

A NEWSLETTER FOR
GSRs AND ALL OTHER
MEMBERS OF A.A.

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF IN-
TEREST:**

- How we meet these pandemic days
- Committee Updates
- Delegate Share
- A DCM Dilemma
- Who is Al Mooney?

"Habits are like
cork or lead--they
tend to keep you
up or hold you
down."

From the November
1962 Grapevine

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area8aa.org



San Diego-Imperial Area 08 Assembly

NOVEMBER 2020 ISSUE

Virtual Sobriety?

Well, not really, but real sobriety in a virtual setting? Absolutely! The past six months of pandemic and the resulting limitations on our ability to keep the physical hand of A.A. out there, has not prevented newcomers from entering our virtual rooms and finding the miracle therein.

At last writing (June issue of the Area 8 Newsletter), there were 157 Zoom A.A. meetings listed on the San Diego Central Office website. Today there are more than 200. In the golden olden days – BC (before COVID), one would locate a meeting by checking the printed schedule or going to the Central Office website where one would find the

location, day, time, and type of any meeting.

Currently that website maintains lists of meetings in eight different categories based on how the meeting is conducted – telephone only, Zoom with password, Face to Face (F2F) outside meetings with hybrid Zoom component, F2F inside meetings temporarily on hold, etc. You get the idea. While most Zoom meetings represent previous F2F meetings converted to Zoom, there are meetings established solely on Zoom at the time of the shutdown which have never had a physical presence. There is a daily noon meeting established by an area officer which regular attracts 20 – 30 attendees.

Likewise, a daily 6:00 PM meeting established by one of our standing committee chairs, has similar attendance figures.

Newcomers are finding these meetings, getting sponsors, working the steps, and collecting 30, 60, and 90 day chips! What a miracle. One newcomer recently shared that while in the past he had been reluctant to attend a live A.A. meeting because of fear, shame, etc., he had found it less daunting to enter from home with the click of a mouse. Another shared that while she lives in San Diego, she found a sponsor who lives in Portland, OR but attends Zoom meetings "here".

How a Unicorn in A.A. Became the Missing Link in Spanish Speaking A.A.

I am descendant of the Chiricahua Apache, Raramuri and Mixteca natives. I grew up as a border child. I remember crossing the border between San Diego and Tijuana, back and forth, during my childhood making me fluent in both English and Spanish. I

began interpreting at Doctor's appointments for my mother at the age of 4. During my teenage years it became apparent that I had a complicated relationship with alcohol and other substances. At 18, my Uncle Chuck, who had been sober for 15 years

at that time, invited me to an AA meeting. I declined because I did not think I had a problem.

After turning 21, and no longer needing to drive to Tijuana to drink legally, I snowballed into my bottom. My sobriety

Grapevine Quote:
*Looking Into the Face
of Online AA Oct.
2002*

"I have to warn you all that I think this is a blessing for our aging alkie population who tend to get criticized for not showing up at meetings, but probably have problems I as I do with mobility and transportation.

—Ruth

Grapevine Quote:

"I am always the one who gains the most in anything I do for service."

B.H.

February, 1967

Virtual Sobriety? (continued from page one)

No one can predict when the COVID restrictions will end and we can return to having Face-to-Face meetings free of size restrictions, face masks, temperature checks, and sitting at least six feet apart. While the originators of the Zoom only meetings described above had only planned on their efforts being temporary, now, some are taking on a more permanent existence. Creating the usual service positions, accepting 7th Tradition contributions, and electing GSRs! And to what district will those GSRs belong? We have long had linguistic districts overlapping the

traditional geographic ones. Is a District 24 for virtual meetings in our future? How about a DCM who lives in...Portland?



After a few decades of sobriety, I was comfortable attending 3 – 4 in-person meetings each week. However, being high risk, both old and sick, I now spend a

lot of time at home and it isn't unusual to attend 2 – 3 meetings on Zoom each day! That may be a very hard if not impossible habit to

break. Perhaps some of our service meetings currently conducted virtually will choose to remain that way, saving hours and miles, and saving miles means saving money giving us more money for 12-Step work. Alcoholics Anonymous survived a world war, a terrorist attack, and now is doing the same with a global pandemic. It still works! And of that, I am virtually certain!

