

Chair Report April 2016 Area Assembly Meeting

Post Conference Area Assembly Items for review

The agenda for our upcoming Post Conference Area Assembly on June 4th at Torrey Pines Christian Church is shaping up to be jam-packed with information and motions that will require GSRS to provide feedback.

In the morning, we will be discussing Area business.

We will be hearing group feedback and voting for the final time on the Structure and Guideline motions:

- **Maintenance of Tax Filing records**
- **Annual Tax Filing Responsibility**
- **Inclusion and Contributions**

All these motions are available on the Area website in the Policy committee section.

We will also be discussing a Structure and Guidelines motion to establish a prudent reserve that could be taken to the groups for discussion, as well as an unbudgeted expense motion to cover the ASL translation expenses for the remainder of the year.

In the afternoon, we will hear Jane's experience and feedback regarding the General Service Conference and the agenda items we are discussing here today. We will also have roundtables regarding a number of items including the feasibility study, safety, and the General Service Conference inventory.

It will be a fast-paced, highly interactive day that I hope all GSRS, or their Alternates are able to attend and share your group's feedback regarding the motions.

PRAASA

I would like to give my thanks to the fact that the Area designated funds to send the Chair or alternate to PRAASA. What Colin and I decided that each of us can use \$ 375.00. This took care of my plane ticket and registration fee.

PRAASA was an experience I will never forget. After attending PRAASA several times, including here in San Diego on the treasury committee, it was a completely different experience as Area Chair. I have never felt closer to the middle of AA. Thank you.

PRAASA themes

There were several themes that I wanted to share with the Area that came up consistently in my conversations, round tables, and the general sharing sessions. I'd like the Area to provide me with feedback regarding which of these we would like to further discuss and potentially take action around.

Translation: The translation of General Service Conference items into Spanish was a theme I heard reiterated throughout PRAASA; from side conversations with Delegates, to the microphone at the General Assembly to the Chair roundtables. This is obviously an ongoing issue that affects all Areas in

the Pacific Region and I hope action is taken at the next General Service Conference to address the gap in knowledge being made available to our Spanish-speakers. I was able to hear solutions from a variety of Areas but I think what we'll see happen next year is each Area takes on a certain # of background items to translate and disseminate out to the remainder of the Areas. This sharing of the workload is key to being able to turn around the volume (800+ pages in any semblance of a reasonable timeline.)

My most spiritual moment of the conference came Saturday night when I was invited (told) by our Spanish-speaking members to attend an off-the-books sharing session of Spanish-speakers when translation was not available for all round tables. I found myself in tears as the first-time PRAASA participants shared their experiences. It was obvious that these members had learned more in 2 days than we could teach them in years of General Service. They also raised questions regarding translation and interpretation that many of us have taken for granted and learned to just "accept."

*PRAASA CDs are available in both Spanish and English. Our budget line item only covers the \$81.00 for English CDs but I also purchased Spanish for \$81.00 and will eat the cost if I need to. I see these tapes as a vital resource for our Area that should be made available to all members.

Inclusion: There seemed to be two competing mindsets in regards to inclusion during the General Sharing Sessions. There were those trying to use "and-a" as a dirty word and blaming this for the dilution of the Alcoholics Anonymous message. The other perspective presented is that everyone can be an "and-a" from a retired person to a single mom to someone with drugs in their story to someone with mental illness in their story. That these definitions of "and-a" should not be prevented from participating in Alcoholics Anonymous due to perceived differences from the typical older Christian white male that our survey tells us represents the bulk of AA. I believe this second group of perspectives falls in line with the theme of Inclusion that I called out at our January Assembly and Area Committee Meeting.

Feasibility Study: I started to hear about a feasibility study that had been conducted by the General Service Board during the general sharing sessions and Jane has now made this study available to all in English and Spanish. There are key strategic questions being asked about the future of AA.

Prudent Reserve: During the Chair roundtables, I took the opportunity to find out how each Area in the Pacific Region handles their Prudent Reserve; how is it set, how is it used, and how is it funded. There was only one Area that stated that they do not have a prudent reserve, instead they have a threshold. This is a number at which they no longer fund activities beyond the Delegate expenses and capital costs. All other Areas had a prudent reserve in place. Some have never utilized these funds. Some utilize these funds every year and then refill the Prudent Reserve within that same year.

Security: There were many differing stories we heard during the general sharing session and round tables in regards to the subject of security. One great perspective I heard is that much of the talk about security really involves personal privacy and our ability to be good citizens in the world. The true application of practicing these principles in all our affairs. Think about at your workplace or your children's school being comfortable with advances to women or treatment of transsexuals. How does your approach to these scenarios differ at an AA meeting and why? Is anonymity preventing AA members from being good citizens and enabling bad behavior?