **Q:** Was there any thought to an alternative medium to a pamphlet (e.g., video, or other content)? **A:** Yes. This sense of the room is not suggesting that this is the best path forward, it's just one. It's not an exclusion of other paths forward. // I'd like to make a point of order. A sense of the room is not a group conscience. If the Area wants to send an item to the Conference for consideration, it should have current discussion, vote, and hopefully substantial unanimity, regardless of what actions were taken in prior panels. // Since we follow Chair's Rules rather than traditional Roberts Rules of Order, I rule your point of order as out of order and consider clarifying questions. // What we're asking for is not a group conscience. What I'm requesting is that this group conscience that was fully discussed and expressed by our Area be resubmitted. On the floor of the General Service Conference (GSC), our delegate brought up his concern that this agenda item was not considered and was invited to resubmit the request. // **Q:** Since GSC decided not to act, has there been any attempt to stimulate interest from other areas? **A:** The sharing session was open and hybrid. Some members joined from outside our area and similarly expressed a desire and need. There has been another request from a different area to revise the pamphlet for LGBT alcoholics in A.A. to include stories from gender nonbinary members, for which no action was also taken by the trustees' literature committee. // **Q:** Would the focus of the pamphlet be on long-term A.A. members or newcomers? **A:** That's unknown. // **Q:** Will it be written by transgender alcoholics? **A:** We don't know. For a current pamphlet being revised (A.A. for Native American Alcoholics), a request has been put out for members from that community to form a working group because of the value of hearing from those with that lived experience. // **Q:** Was the original motion brought forward by transgender or cis-gender members of AA? **A:** It was brought by trans members from District 07. Some of the issues they noted having difficulty with were confusion within the fellowship about the nature of hormone replacement therapy, restricted access to gender-focused meetings, confusion from the "small t" tradition that "men sponsor men and women sponsor women," etc. This motion is not suggesting AA take a stance but is requesting literature that shares experiences from members. Several trans members shared that although they appreciate the current LGBT pamphlet, it does not meet their needs. // **Q:** I'm concerned that this is breaking new ground procedurally. Would you consider this as a housekeeping motion or taking it back through the traditional area assembly business process? **A:** I disagree with that interpretation. This motion has already been through the assembly process, it's not new. We've discussed it at great length as an Area. // If we approve this sense of the room, we're not asking the GSC to reconsider, the GSC has not even discussed this idea. It has never been an agenda topic. The hope is that this would become an agenda item, then the questions about what goes in it, who writes it, etc., can be discussed by groups. // **Q:** Something similar happened with our Area's request for a graphic novel but there was not a subsequent sense of the room for reconsideration. Has this procedure been used before? **A:** Not in this Area, but it has been used in other areas. // **Q:** If we didn't move forward on this, would it be on Intergroups or Areas to produce its own pamphlet? **A:** Those were options proposed during the sharing session. Areas can produce their own content to meet the needs of the area. There is precedent for this. For example, an Ohio area has produced non-Conference approved literature. **A sense of the room was taken and there was substantial unanimity in favor of the Delegate submitting a letter to the GSB.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- That the Conference Literature committee consider producing literature combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with the Twelve Concepts for World Service. – *Presented by District 14 Mendocino at the Area Committee Meeting on 10/22/22*

Discussion: **Group consciences:** Substantial unanimity was against creating this piece of literature. There is a feeling we are "watering down" AA. There is agreement that there is a need for more awareness around the 12 concepts, but questions whether this is the best way and if this is the most cost-effective way when there are already materials available. Concern about the cost is even more applicable given that AA is operating at a deficit and contributions are down. Another comment was when a newcomer comes into the rooms, they are just trying to get sober. This is our primary purpose, to help the newcomer, and one alcoholic working with another alcoholic. There is a feeling of moving away from this focus. If you are "all in" in AA, eventually you will find out about the 12 concepts. // Most of my group was in favor and one member was opposed. // This is not accessible for newcomers because it's too confusing/distracting, let's focus on accessible literature. // General service is dying, and you don't even get a copy of the service manual until you become a GSR. This will help inform people how important the Concepts are and how general service can help extend your spiritual program and sobriety. // Our group was split. There were concerns over the cost and suggestions about other ways we could communicate or encourage the concepts. Others agreed we need more information on the concepts and said new literature would be useful. // Substantial unanimity from my group not to produce a 12x12 with the Concepts. The Concepts are already in the Big Book. It's too much information and hard to understand. The minority opinion was that Concepts connect us to AA as a whole and present spiritual guidance for service. // Most of my group was in favor because the twelve spiritual principles of the Concepts can be applied to our lives. // One idea from my group was to have a special edition of the 12X12. This would be a good way to introduce new members to general service. // Our district approves this motion. // Most of my district disagreed with this motion.

