

PRAASA 2020 Report

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Much has occurred since PRAASA took place two weeks ago in Tucson, AZ. Although the Coronavirus scare was in its infancy, the crescendo was building. Unbeknownst to the world, our lives were about to change drastically. There were statements a plenty about respecting each others space and taking the utmost care with personal hygiene. This assembly was to actually be my last in person AA gathering to date. The 2020 PRAASA was my second time in attendance in as many years. Funny how 2 years prior, I had never heard of it...

My wife Julie and I arrived on Friday, March 6th in time for Panel 1: Area Highlights, Per the usual, it was an about even mix of first and second year Delegates. Our first year, Panel 70 Delegate Jerry S. highlighted the range of geography and demographics in our Area; including an “estimated 5 million non-local alcoholics” that visit San Diego annually. He paid tribute to the work that our newly formed Young People's (YPAA) is/has done with the Membership survey. He acknowledged the development of an Armed Services Committee in order to increase outreach and support to any alcoholics among the 140K armed service active duty and veterans in Area 08; the growth of the Hispanic Women's Workshop that found its beginnings in SDIAA; culminating, to paraphrase, 'with the expansion of our 12 Step Work in the loving, divine expression that we call home'.

I was able to attend about half of the panels during the weekend. The mic time after the panels was thought provoking and inspiring (for the most part) and even included a marriage proposal; interesting enough, between 2 people that met at 2019 PRASSA in Irvine, CA. The PRAASA Host Committee allowed me the honor to take part in the first panel on Saturday morning (Panel 5: We Have Entered the World of the Spirit) by sharing on “Staying Spiritually Awake Through Service”. Our Pacific Regional Trustee, Kathi F. was the 'Presenter of the Day', starting with her mid-day Trustee's Report and culminating in sharing her own story after the Banquet Dinner later in the evening. I took advantage of participating in the DCM Round Tables on Friday night and Saturday afternoon with my counterparts from around the Pacific Region.

Some notes on what I heard and experienced:

- **GRAPEVINE/LA VINA** - How can we help make them more available to Newcomers, Institutions, etc. *UPDATE: In response to many meetings temporarily closing their doors nationwide because of COVID-19, all issues of Grapevine and La Vina have been made available for free through 2020, www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help*. Grapevine/La Vina Gift Certificates are available at <https://store.aagrapevine.org/gift-certificate> . Subscriptions are down at the moment. Agenda Item – Grapevine/La Vina Instagram Account?
- **LITERATURE** - Are there Accessibility and Relatability issues with the Big Book? In terms of comprehension, reading grade level and literacy are *different*. The current language DOES present a problem for translations, including American Sign Language (re-translation for ASL now available [12 and 12 available as well]). Price normalization has been achieved for translations of the Big Book, namely the *Braille* and *Navajo* translations, they can be purchased for the same price as an English Big Book. Is our current literature inspiring activity and participation?

- **COOPERATION with the PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY** – Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (A.A.W.S.) has a Linked In Page available to Medical Professionals
- **FINANCE** – *Our Self Support is ESSENTIAL to our SURVIVAL as a Fellowship*
- **REMOTE COMMUNITIES** – Hispanic Women in Service have traction and are growing.

I had the unique opportunity to go on a hike in Sunday morning with our past two Area 08 delegates, Jane G. and Roxanne R.. We hiked the Seven Falls Trail and narrowly avoided a down pour as we returned to our vehicle. We were rewarded with some fantastic terrain and views. Being in places like this, I feel a little closer to God...



In closing, my PRAASA experience was enriching. I am looking forward to attending many more in the years to come. With the current COVID-19 pandemic response placing restrictions on the ability for people to gather, here in the U.S. And Worldwide, A.A. is finding a way to evolve and adapt to ensure the message is accessible to those who are seeking a solution. My Home Group and many others have temporarily suspended live meetings and created on-line meetings in their place. District 19 will hold our meeting on-line in April. I am inspired by the local response to the evolving climate within our Area. We are all learning as we go and it is important that I remain patient and loving along the way. There is an air of uncertainty right now. My connection with God is just as important now as ever. My commitment to show up and be available to those in need, by whatever means, is vital. I leave this report with some questions to ponder that I took from this experience. I encourage all of you to continue to SEEK, with whatever your understanding is. Please stay safe, responsible, and healthy.

How can the General Service Structure and Inter-groups/Central Offices coexist and effectively work together to support A.A. locally?

Am I present in all 3 Legacies with Inclusivity in mind?

Am I open-minded, empathetic, and compassionate enough to do what is necessary to carry the Message of A.A. to the still suffering Alcoholic?