

Area 42 Newsletter

May 2007

Confidential Alcoholic Anonymous Document

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DATES TO REMEMBER:

Area 42 Fall Assembly

Friday, September 7
at 6:00 p.m. – Sunday, September 9 at noon.

Friday night: workshops
Saturday: Area Inventory and more – Saturday night: banquet, speaker meeting
and dance – Sunday: Area Business (including discussion of proposals) and the Ask-it-Basket.

See you there!

PRAASA 2008

March 7,8,& 9,2008

Egan Convention Center
Anchorage, Alaska

Pacific Regional Forum

August 29-31 2008
City Center
Spokane
Doubletree Hotel
Spokane , WA

At the Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly held in Portland, OR this past March 2, 3 & 4th our Area 42 Delegate and Chairperson were both asked to participate as presenters #3 and #4 on Panel Two:

"Our 12th Step Responsibility - Are We Going to Any Length?"

Mike D was presenter #3 with the topic: "Helping Wet Drunks - Are there Do's and Don'ts?" Sophie K was given the topic: "Is Growth of the Fellowship Affecting our Groups, Districts and Areas?"

Below are their respective presentations.

Mike D. Presentation at PRASSA

I am a slowly recovering alcoholic from Tonopah, NV. I currently serve as the Area 42, Panel 57 Delegate. My topic is "Working With The Wet Drunk."

When I first accepted this "topic", I really struggled with it. Then I remembered an old story.

This guy was walking down a country road, when he came upon a man with a mule. The mule was harnessed to a wagon, but it was sitting on its haunches and wouldn't move. The man was hitting the mule, kicking it, and cursing it with loud yells and uncouth words.

The man coming down the road went up to the mule's owner and said, "You can't get a mule to do anything that way. They are too stubborn."

The mule's owner asked, "So, do you know how to get a mule to do what you want?"

The man answered, "Yes! But first you have to treat them with tender, loving, care!"

The mule's owner said, "Okay, wise guy. Let's see what you can do."

So the man walked over to the side of the road, found a broken branch about 30" long and 2" in diameter, and walked back to the mule. He stood in front of the mule and waited until the mule looked at him. As soon as it did, he raised the piece of wood and hit the mule, as hard as he could, right between the eyes.

The owner of the mule yelled and said, "Hey! I thought you were going to treat him with tender, loving care?"

"I am," said the man, "but first I have to get his attention."

To me, that mule sounds like a "wet drunk."

And, as I look around this room, I see it is mostly filled with "mule trainers," so I am not going to tell you any-

thing you don't already know.

First of all, let's define a "12th step" call.

The "Big Book" tells me that "having had a spiritual awakening, as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, . ." To me, this means "share", not "shove it down their throat."

I have to tell you what the first "spiritual experience" was for me. It was actually recognizing and accepting the 'alcohol' had something to do with the problem.

My second "spiritual awakening" was that I didn't have to buy into the "god of my fathers."

The Big Book tells us that Bill began to get the message when Ebby told him, "Why don't you choose your own conception of God?" (I have always been 'impressed' that Bill's "12th step conversion" is on the 12th page of his story.)

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Editor's note:

The reports that could not be presented at the Pre-conference Assembly held in Tonopah, NV on March 23-25, 2007 will be published in the June 23, 2007 newsletter. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

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So, what is the message? That I (we) have had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps!

Now, what is a twelfth step call?

In my first two weeks of sobriety, I discovered the "secret" of Bill's discovery. That secret is "When I am sharing my experience, strength and hope with another person, I am not focusing on wanting a drink."

On my 4th day of "so-dry-ety" – that is, without a drink, I saw a friend from grade school and high school at his first meeting. In my infinite wisdom, I decided I was going to get him sober. For the next ten days, I was on him like white on rice. He could hardly get a free moment to himself. At the end of the ten days, he never wanted to see me again. But, also by the end of the ten days, I became absolutely convinced that A.A. was for me.

So, Bill's discovery worked for me. He found out that, when the urge was overpowering, if he talked to someone about his experiences with the problem, the urge lost its power.

To me, that is "the great mystery" of Alcoholics Anonymous. We keep it by trying to give it away. . . and, in the process of giving it away, we find it.