-Blaine H., Area 8 Chair

How a Unicorn in A.A. Became the Missing Link in Spanish Speaking A.A.

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date is July 15, 2007; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security chose it for me. I hit my knees and asked God for help. I still had the AA schedule given to me by my uncle. I looked for the next meeting available which was the Oceanside Alano Club, noon, on a Sunday. I saw a sea of old, white men. I thought, "This cannot be sobriety." Deflated and scared, I looked at the schedule again and found a young people's meeting in the basement of a hospital

on Saturday nights. I met my first sponsor at that meeting. We worked all 12 Steps in my first nine months.

When I began working with others. My sponsor suggested, "Go to Spanish speaking meetings. It's important." Reluctantly, I became the Spanish-Speaking liaison for the young people's committee in North San Diego. In the Spanish speaking districts, I was the youngest woman sober, who stayed sober and had

worked the steps. I was a unicorn in Spanish speaking AA. I was young, female, and bilingual. I went to an area assembly and saw that there was a Spanish interpreter. When they announced the Area Translation Committee, I volunteered, serving for four years. Then the Area asked me to serve as a Spanish interpreter. This service prepared me for my Creator's vision for me. I graduated college and applied to law school. Against all odds, I was admitted into law

Getting Real and Honest by Jerry S, Area 08 Delegate, Panel 70 area8delegate70@gmail.com

Around mid-March when the dramatic impact of the pandemic hit, the details of our commitments drove a deep sense of confusion and “dis-ease.” The totality of the force inspired an old idea, a buried concept, an abandoned way of resolving problems: Satisfaction and happiness are mine if I can only manage the play and its players, so off to the races I went with my dis-ease.

ZOOM became my chariot; a carriage winged by a pompous attitude that due to my youth and zeal for technology, would fly me to new heights amongst my peers. What a cool, novel, toy!

The Area officers and I ventured into a dramatic approach to our first ever virtual Assembly. It was a dynamic introduction to some of the possibilities that ZOOM can offer. We had guest speakers from outside our Area and shared in discussions with persons, usually reserved to a select few, that can travel widely. What blistered my experience was the raw truth that I was struggling to manage the entire experience. Although it

appeared to be harmonious, deep within myself lurked insatiable confusion and an indignant attitude. I recall the moment when the Pre-Conference Assembly came to an end and the last member signed out and I was left alone, my head fell into my hands and I wept. I had been clawing through ego for hours and I was exhausted.

Into and through the first ever virtual General Service Conference too was a sense that if only I can manage the details of my responsibilities as delegate all will be well. To some extent the experience was enriching and fulfilling, while in another context I became saturated by a growing sense of discomfort and a desire to escape. Screen burnout began to scald my enthusiasm and joy. Is this style of working my program sustainable? Can my desire to connect with others be satisfied while in isolation and solitude? If only I could reach through the screen and lay my hand on your shoulder or feel the ease and comfort of your hand on mine all would be well. I fell into a deep depression.

Realizing I stepped on the toes of my loved ones and of those I am blessed to serve with, I asked for help. Additionally, I sought outside help through professional therapy, then asked my sponsor to lead me back through the work.

As I write this, I am on my 3rd Step. I am exploring areas of my life where I sense a deeper need for Divine support. I am adventuring into areas where I lack intimacy and faith in a Higher Power.

The search has brought healing, perspective, and awareness. Today, I am buoyed by hope and an ideal to demonstrate joy within my relationship with the unexpected, the unknown...the unknowable...the pandemic.

I remember the fulfillment of purpose and enrichment that comes at once by walking towards the alter of self-sacrifice through my commitments in service to others. I am reminded that if my service does not bring me back to recovery then I am probably fueling the effort with self-will. I am beginning to remember...

