

DCM 19, Area08
2022 PRAASA Report
David A - D-19

This year's PRAASA was the second I attended in as many years. I was hoping to attend PRAASA in person this year in Portland, Oregon, but like last year the event moved to an all virtual event due to COVID. I live most of my work life on Zoom so attending virtually wasn't too much of a change in my daily life. However, I was hoping for the personal connection that comes from being in person. Based on the current COVID situation I have high hopes that I PRAASA will be in person next year.

The host area Oregon, area 58, did an amazing job of hosting the virtual conference. Many of the kinks from the first virtual conference in 2021 were worked out. Clear instructions for interpretation, the virtual lobby (a PDF of where to go), breakout rooms were all part of this well run event.

There were some great panelists that shared on a variety of topics. I was impressed by PJ W who talked about the change to the preamble. Self identified as a non-binary person and shared how the change pre-amble change personally affected her and people she knows. But, she also was able to identify with those who were not in favor of the change. How great is it that we can hear all points of views on a topic in a loving open way.

As a new DCM (yes, this is my first year) the round tables were great sharing sessions. I've gathered a few ideas about reaching out to groups who don't have GSR representation as well as ideas of district events.

A highlight for me was listening to an AI-Anon speaker during the Saturday lunch break. I've never attended an AI-Anon meeting and was filled with curiosity. This speaker not only told their personal story of how living with an Alcoholic affected them and their children but also explained how their concept of service grew in AI-Anon. Like many of us, their service started in a group position. They were a treasurer and then grew to a GSR. They ended up being instrumental in starting a Native American AA conference illustrating having the hand of AA to always be there, for all. One lesson they shared about service that hit me is that "Leadership comes with criticism. But rarely does criticism come from anyone who does more than me." AA is all about progress, not perfection. It's also about helping another alcoholic and carrying the message. We're not going to do this perfectly but by being of service we are doing our part.

All in all, PRAASA did, like last year, re-energize me about general service and reminds me AA is, at its core, all about one alcoholic helping another. AA is made up of people of various backgrounds, races, creeds, sexual orientations, cultures and nationalities. We must respect those differences and AA must evolve as our society evolves. I learned, during PRAASA, that Bill W. himself said that AA must continue to evolve.

Many of the topics discussed, from reactions to changing the preamble, to revising our literature, finding a place for online groups, and if we should have PSAs on streaming platforms, are truly only secondary in nature to our primary purpose. To help the alcoholic still suffering. And that is what service, and PRAASA, is all about. How can we be of service to help another alcoholic and to ensure that AA is there for future generations.