Many newcomers never discover that. Also, when I get into the "gimme" mode, I begin to lose it.

So, let's get to the question; what are the do's and don'ts of working with a wet drunk?

#1 – Don't try to tell him or her anything about him or her self. Remember the old adage, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." You can almost always tell a drunk; but you can't tell 'em anything.

I was in and out of counseling for 18 years before I got to A.A. There was always some authority figure sitting/standing up there (many of them friends of mine), talking down to me, telling me how to think, how to act, and how to feel. As soon as the **shoulds** started, my vision ceased to function, my hearing failed, and I wasn't there any more. Usually, I came out of it feel-

ing belligerent.

#2 – Don't talk down to them; i.e. #1. **SHARE *your*** what happened, and what it is like now.

#3 – From "The Dr's. Opinion", tell them about your physical addiction and metal obsession.

#4 – Ask him or her if he/she would care to go to a meeting.

#5 – Tell them what you are doing now to maintain your "equilibrium."

#6 – If the "pigeon" is intoxicated, don't go alone.

#7 – If the "pigeon" is belligerent, leave.

#8 – Tell them about AA and ask them to come to a meeting.

#9 – I have been told, and some of my experience is, "try to catch them in the 'wah, wahs'", when they are whining and questioning.

#10) – If they are posing a threat to members of their family or members of society, get law enforcement backup. We had to do that at a meeting – once. There were members present ranging from months to over 30 years. The long termers were the ones who called law enforcement.

#11) Back in the late 70's, when I was living in Portland, Central Office sent me out on a 12th step call. It didn't take me too long to realize that the "pigeon" just wanted someone to provide him with transportation to the various places he wanted to go. When I made it clear that I wasn't going to do that, and told him I would be glad to take him to a meeting, he pulled his bottle out from behind the divan and began to drink.

Before I left, I told him that, if he ever thought he might want to try a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, we would appreciate him giving us a call.

#12) Set up an intervention. Those often work in getting people into treatment centers but, If the "pigeons" are anything like me, they will probably come out with a resentment.

#13) Offer to take them to a meeting.

#14) Some members say the best time is when they have "hit bottom." The biggest problem with that is,

by that time, many of them are dead.

#15) I remember Richard, in Portland, back in the early 80's. He used to come into our meetings drunk, late, wearing chains and spikes, and behaving in a very threatening manner. He did that at a meeting which was being chaired by my wife — a red-haired, green-eyed, Taurus, full-blooded Irish alcoholic who had a number of years experience in drug and alcoholism treatment. She told him, "Richard, quit disturbing everyone, come up to the front, sit down and be quiet." He did exactly as he was told. He was recognized, accepted, and given some instruction. I don't remember him being disruptive after that.

#16) Take them to a meeting. You may have noticed that "going to a meeting" came up a number of times. There is probably a reason for that.

There are a lot more answers and suggestions out there, among you, and many of you have oodles of experience, so I won't harangue you any more with my feeble attempts to enlighten you.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to serve.

Deadline: June 1, 2007

All submissions for the next Area 42 Newsletter, whether for proposals to amend the Area Guidelines or service-related articles for consideration, must be received by

June 1, 2007.

Email all items to

area42newsletter@gmail.com

Confidential Alcoholics Anonymous Document

Sophie K Presentation at PRASSA

Good Afternoon. My name is Sophie K. I am alcoholic. It is my honor and privilege to serve as Chairperson for Area 42, which covers Nevada and the eastern slope of the Sierra from the Oregon border to just north of Mount Whitney.

In the context of our 12th step responsibility, I have been asked to address the question **“Is Growth of the Fellowship Affecting our Groups, Districts and Areas?”**

“Growth of the fellowship”. I’ve been hearing for some time that our growth in North America is flat, that our 7th

Tradition contributions to GSO continue to decline and that Grapevine subscriptions are waning. Does this mean we’re not “growing”? What does “growth” mean?

Are there newcomers coming into my home group? Yes.

Do we have more meetings per week than a year ago? Yes.

Than 5 years ago? Definitely.

What about my district? Is my district too large for our DCM to handle?