“You can never be lost.
When have you ever been apart from me?
You can never depart and never return.
For we are continuous, indistinguishable.”
-Alex Grey

How a Unicorn in A.A. Became the Missing Link in Spanish Speaking A.A. (Continued from Page 2)

school. My intense experiences interpreting for AA served as a catapult to become a court interpreter. I now get to tell Judges to “shut up and listen!”

I continue to serve in the area as an interpreter. Interpretation is vital to our area, as we have made it a requirement for all ACMs and Assemblies to

have interpretation and all documents that are shared on the Area 8 website must be translated into Spanish before they are published. This has allowed us to unify. Even after graduating law school, during a world-wide pandemic, AA has been my bridge to my Higher Power. Service in A.A. has allowed

me to start a career that positively impacts my community, to rebuild my relationship with my family, and to be an example of what any alcoholic can achieve if they get out of their own way. Thank you for giving me back my life.

—Brayana G.
Area 8 Interpreter



DOING GENERAL SERVICE WORK WITH ENTHUSIASM

I still feel new to my role as a District Committee Member (DCM) though I have been in the position for one year. Since I am in the middle of my term, I am doing my best to be a leader and promote leadership. (Concept 9) I was elected DCM with little idea of what the role required. I loved being a GSR and I thought I would also love being a DCM. My GSR experience was in a thriving district and the DCM of that district had a very unique style of leading that inspired deeper participation. I am the DCM of a struggling district and I want to emulate the passion of that DCM to garner greater participation from my district.

What I know works in any service com-

mitment is the spirit of one alcoholic talking to another. My alternate GSR and I met each week and had lively discussions about what we were reading in the General Service Manual. We would share reflections about the traditions and exchange personal information about our recovery in the process. We ended up being best friends through this exchange of shared experiences in General Service.

Having had this experience as a GSR, I am looking for similar results as a DCM. I want to create deeper connections with the members of my district so that the work of the district will be inspired by alcoholics

who genuinely want to take on the service commitments of the district. It is the deeper connections to others that was taught to us during the recovery process, through the 12 Steps. Now we want to connect through service. General Service involves us in some of the most vital 12th Step work in A.A. and practicing Unity, our First Tradition, around the world, connects us to each other and the work in General Service. The question of how I might model and inspire this global perspective to the district is what I ponder during this middle stage of my term as the DCM

Allison H., DCM District 7

Class A Trustees are non-alcoholic, and serve two consecutive three year terms.



Letters to the editor:

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Dr. Al J. Mooney, Class A Trustee

The September Area Assembly was highlighted by a guest talk by Dr. Al Mooney, a Class A Trustee on the General Service Board since 2019. His talk centered around his personal experience of his father getting sober in AA. The senior Dr. Mooney was also a physician who served in World War II, and along with alcoholism, developed an opiate addiction after the war. His father was later sent to prison for writing illegal prescriptions, but he was told by his mother that dad had "gone to a school to learn to be a better doctor." He detailed the darkly humorous ways that his child's mind processed these events. As an 11-year-old boy, he wondered about this AA program and how it was able to put a completely different person into his father's body.

The junior Dr.'s mother, also an alcoholic and sober in AA, joined his father to take recovering alcoholics into their home, much the same way the Wilsons did in those early days in Brooklyn. They would found Willingway Hospital in Statesboro, NC, a hospital dedicated to helping alcoholics and addicts. The young Al Mooney was immersed in the AA Fellowship. He spent the rest of his childhood tagging along with his parents to AA meetings, conferences and forums. Dr. Al Mooney would eventually come to identify as a member of Alanon.

Dr. Mooney focused his career on helping those who suffer from our disease. He was one of the first physicians in the US to be certified in Ad-

diction Medicine and currently serves as the Director of Willingway Hospital. It was an impressive recollection of a service filled life.

John B., Archives Chair



"I'm extremely grateful to have been given this honor of serving as a trustee. I have always loved the term 'friend of A.A.' I hope during my time as trustee I can reach out to other friends of A.A. who are as passionate about Alcoholics Anonymous as I am."