

One of the first emails I opened in the new year was from our Delegate who asked, "Is it me or does this look boring?" her question directed at our upcoming General Service Conference. Indeed, as I perused the list of Conference Agenda items I saw what she meant. Preliminary topics appeared to lack the luster we were looking for. I know how it feels to be taking a new position in the Area and not wanting to have to coerce people to attend our carefully planned workshops when there is nothing exciting or titillating to present to our members. We want others to be as excited about our work as we are and when they are not, we are often offended. Why can't everyone see the excitement in retiring the pamphlet, "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." which most have never seen? I'll have to admit that I raised my eyebrows when I saw, "Consider development of a plain language version of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous." I pictured a comic book adaption for those members who could not wrap their head around such phrases as, "All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals-usually brief-were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization" (Anonymous, 30.) It will be incumbent upon us to prepare the agenda items in such a way as to draw out a conversation about our primary purpose. If all we do has this particular purpose in mind, then we can insure the members of Area 8 will understand, enjoy and communicate the needs of our society.

I am anxious to begin my commitment to attending So Cal's H & I Intergroup meetings and the So Cal AA Convention Committee Meetings for 2016. As liaison to these two entities, I will be traveling north two Sunday's per month in order to report back to the Area. Our cooperation with other entities is part of our commitment to Area 8 and I feel honored to participate in this capacity. I have already attended the North County Intergroup meeting held in Vista the 2nd Wednesday of the month and felt privileged to be asked to share upcoming events in the Area with this body. I listened intently to their treasurer's report and felt the operating budget to be substantially better funded than Area 8 and I wondered at this. I wonder how we can fund our fuel, our literature and our printing costs when there are so many groups not contributing to the Area at all. The apparent lack of regular contributions has more to do with having an uninformed and unrepresented group than it is about blatant hold outs. If a group does not know to contribute, then it is unlikely that they will contribute. Making the Area's needs known to the groups is the responsibility of the General Service Representatives in our Area. Let us all be responsible for seeing that your group has a GSR and that the contribution to the Area and to GSO is not neglected.

I am busy with my garden these days too. I have sown a garden for the past three years, never having gardened in the past. I am digitally self-educated by Google and YouTube. I believe this is the way of the future. This year I tried a winter garden with enviable success. In fact, it seems easier than a summer garden because the pests cannot tolerate the cold. It makes me more confident about this year's garden and I contemplate new seed ideas. Gardens are excellent metaphors for what we do here in A.A. We sow seeds even when we think they may not take. We are faced with unending obstacles that threaten our success. When we survive a disaster, we begin anew on the next undertaking. And God does things behind the scenes that we are not privy to but it works 2016 just the same. I love gardening for all these reasons and I love A.A. for the same.