Not yet, but the number of registered groups has doubled in the time since I was DCM. (Doubled from three to six, that is.)

Area-wide, are new districts being formed? No.

I called GSO for some numbers. Staff member Eva Sanchez laughed, “Numbers? Solid numbers....about alcoholics?” Having served as registrar in the last rotation, I got it: any numbers that GSO has about us are only as good as what the groups provide – and “number of group members” was the LAST blank anybody updated on their group information change form.

Is our growth to be measured only in numbers? No. If it were, we’d be a missionary society or a business. This is a program of attraction – not promotion.

Numbers don’t tell the whole story; nevertheless, the number of Spanish-speaking groups in North America IS currently growing. The number of subscriptions to La Vina IS steadily increasing. The members at the group level ARE carrying the message. Does this growth affect the work of AA at the district and area level?

I’ll share what “growth” looks like in Area 42. In June, 1986, in Las Vegas, Area 42’s first Spanish language group registered with GSO. Four months later a group in Reno became the second.

In those years did the GSRs of the

Spanish-speaking groups bring their group consciences to the area assembly? And did they return to their groups with the news of the Conference and the General Service Office? I don’t know.

In 1995, District 21, the linguistic district in southern Nevada, formed.

In 1999, District 22, the linguistic district in northern Nevada, came into being. Was it merely our growth in numbers that brought about the formation of the linguistic districts?

Not long after District 22 was formed, the assembly acquired enough interpretation equipment to serve all Spanish-speaking members who attended the assemblies. Over the years the Spanish language districts and the area have had occasional successes in coordinating interpretation at assemblies. That is to say that every now and then we have all been able to listen to and learn from one another.

Yet today, 20 years after the first Spanish-speaking group in Area 42 registered with GSO, our area guidelines address neither “translation” nor “interpretation” - except in regard to American Sign Language. In the eight years that I’ve attended area assemblies we have not yet had language

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interpreters present on a consistent basis. Neither have we had our area documents – our guidelines, newsletters, agendas, etc. - consistently available in Spanish.

Our situation might suggest that when membership grows at the group level, it ultimately affects the area. When the groups and districts are practicing the 11th and 12th steps, should the area do the same? Are we willing to go to any length?

Maybe it's time for an area inventory. We might ask ourselves, for example:

- DOES our common welfare come first?
- Can our Area's group conscience BE informed if our members do not understand one another?
- Can we say that we practice/observe the Traditions and Concepts if none of our members can fully participate?
- In conducting the business of our Area IS the ONLY requirement for membership a desire to stop drinking?

District 21 presents:
5th Hispanic Forum
May 20th, 2007

Walnut Community Center
3075 Walnut Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89115

Toward the end of his discussion of Concept 4 (the "right of participation") Bill wrote:

"There is another good reason for 'participation,' and this one has to do with our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. We want an A.A. relation of brotherly partnership. It is our shining ideal that the 'spiritual corporation' of A.A. should never include any members who are regarded as "second class." Deep down, I think this is what we have been struggling to achieve in our world service structure. Here is perhaps the principal reason why we should continue to ensure 'participation' at every important level. Just as there are no second-class A.A.'s, neither should there be any second-class world service workers, either."

Is growth of the fellowship affecting groups, districts and areas? You bet. In a few weeks, the Area 42 committee will have the opportunity to set our direction for this new rotation, to choose the issues that we'd like to address as an Area. Will we decide to look at the challenges of communication and participation? I don't know.

But I DO know that when I practice the 11th Step, my fear decreases and my sense of purpose increases. And I'm told that if I keep the Second Tradition, trusting in the Ultimate Authority as it

expresses itself in our group conscience, I will grow spiritually. And so will A.A.

I will close by reading from As Bill Sees It, page 115, titled "Essence of Growth."

"Let us never fear needed change. Certainly we have to discriminate between changes for worse and changes for better. But once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, in a group, or in A.A. as a whole, it has long since been found out that we cannot stand still and look the other way. The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails."

Thank you.

