

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

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Regional Forums
- Big Book Editions
- Workshop Dates
- Brawley or Bust!



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# San Diego-Imperial Area 08 Assembly

SEPTEMBER 2022 ISSUE

## My First Regional Forum

I had the good fortune to attend my first Regional Forum last weekend. I've been sober in AA for 37 years so the good news is, you can stay sober not attending a forum, and not even knowing what one is! But if you are curious, as I was, read on.

AA has been holding Regional Forums since 1975, four times each year, at various locations throughout the United States and Canada. Regional Forums bring together leaders from the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, the Grapevine and La Vina, current and past trustees and delegates, and others involved in A.A.'s service structure. See <https://www.aa.org/regional-and-local-forums>  
The Pacific Regional Forum

held September 16-18, 2022, in Salt Lake City, included workshops with titles like "Building the Informed Group Conscience," "Service Sponsorship" and "Overcoming Local Apathy." I was not able to attend the workshops since I am taking another college course and had pressing homework. Neither did I attend the Delegate Presentations or the First-Timer's Orientation.

I did attend a Saturday afternoon presentation by Trish L, Trustee at Large from Canada, on the topic of "A.A. Around the World." I learned of the existence of REDELA, an organization uniting AA meetings throughout Latin America. Trish is presenting her talk again at the Area 8 Service Assembly next Saturday in Brawley, which will

include Zoom participation. For information see <https://www.area8aa.org/>

I finished my schoolwork Saturday night and was able to attend all forum events on Sunday. At the session on the A.A. Grapevine, I learned that there are numerous books put out by the Grapevine including a new book titled, "Fun in Sobriety." <https://store.aagrapevine.org/fun-in-sobriety>

I got a better appreciation for the work of our Class A "non-alcoholic" Trustees who give generously of their time without having to come close to dying of alcoholism first. I enjoyed a skit, actually a scripted reading, about our 2025 International Convention set to take place in Vancouver, B.C. (Continued on p. 2)

## Not My First Regional Forum

Approximately 570 A.A. members -- exceeding the planned-for attendance of 300 -- showed up in force for the Pacific Regional Forum in Salt Lake City, Utah from September 16 - 18, 2022. A large array of trusted A.A. servants from the San Diego - Imperial Area were in attendance. There was also a very robust presence of Spanish-speaking members from all over the Region, including some who travelled from

Mexico to attend this inspiring event.

Interspersed throughout the weekend were "What's on Your Mind?" sessions, during which A.A. members asked questions and made suggestions to trustees of the General Service Board, A.A. World Services Board, and A.A. Grapevine Board, along with General Service Office/ Grapevine/La Vina staff members. The presentations included such varied topics as

the role of Class A and Class B trustees, General Service Office, delegate presentations on a wide range of topics, a financial report by the Treasurer of the General Service Board, workshops on matters of current interest in A.A., a session on "Who's Not In The Rooms?" as well as the boards of A.A. World Services and A.A. Grapevine, A.A. Grapevine and La Vina, a presentation by the Senior Editor of the Grapevine, on

**About the Big Book:**

29 stories were included in the 1st edition to reflect a 1939 US membership of around 100.

37 stories were included in the 2nd edition to reflect a 1955 worldwide membership of around 136,000.

43 stories were included in the 3rd edition to reflect a 1976 worldwide membership of around 321,000.

42 stories were included in the 4th edition to reflect a 2001 worldwide membership of over 2 million.

**"The truth has a way of changing every time you think you know it."**

**Grapevine Quote**  
**August 1981**

**Check out this NEW Feature added to the Area 08 Website:**

**GSO Group Directory**

**LOOK UP YOUR GROUP ID NUMBER**

**area8aa.org**  
**(Click [Here!](#))**

## My First Regional Forum (Continued from Page 1)

See <https://www.aa.org/international-convention>

I particularly enjoyed attending the sharing session from our Past Trustees, both Class A and Class B "alcoholic" Trustees. I was moved by their sharing and observations about our fellowship, often from perspectives that I had never considered. These are the folks at the bottom of our upside-down triangle. In AA, the groups are at the top. The groups not only hold the power of the purse, but also, through an informed group conscience, pass on through a group's General Service Representative (that is the position I hold at my home group, the Carlsbad AA Workshop) how the groups would vote on issues that eventually make it down to the Area Delegate. The Delegate, through attending the General Service Conference in

New York, makes proposals to the General Service Board which, in part, consists of these Trustee people. Here's a link to the *Circles of Love and Service* pamphlet which explains a bit more about General Service: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:49074fb1-c7b0-3a8c-8d47-5f711c8fff2b>