// My group was split in half. Half thought it would introduce more people to the Concepts. The other half thought it was unnecessary and a waste of money; we already have the 12X12. They are afraid it would replace the 12X12 book. // My group is in unanimous support. // My group unanimously supports this motion, but one member mentioned it may not be necessary. // My group opposes this motion, it is unnecessary. // My group was not aware that the concepts were in the back of the Big Book, but they were in favor of literature combining 12X12X12. // It would be good for us to make this available. My group is in favor. // My group thinks this is a good intro to working with a sponsor on this. // My group agreed that it would be good to have this book. // My group doesn't think this is necessary. It wouldn't be good to spend our money on this. // My group was against this motion. There is a need for more awareness of the 12 Concepts, but this is not the best or most cost-effective way to do it. // My group is in favor of this motion, but they don't like the name Twelve by Twelve by Twelve. **Personal opinions:** This motion is superfluous and narrow-sighted. 12x12x12 is for the convenience of those who already are in service. How will this help us carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers? Our fellowship is begging for literature to better reflect the current fellowship (evidence is all the literature agenda items every year). Let's focus on accessible literature for the alcoholic who still suffers and use the service material we already have. // I'm against this. It's too cumbersome. // My experience with taking people through the Concepts as a service sponsor has changed. What I do now is take them through the Conference Charter. There's info in the Service Manual that goes along with Concepts. I love the idea of being exposed to the Concepts, but I'm concerned that there will be information missing that you can only find in the service manual. // I let my sponsees know that there are 12 Concepts when I work the steps with them. // I would like to see this book printed. I didn't hear of the Concepts for a long time. Up here in the north is a remote community and few people know about them. Let the Concepts be available for people to learn about them. // It's hard to understand the Concepts without first reading the chapters in The Service Manual. This would be a good way to lead people to The Service Manual. // I've been in favor of this for a long time. Al-Anon has literature with the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts combined with ways to apply them to your personal life. People think that the Concepts only have to do with the General Service Conference, but that's not true. // Members won't know about the Right of Participation without knowing about the Concepts. // It would be good for newcomers to know about the Concepts. // If more people knew about the Concepts, our group business meetings would go better. // I don't think this is necessary because the Service Manual already exists. // Young people groups sometimes use the term Right of Decision without knowing what it means. I think it's important to have information on how people can apply the Concepts to their business. I think it would be good to have literature like this. // I'd like to see this as an agenda item so that groups can discuss it. // This literature is not meant to replace the material we already have. // A new person will not be able to integrate this into their recovery. It's too hard to understand. I don't think we should do this. If we integrate the Twelve Concepts into the 12X12, they'll be distracted. // The Concepts are irrelevant to a lot of people. Literature to make it more relevant and accessible to help people understand how A.A. works spiritually is a good idea. << **Motion to remain Old Business at the Fall Assembly at The Moose Monterey Lodge on November 4, 2023.** >>

## **WORKSHOP TOPIC REPORTS**

- Why Are We Here? (Online session) - *presented by Tanya S., D08. Notetaker: Danica*