District ONE
Traditions Workshop
Sunday May 20th 3-5 pm

St. Rose Sienna Hospital
Eastern & St. Rose Pkwy
Las Vegas, NV

Traditions 1 through 3
Joanne B. (Green Valley Club)
Traditions 4 through 6
Tom J (Boulder City)
Traditions 7 through 9
Cathi M (St. Rose Sienna Sun.)
Traditions 10 through 12
Tony M (Henderson Comm. Church)

Room Directions: Enter
St. Rose Sienna main entrance.
Veer left, past the chapel and look for
the AA sign.

First Impressions

The following is an interview with a GSR who attended her first Area Assembly last month. She has two years of sobriety. She has asked to remain anonymous.

When did you first get into General Service? By that I mean service beyond the group level.

For a couple of years now I've been going with the AA women taking a meeting into the county women's jail.

What has that done for your sobriety?

Well I can't for certain that X, Y, or Z is a direct result of going to the jail. But I will say that I never want to go, and then I go, and I come home grateful that I went. I have to say that I was astounded the first time I went that the women had to wear those outfits. It was so 1940! It was ridiculous. Striped pajamas? Give me a break!

I'm really glad that we get to go there so the women can see people from outside who are actually living and have a life without drugs and alcohol. And I can say, "Yeah, I've been where you're at."

Have you ever been a GSR before?

No.

Was that something that you did voluntarily or did you go to the restroom and come back to find out that you were elected GSR?

No, they had been talking about this to me for a while. And I was giving up being treasurer, so I said I'd do it.

Did you have any idea what you were getting into?

Kind of vaguely. I had seen the last guy go through being GSR of our meeting.

And did he prepare you at all?

Well, he had me fill out the form. (Laughter)

Have you participated in a GSR Survival Training?

Yes, I went to a training in Reno. That was good.

Did you have any thoughts about Tonopah before you came? Expectations?

I didn't really have a preconceived idea. I just figured it would be a lot of alcoholics and kind of business-type stuff. I guess it was what I expected.

What was your impression of the weekend?

For one thing, I was glad that our district was hosting it. It gave me something to do and not just sit around going, "What am I doing here?" So that was good. I was glad we were doing that. The Assembly seemed to run really smoothly, and I was really grateful it wasn't a free-for-all. People expressed their opinions or whatever and it was all ok.

Was there anything you found particularly confusing or helpful or shocking or a waste of time or...

Not really. It was really interesting to learn more about the conference agenda items. Unfortunately I wasn't able to make it to the NAGSC meeting to learn about the first five of the items, so in Tonopah I got info on five rather than ten. It would have been nice to be able to get more information on all of them.

So you took back to your group the information you did get and...

Right, but we haven't had our business meeting yet. It's this coming Monday.

How are you preparing what you're going to say?

I got some notes from another GSR in my district. I'll put our notes together and give a report of what happened.

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I thought [the Grapevine] "gray pages" issue was really interesting. So many people were opposed to it, and then when the doctor, who is a member of the program, spoke it was neat that people listened and maybe reconsidered their positions. I don't feel really strongly one way or the other. I trust that if articles are going into the gray pages, they will go past editors who are AA members. And they're not going to allow some "miracle cure" or any other off-the-wall thing to be included in the magazine. It will be done in good taste. All of the other literature is well done. And I think it's good for newcomers to hear something from a professional person's point of view. "You have a hopeless disease. You will not recover. This is the only thing that has worked."

Is there anything that the Area or your district can do to help you to better serve your group?

I'm kind of used to service where they vote you in and then you're pretty much on your own. Sink or swim. But the DCM has been really helpful. He follows up on things and answers questions. He emailed me the agenda items and different things. That's been nice. And one thing I really enjoyed about going to the Assembly was that I got to meet more people from my district. We're pretty spread-out geographically. I had seen them, but I got a chance to spend time with them. It was cool.

Last question: was there anything you wish you knew before you went to your first Assembly?

YES! I wish that I had known about the schedule – especially on Friday night. I should have gone to dinner before the Assembly opened. And the whole weekend I was just a little "off" with meals. I wish I had planned better around that. The other thing was that the regular AA meetings were in the morning, early. I'm not a morning person, but I do hit a meeting every day. A noon meeting would have been helpful.

Thanks very much for your time today and for your service.

You're welcome, and thank you!