I learned that AA has a YouTube presence. Here's a link to a video on our General Service Office: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=P4mnDvinzzY> I learned that the percentage of total contributions to the General Service Office has decreased for groups and increased for individual members. Currently, individual members provide about 30% of the annual funds to GSO. The percentage of group contributions has been declining for years. This

is interesting because our service structure only provides for participation by the individual through the groups and their elected General Service Representative. While individual contributions are increasing, individual AA members do not have a voice with General Service unless they belong to an AA Group

In closing, I would like to share my number one reason our General Service Structure is important. It allows all of us to travel across the United States and the world, and to find an AA Meeting that we find familiar. Local customs may differ, but the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts are the same. The General Service Structure makes this possible. Regional Forums are a wonderful way to learn more about General Service and anyone may attend, plus there is no registration fee for attendees. *Link S. (GSR, District 23)*

## Not My First Regional Forum (continued from page 1)

how 3 Class A trustees became interested in serving A.A., an Ask-it Basket, preparations for the 2025 International A.A. Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, a skit about this upcoming International A.A. convention, in which our delegate, Monty C., played

a prominent part, and sharing from past trustees.

All of the proceedings were translated into Spanish and American Sign Language. Ask-it Basket questions that were not responded to due to time constraints will be printed and answered in the Pacific Regional

Forum published report which will be forthcoming in the next few months. This was a highly informative and memorable weekend filled with laughter, joy and deep devotion to our lifesaving Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Paul C. Past Delegate/Past Trustee

**"We have, in AA, no coercive human authority. Because each AA, of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he backslides, we are finding we have little need for manmade rules or regulations." —AA Co-Founder, Bill W., January 1948, From: "Tradition Two", The Language of the Heart.**

**[Sign up to receive GV's Daily Quote](#)**

## Call for Stories for New Editions of the Spanish and English Big Book

Is the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous important for our recovery process? Does it help us out during our early days of sobriety, while deciding whether to stay in the rooms of AA? Have you read the stories in the back of the book? Can you relate to opening the Big Book during those moments of loneliness when you want to relax your thoughts and learn more about a miraculous recovery from a fatal disease? I began thinking along these lines since the General Service Office offered a call for new stories for both the Spanish 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, due December 15, 2022, and the English 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, due October 31, 2022. Here are the links for those requests and submissions.

[https://www.aa.org/submit-](https://www.aa.org/submit-bigbook-spanish-4th-form)

[bigbook-spanish-4th-form](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_4th%20Ed%20BB_EN_0.pdf)

[https://www.aa.org/sites/default/](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_4th%20Ed%20BB_EN_0.pdf)

[files/literature/](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_4th%20Ed%20BB_EN_0.pdf)

[Announcement\\_4th%20Ed%](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_4th%20Ed%20BB_EN_0.pdf)

[20BB\\_EN\\_0.pdf](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_4th%20Ed%20BB_EN_0.pdf)

[https://www.aa.org/submit-](https://www.aa.org/submit-bigbook-english-5th-form)

[bigbook-english-5th-form](https://www.aa.org/submit-bigbook-english-5th-form)

[https://www.aa.org/sites/default/](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_5th_EditionBB_EN.pdf)

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[Announce-](https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/Announcement_5th_EditionBB_EN.pdf)

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This is the point where we ask our-

selves, how important is our Big

Book? Will it benefit just those who

are here today, or future genera-

tions to come? Each of you have a

story and the deadlines are ap-

proaching. Do you want to miss an

opportunity for sharing your

experience, strength and hope with

thousands of people around the

world? Just imagine being a part of

someone's solution. All it takes is

some motivation from within to make the time, sit down and write how it was, how it has been and how it is today. I might even encourage another member from my home group or even a sponsee to share their story.

Have we shared this opportunity with enough AA members from our fellowship to get a good cross section of all the members? I am still wondering if the Big Book has even helped some members in their recovery or not. Is it possible that some newcomers do not stay here because they are not comprehending the message written in the book? Could our book have some translation errors that may need to be corrected for a better understanding? Are the words of the founders accessible to everyone?

Some members of the Spanish community have shared that they hardly ever read the book and years have passed and they are still in the program, still sober. Others are currently in Big Book study groups and are understanding it very well, enriching their lives with the recovery program that has saved their life, your life, my life and many others' lives, and the ones to come.

I want to share that during an isolation period in the Pandemic months, I contracted the Covid sickness. Confined to my house, I sat down one day, opened the book and just started to read. When my eyes got tired of reading, I listened to my audio book and followed along during each chapter, even reading the stories. While reading the book, I understood the words far better

than while listening, though there were some clarities during the listening of which I found much value.

