

My name is Colin and I'm an alcoholic and honored to serve as your Area 8 Chair.

Happy New Year to everyone. Welcome to our Orientation Assembly.

Our Officers and Committee presenters today will give you a brief statement about their general service responsibilities for the area so that those of you who are here for the first time may go away with a better idea about the variety of offices, duties, committees and roles among Area 9 trusted servants, both those elected by this Assembly or elected, appointed or otherwise persuaded by their respective groups. In my case, as Chairperson I am responsible for the smooth running of area assemblies, consulting with the Area committee before setting the date and time, making sure that all groups are notified, consulting with officers and committee members on the program, and chairing the assembly meetings and Area Committee meetings. I try to keep our delegate informed about what is going on in the area, and work with her to make sure that our Area committee members are aware of what goes on in world services.

I want to take a minute to introduce our Area Officers and Alternates. Up here on the stage we have:

Jane G. - our delegate

Roxane R. - our Alternate delegate

Monty C. - our alternate Chair

Renee R. - our Registrar

Gerry S. – alternate Registrar

Linda R. - our Secretary

Tanya T. - our alternate secretary

At at the table our Treasurer and Alternate

Paul K. and

Efrain A.

If an opportunity arises today please introduce yourselves and get to know us. We don't bite.

Today our agenda is filled with lots of information for those of you who recently joined us as newly elected GSRs, Committee and District Chairs, and officers. As you may or may not know, each year marks the start of a new AA Panel. Those just elected are part of Panel 67. Panels began in 1951 at the First General Service Conference in New York and increase numerically each year. So if you do the math this is 2017 which is year 67 after 1951. Each Annual General Service Conference held in New York is made-up of both new representatives and representatives from the prior year's Panel, and our Areas throughout the country hold their elections in odd or even years. Area 8 (notice that our number is an even number) is currently represented by Jane G. who was elected by this body in November 2015 as our Panel 66 Delegate and Roxane R. as our Alternate.

But our Area's Districts and many of our Groups still hold elections each year based again on whether they are an odd or even number. So our odd numbered Districts just elected new Officers - for the most part - and at least 6 of our Committees also elected new Officers. Confused? I hope not, but your District DCM or Committee Chair should be able to answer your questions or you can either come to the microphone today and ask or else write your question down and put it in our Pink Askit Basket.

You'll hear some things today about our Structure and Guidelines, about Committee work, about our finances, and about the business of Area 8 including how we try to communicate with each other - and

the work being done at many levels by so many different people to extend the hand of AA to the alcoholic who still suffers and to keep AA alive in San Diego/Imperial County and beyond. You'll also be given - or be able to access electronically - the Area Master Calendar which contains the key events, workshops, and opportunities for service in the coming months. Please share it with your Groups and other AA friends either electronically or printed out. These events and workshops extend our service structure into the community and provide opportunities for fellowship and education to many of the diverse groups of alcoholics in our region.

Our Literature Committee and GrapeVine/LaVina committees have displays of AA literature and publications here today so please visit their tables. Our Translation committee provides simultaneous English/Spanish translation using radio equipment purchased with funds donated by Area 8 groups. Our Accessibilities Committee organizes ASL Interpretation for our Deaf community - again funded by your group's generous donations. Our GrapeVine/LaVina Committee, Archives Committee, Hospitals and Institutions Committee and Newsletter committees have tables here today as well. So please visit our committee tables during our lunch break today to find out more about how they support AA in the region.

On Christmas morning I lost a friend and sponsee to this disease. He had struggled for the past four years I worked with him and his enlarged heart finally gave out after the doctors had given him only 3 to 10 months to live. Well he got only two and died peacefully, sober, his wife of 34 years at his side. I mention another alcoholic's passing because it has touched me personally and also as another grim reminder that alcohol kills, sometimes quickly, sometimes more slowly. And I'm reminded by his passing that we have so much more work to do to keep our program stronger than the disease. And I want to ask each of you to dedicate 2017 to service to our Area, Groups, and fellow members - and especially to those out there who still suffer, in spite of sponsorship, their groups, their fellows, and their loved ones.

Thank you for letting me be of service.

Colin M. - Chair