Presentation: I'm here because of alcoholism, and I'm a GSR for my group learning a new way of life through service. Service work is about carrying the message of AA in the spirit of the responsibility statement to anyone, anywhere - that there is a solution and a way out. It's more than being available, it's about creating awareness and giving away what was given to me. Two years ago, my niece called me to say she was sober for 30 days through AA. She's still a sober member today and a GSR for a group in her area. She knew where to go because my husband and I are sober through A.A. Discussion: Many of us initially come here out of desperation, but we stay due to a sense of duty to carry the message of recovery. We have been given the gift of sobriety and it is our responsibility to be the best example of AA to the outside world and find new ways of carrying the message to all alcoholics who have yet to find our common solution. The community of A.A. and service is the antidote to alcoholic isolation. I am here because we are here. It's important to ask who isn't here and how to attract and support them (e.g., women, younger people, mothers, transgender alcoholics). We don't know what we don't know. General service gives us the opportunity to be exposed to new ideas, people, problems, and solutions to help us better carry the message. The sense of belonging in general service allows us to continue service work. Service allows us to give what is freely given to us. Service work encourages us to be the best example we can be of AA to those outside the rooms of AA by being our best selves, growing spiritually, and showing others there is a life available free from alcohol, especially for family members that might have a drinking problem. Service work gives us a sense of purpose and is a powerful catalyst of spiritual growth, which is essential in personal recovery, accepting life on life's terms, and continuing to be an attractive example of AA in the outside world.

- Why Are We Here? (In-person session) - *Presented by Judah N., D12. Notetaker: Maureen G.*

Presentation: Bill was trying to save his sobriety when he tracked down Bob in Ohio. Bob referred to the experiment of the conference as saving AA from himself. The aspiration is that AA could and would survive any personal transition out of leadership. Discussion: Some might not even know yet why they are here. Some might be here to fix AA. Some might be here to stay sober for a few years. We show up because we said we would. Maybe it feels good, or we want what someone in General Service has. Many said one way or the other that they were in the room because AA was

there for them. The baseline is to carry the message. We're here to face our fears, grow a spiritual and human connection, learn from, and tolerate others, stay curious, and be helpful. We are here as a manifestation of our higher power's will for us. We are here to have hard conversations and grow in eloquence about difficulties like racism and put our steps and tradition work together to find similarities in and through our fellowship. Some of us get drawn into general service because we read the literature and history; now we participate in seeing what happens next. We're here to self-reflect on our experiences and learn from our mistakes. We may all be able to agree that we are lucky to be anywhere and if we keep practicing these ideals maybe AA will continue to be safe from us too.

- How Do We Keep Each Other Safe? (Hybrid session) – *Presented by Marisol B., D18. Notetaker: Alma*

Discussion: We shared a lot of experiences and solutions regarding safety in AA. Marisol gave info on what safety is in A.A. It's a very important topic. She had a difficult situation with a companion and had to search for information. When people asked for my number in A.A., I thought they wanted to sleep with me. It was important for me to work with women. Thirteen-stepping makes A.A. unsafe. It's difficult to work with people with double stigma. We all need to feel safe, so we can recover. Some people come into AA with aggressiveness and it's hard for them to follow the steps. Once we had to call the police, and I had to change groups because the group didn't accept that. Anonymity is a form of safety. We must use the law sometimes if needed, for example, if a restraining order is needed. Someone in my group talked about women in an inappropriate way and I didn't know how to get support with that. My home group talked about not taking medication, but I had to take it, so I had to change groups. My group discussed how to make people of color more comfortable. I've talked to predators in AA and told them it's not appropriate. We have freedom of expression but we're not above the law.

- How Do We Ask for Help? (In-person session) – *Presented by Rosa S., D12. Notetaker: Elba*

Presentation: When I asked for a sponsor, it gave me confidence in other people. Knowing people want to help me helped me ask for help. It helped to know I wasn't the only crazy person there. My sponsor shared her life with me, and I shared my life with my sponsor. She didn't judge me.

Discussion: We thought asking for help means we were weak. We are accustomed to being arrogant and thinking we were in control of our lives but then our lives fell apart from alcoholism. Some of us did not come here asking for help because we were forced by the courts. But many of those people realized they had to ask for help after they lost their sobriety. If we don't ask for help, we may die.

- How Do We Ask for Help? (Online session) – *Presented by Elaine W., D04.*

Discussion: Asking for help was shameful in childhood. With a feeling of inadequacy, we were afraid to ask for help. As newcomers, we had no idea how to get started. Because our common welfare comes first, having a safe environment is important to be able to ask for help. The help that we need can be found through recovery and service sponsorship. On an individual and on a group level, we can use the traditions and concepts. My journey in general service went from "have to," to "want to," to "get to." The spirit of rotation is important to prevent unqualified authority. To keep what we have, we need to give it away, so offering help is mutually beneficial to everyone in A.A.

