Welcome everybody to our Pre-Conference Assembly – the jumping off point for our Area and especially our Delegate Jane G. who has been working tirelessly since she and our alternate delegate Roxane received the 1400 pages of this year’s General Service Conference materials in mid-February. For those of you who are new Panel 67 members and who may not have had an opportunity to attend one of the pre-conference workshops - which have been held on successive Saturday’s in March - this day is another opportunity to listen, share at the roundtables, and join the conversation that will help our delegate better understand the conscience of the Area as she prepares to travel to New York later this month.

Since our last Assembly in January a number of other successful Area Workshops have been held in various parts of the County. Our thanks goes out to the members of our Districts, Committees and groups who have planned and supported these events. A number of us attended the Traditions Breakfast at Camp Pendleton a couple of weeks ago which is sponsored by our North County Coordinating Council annually. Our Regional Trustee Joel C. shared his wisdom, strength, and anecdotes about the traditions. He returns to run our Panel 68 election at our Assembly in September.

By my count from the picture that we took, 64 of our Area 8 members attended the 2017 Praasa (Pacific Region AA Service Assembly) held this year in Sacramento. I was honored to be asked by the 2017 Praasa Planning Committee to read S20 from the AA Service Manual as Reader for the opening Panel of Praasa. Our delegate Jane presented at the opening session as a second year delegate. And two of our Committee Chairs, Jerry with a J from Finance and Renea from Accessibilities served as Panel presenters during the conference. Other Area 8 members served on roundtables or as volunteers at the conference.

I encourage those who attended to share your impressions when you report back to your Districts, Committees, and Groups. I can say that I feel privileged to have been partially supported financially by the Area this year and to have been given the opportunity to share so many wonderful experiences with our members there and with my other friends and fellows from the region. And I hope that our Area can find the means in future budgets to support more members to attend the 2018 Praasa next year in Reno Nevada and then nearby in Irvine in 2019.

At Praasa I attended both Chairs roundtables, one with Monte and the other by myself. I also attended the Senior Outreach roundtable, which was strange, to say the least, if only because the moderator thought some of us were trying to hijack the session with CEC and SIS business. No biggie.

Today our Agenda doesn’t allow time for District and Committee business updates, so I encourage each of you to read the minutes of our monthly Area Committee Meetings (we call them ACMs) and also attend one of our monthly Service Committee meetings, especially if you haven’t yet found a committee home. Most if not all of our Committee Chairs or alternates are here today. Please take time to introduce yourself to them at the lunch break.

Today, in my fellowship, family and community I have a full and thankful heart. I try to achieve a state of peaceful and joyful gratitude even though Life itself tries to get in the way – a lot. But most of you know what I’m talking about. So we trudge. The AA program and the opportunities for service offered by General Service activities have become a large part of the fabric of my recovery and one which I would never have predicted when I first got sober. Our “keep coming back mantra” and the still small voice of my higher power continue to motivate me to dress up, show up, and be responsible.

Thank you for letting me be of service.

Colin M. – Area Chair