Please, relay the message from our General Service Office to our fellow members, both Spanish and English speaking, to author their stories and submit them to help carry the message of experience, strength and hope to all who need our program. There are a variety of topics that can be included in those stories, such as ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, gender diversity, social class, your experience of recovery during the pandemic, newcomer experiences, the valuable experiences of our old timers, accessibility experiences, spiritual experiences, your experiences with

virtual platforms, as well as sobriety and mental health experiences. Just pause and think whether it is possible to save a still suffering alcoholic's life with just a few hours of your time with a pen and paper, your computer, laptop or even your portable smart phone device. I will be sending my story before the deadlines, either October 31<sup>st</sup> or December 15<sup>th</sup> or both!

Our Big Book has been a blessing for my recovery and hopefully for yours. Let us pass this on to our future generations with the most current phases of the lives we are living today. We are miracles. *Richard Ortega, Alt. Delegate, Panel 72*

In April 1939, 4,730 copies of the 1st edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous" were published at \$3.50 a copy. That would be equivalent to \$54 a copy today. It was a very expensive book for its time.

## Mental Health in AA Workshop

Saturday, November 5th, 9am – 2pm

*Our goal is to create a safe space for all to recover.*

"There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders..."

**Speakers on Mental Health Topics**

- Experience, Strength & Hope
- Breakout Discussions
- Food and Refreshments

Hybrid Event - Spanish and ASL interpretation available

**Seaside Center for Spiritual Living**  
1613 Lake Dr. Encinitas, CA. 92024

Virtual Attendees Zoom Info:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87228448319> Meeting ID: 872 2844 8319 Passcode: D22022

**Sponsored By Districts 2, 14 & 21 of SDIAA (Area 08)** Contact Chairperson - Sutton K., DCM\_02@area8aa.org

## Brawley or Bust!

Hopefully, a great many trusted servants will make the trip to Brawley on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> for the Big Day Area Assembly. Sure, it will be hybrid, but please try to make it in person. For those new to Area 8 service, Brawley is in Imperial County, just east over the mountains and home to two of our 23 districts. District 9 and District 17. The latter is a Spanish linguistic district and one of the three sponsoring districts for this assembly. We are told that there will be lots of important Area business on the agenda.

A few words about the venue, the Lions Center in Brawley. Veterans of the Imperial County Roundup, a wonderful intimate gathering of alcoholics which takes place in February, will appreciate the size of the facility and the presence of a real stage so that Monty, Adrian, and all the other committee members can be seen in all their glory. There is an excellent kitchen

and there should be an abundance of tasty food.

Getting there is really part of the fun. Yes, it is a drive of 2+ hours from San Diego. However, the early morning trip over the mountains through exotic rock formations is spectacular. I, myself, have made that drive more than one hundred times as one must go through Brawley to get to Calipatria State Prison, a maximum security facility about 10 miles north of town. Now that severe COVID restrictions are lifted, there are A.A. meetings there each Saturday which could really use H&I panel members. There are evening meetings there as well which could use our help.

Now, why I love Imperial County. The editor may well delete this as it is not pertinent to the Assembly, but there is much to like in the IC. It is small town America at its best. I already mentioned the Roundup,

but the Brawley Cattle Call each November closes down the town – literally. One time our trip to Calipatria was detoured because ALL the streets in town were blocked for the festivities. Just east of Brawley is Holtville. The Carrot Festival there each February is something not to be missed. This town with a population of 6,000 puts on a parade of 2+ hours in length, complete with dancing carrots! For the spiritual, Salvation Mountain in Niland is the product of one man's devotion to God. Leonard Knight spent 30 years building it, and while he is gone, his monument remains – quite a sight!

So, check out Imperial County sometime, preferably in the winter when the weather is beautiful. But regardless, I hope to see you (in person) at the Lions Center on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.

*Blaine H. Past Chair, Area 08*

### At Wits End, July 2015:

A new member of Al-Anon was applying for a job in a Florida lemon grove, even though she seemed over-qualified for the job. "Look miss," said the foreman. "Do you have any experience in picking lemons?" "Well, as a matter of fact, yes!" she replied. "I've been divorced from three alcoholics."



Letters to the editor:

[newsletter@area8aa.org](mailto:newsletter@area8aa.org)

## Workshop for Hispanic Women an A.A. HYBRID EVENT!

**Zoom 9380745147, password 197178. December 3, 2022. 8:00a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**First United Methodist Church, 2111 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108.**

**Participating Areas: 05 (Southern California), 06 (California Northern Coastal), 07 (California Northern Interior), 08 (San Diego - Imperial), 09 (Mid -Southern California), and 93 (Central California).**

[www.mujaresenaa.org](http://www.mujaresenaa.org).

[tallermujereshispanas7@area8aa.org](mailto:tallermujereshispanas7@area8aa.org).

**La Quinta Inn & Suites, 641 Camino del Rio S.,  
San Diego, CA 92108, 619-295-6886.**

**Code Discount: CGMUHE**

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