- How Do We Invite People In? (Hybrid session) – *Presented by Jay M., D10. Notetaker: Margarete*

Presentation: Attraction rather than promotion is important, and the way we do that is through love and the steps. We're attractive by being ourselves and having a meeting that is opening and inviting. Having greeters is a great way to do that. The old sayings influenced me and helped me. We have the power to affect others.

Discussion: This is a matter of life and death. I greeted a newcomer at my first meeting and by the next meeting I greeted him by name. I connected heart to heart, and I hope I never forget that. It's so important to carry the message and participate. We invite people in by working with others. But if they don't want it, don't waste your time, and move on. We have lots of tools to invite people in. People come up after the meeting to talk. Here in A.A. we understand each other. PI/CPC is about inviting people in by letting professionals know what A.A. is and isn't. We were appreciated at a psychiatric conference. Free coffee! No dues or fees! The answer is love. It's important to walk the walk and talk the talk. We can sponsor people online; it works just as well as seeing people in person. I need to be a good example in all my affairs. We all know each other by heart. We share with people hope and love. We always have an extra chair open for the person that hasn't made it yet.

## **WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?**

My pronouns are just as important, if not more important, as my name because they identify me as a person. I came out as trans in Vacaville at the Pre-Conference Assembly when I shared my opinion at the microphone about the request for a pamphlet for the transgender alcoholic. I had not told anyone before that. Until that moment, I was too scared to admit it even to myself. That day I felt the safety and comfort that AA normally creates which allowed me to share this information. Today, I don't think that A.A. is a safe place for the trans alcoholic. I don't believe that A.A. is ready for trans and nonbinary (NB) alcoholics. Over the years, things have eroded the trust for trans and NB alcoholics in A.A. spaces, including myself (e.g., people scoffing at pronouns, snickering, treating others as if they are non-existent, being called names, being made fun of, a recording secretary refusing to change pronouns in minutes, being kicked out of women's Zoom meeting with no explanation, being called "unnatural," being told that this is an outside