Area 42 To Take Its Inventory

"My name is Area 42 General Service Assembly, and I am alcoholic. My sobriety date is January 1, 1955 – I think. I know it is 1955. And as far back as I can remember –when gas was 24 cents a gallon – I don't ever recall having done an inventory."

What odds for continued and happy sobriety would you give an alcoholic that hadn't done an inventory in over 25 years? Or maybe never did an inventory – ever? Odds? Call it grace!

For the same reasons that an individual practices the 12 Steps, a group, district, standing committee, or area observes the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. At all levels of service, a regular inventory is a most useful tool. It's an opportunity to examine ourselves as service entities in the light of the Traditions and Concepts. What do we do well? Where can we do better? Are there places where we are missing the boat entirely?

The Area 42 Committee met on Friday evening at the Pre-Conference Assembly in Tonopah. (See the Area Guidelines for members of the Area Committee.) This body considered the fact that Area 42 hadn't taken its inventory in years beyond memory. A motion was made and seconded requesting that the Chair to create an ad hoc committee to develop questions and a format for an area inventory. The motion was discussed and passed by an overwhelming majority.

The Chair sent invitations to participate on the ad hoc committee to eleven members of the Area Committee. Five trusted servants made themselves available for the project: two area officers, two standing committee chairs and one DCM. The ad hoc committee has been formed and is at work. Thank you to Jason C., Marion S.T., Leslie N., Paul E. and Aaron O. More will be revealed!

The Nevada Area Assembly: what it used to be like

Prior to 1972 the Nevada Area of Alcoholics Anonymous held area assemblies only on even-numbered years. The site of these assemblies, which were convened for the purpose of electing an area delegate to the General Service Conference in New York, alternated between Las Vegas and Reno.

A past delegate recalls that when time for the assembly arrived, ten or twelve members from one end of the state would travel nearly 500 miles to the designated assembly site. "In those days members paid their own way, and no more than a dozen people could afford to make the trip. With only 15 or so local members joining the visitors, the assembly size did not exceed 25 – 30 people," he added.

Pacific Region records show that the first delegate Nevada sent to New York was Larry N. of Reno who served on Panel 05, 1955-56.

The 1968 assembly was held at the Mapes Hotel in Reno and in 1970 at the Fremont Hotel in Las Vegas. In a compromise, the 1972 assembly was staged in Tonopah. That year the Tonopah location was recognized as being mutually acceptable to both northern and southern Nevada groups. A decision was made to hold, on a trial basis, an annual assembly at that location in 1973. Annual assemblies have since been held in Tonopah in early September.

As the Nevada area grew and sought more involvement in the General Service Conference process, a decision was made to hold a second yearly meeting. In 1992 a March meeting in Tonopah was held, on a trial basis, for the purpose of discussing the agenda items for the forthcoming General Service Conference. The March weekend evolved into a two-day event with agenda items being discussed on Saturday and a meeting of the Area Committee held on Sunday.

Now as then, in both the September and March assemblies the General Service Representatives (GSRs) are a most important part of the process. They provide the critical link between the individual members in groups and the rest of the General Service Structure.

Submitted by Ruth J.

You can find the minutes for Area 42 March Assembly @
www.nevadaarea42.org

Area 42 Current 7th Tradition Contribution Addresses:

General Services Office (GSO)
PO Box 459
New York, NY 10163
(Make Checks to General Fund)

Area 42 (All Nevada)
PO Box 70171
Las Vegas, NV. 89170-0171
(Checks to Area 42 Treasury)

Northern Area General Service Committee (NAGSC)
c/o Annie W.
P. O. Box 1101
Hawthorne, NV. 89415
(Checks to Northern Area 42 Treasury)

Southern Area General Service Committee (SAGSC)

Southern Area Treasurer
PO Box 71804-1804
Las Vegas, NV. 89170-1804
(Checks to GSR Fund of S. Nevada)

Las Vegas Intergroup
Las Vegas Central Office
1431 E. Charleston Blvd. Suite 15
Las Vegas, NV. 89104
(Checks to Las Vegas Intergroup)

Northern Area Intergroup
436 South Rock Blvd.
Sparks, NV 89431
(Make Checks to N. Nevada Intergroup)