issue, and silence from other that witness it.) Love and tolerance can be practiced in these situations, but it still hurts and compounds over time. I wanted to hide and stop showing up. If it's a reason for me to drink, it's not an outside issue. We all deserve to learn and feel comfort in our own skin. I was attacked at a meeting and witnessed a complete failure of the steps, traditions, and concepts, and no one spoke to the contrary. Silence is a group's conscience and communicates a dangerous message to the person that's the recipient of attacks. It told me "You're not welcome here" and "You don't matter." After that meeting, I called my sponsor at 2:30 in the morning because I was determined to change how I felt. My safe place to obtain and maintain sobriety was taken from me. I didn't attend meetings for months. If this happened to a newcomer, they'd leave and never return. The newcomer needs to know this behavior is not accepted in A.A. The tenth step says, "promptly admitted we were wrong," and that comes before any traditions or concepts were written. Thankfully my goddesses kept me sober, provided an incredible sponsor, and gave me the strength, love, and support to come today from Santa Cruz and tell you the state of A.A. to the trans alcoholic from my own experience. // Welcome to the outsiders. This meeting is being held on the traditional land of the Wiyot (WEE-yot) people, and I wanted to pay my respect to my elders past and present. // The International Conference on Young People in A.A. is on my mind. ICY ICY ICY! PAA PAA PAA! It's on Labor Day weekend September 1-4<sup>th</sup>. Pre-reg now is \$40; \$45 at the door. There is one week left to book a room at the host hotel for a discounted price. Thanks to member contributions, the host committee has given away 75 scholarships, and funds are depleted. You can contribute to support a scholarship. They will also need volunteers at the event. Check out [icypaa.org](http://icypaa.org). // Shout out to our new interpreter, Jorge. This was his first time at an assembly and hope to see him at future assemblies. // We have a PI/CPC workshop on September 16, 2 – 5 pm in Los Altos. It will be hybrid and bilingual. Contact me (Alternate Delegate, Miguel) if you have questions. // We have 21 trustees in our GSB, including seven non-alcoholics. One of them, Dr. Al Mooney, was recently in a car accident and was in the hospital. He and his wife are out of the hospital now and moved in with their daughter and son-in-law in North Carolina. They have a long recovery ahead of them, but Al is in good spirits and is making amazing progress. He's even fulfilling his commitment from his sickbed remotely. // Welcome to those attending for the first time. I hope it has touched your heart and opened your mind. I'm the area technology committee chair. As a standing area committee chair, I have a voice but not a vote. Technology is and continues to play a major part in how we do business. Our ACM is discussing a motion to reimburse required on-site hybrid trusted servants for travel costs, and I don't have a vote. Of the 93 areas in the US and Canada, 73 have given a vote to their area committee chairs. Let's continue loving discussion about giving area committee chairs a vote at ACMs and assemblies. // I started in person today, but I got exhausted and had to come home at midday. That is my life today. I was impressed and delighted with Barbara M. speaking to us online. She was a DCMC when I first entered A.A., and she helped me understand that I wasn't special. Today, being online is a major part of our lives. I was upset to hear that PRAASA is going to be including Al-Anon, which are friends of alcoholics, not alcoholics. // I found the safety session very informative. I've experienced awful comments when sharing that I was queer and experienced silence from the group in response. A pamphlet needs to be created. I'd love to talk with folks that want to discuss new solutions for safety. Our traditions are important, but sometimes we're told to have our hands tied to protect the group, but we also must protect the individual. // Contributions at the assembly today were \$1227 in person and \$125 online. The Area is very grateful. Thank you for your contributions. // Thank you to the members of the assembly planning committee from District 15 Humboldt-Del Norte and other trusted servants. Thank you to the hybrid subcommittee for the very long day. We had alternates help for the hybrid committee for those that couldn't make it. I also commend districts that are operating hybrid. I'm interested to see what's next down the road. // This was our 7<sup>th</sup> in-person assembly since the pandemic. I'm impressed with how we've grown to have an infrastructure for hybrid events, but the proof is in the pudding with attendance. The last time we were in this district was in Fortuna in 2018. 270 were registered then. Today, combining in-person and online, we had 322 registered (235 in-person; 87 online). I think this is really working and I'm proud of us as an Area. // Thank you for asking me to speak at the workshop and for those that attended. Thank you to those that did our food. When I heard someone talking about deaf Spanish-speaking alcoholics and their challenges, I started texting people in Mexico asking if anyone in their meeting needed sign language interpretation in Spanish. One said no, another said yes, and they are working on it. They're going to have a virtual forum and will share that information with me. // Thank you to everyone that made this event possible. I learned a lot and heard things that touched my heart and made me reflect. I'm taking away a lot of love and gratitude. // I'm grateful we're doing this hybrid. If we were in person only, I'd have to resign my position. Sometimes people make insensitive comments to people attending hybrid meetings online (e.g., "Get out of your pajamas and go to a meeting in person"). I can't attend in person because of my health. I hope that PRAASA will consider being a hybrid. I heard a nonbinary person share about how much it meant to them that we changed "men and women" to "people" in the preamble. In Bill W.'s 1960 GSC talk, he said, "Not that any great changes are in prospect, but I think that we ought to stay open-minded on this matter of change. We reference the past and its lessons for so long as those teachings work. When they don't, we readapt and we re-shift. That has been our history." We need to move forward and include everybody. // I told my sponsors what was on my mind, and they told me if I'm going to speak, don't come from a place of ego or resentment. I hope I'm coming from a place of love. To the first person that shared first during WOYM, I see you and I hear you. I think Eric shared that the latest membership survey came back whiter, older, with longer sobriety, and predominantly male, and that isn't broken down into cisgender or transgender. A lot of people are missing from the rooms that need to be here. I've been trying to get us to do ASL and there isn't much enthusiasm. We have deaf siblings who are dying out there because we're not reaching out. We need to use our own spiritual energy, area energy, and district energy in answering

how to receive people that come here. // Thank you to District 15 and the Area to help us fulfill our primary purpose.

*The meeting was closed at 5:12 by Chitra S. with the Responsibility Declaration.*

In love and service,

Sarah B.  
CNCA Recording Secretary, Panel 73