



# The Wagon Wheel Idaho 18's Newsletter

January 2013

Editor, *Ralayne H.*

## **PRAASA 2008**

### **Part 1**

PRAASA started off at 12:45 pm on Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 with a few comments from Alaska's Delegate to welcome everyone and then a few comments from our Pacific Region Trustee, Madeleine P. Torvald H., Alaska's Delegate stated that the most important person at PRAASA was probably the G.S.R. At that point I realized just how important PRAASA is to anyone involved in any level of service. Then, Madeleine stated that PRAASA is the College Education of Alcoholics Anonymous. Once again, reinforcing that all of us who attend PRAASA needs not only report, to the very best of our ability, our experience, but to begin finding ways to get as many people as possible to attend PRAASA. As those of you who know me, you know that I am already trying to do this with the H&I Committee, but as well as in my Home Group. So, I challenge all of you to go back and discuss this at your next business meeting, whether that is at your Home Group, District, or Special Service Committees. The Assembly moved on from there to all the attending Delegates giving reports on the Area's that they represented. David F. did a fabulous job representing Area 18 (I need to say this not because he needs his ego pumped, but some Delegates were not as exciting as our own delegate). I will not cover what David stated, because hopefully, we all have an idea of how outstanding our Area is. But, two Areas put me in absolute Awe, Area 2 – Alaska, & Area 17 – Hawaii. Their stories were so exciting they made chills run down my spine and gave me goose-bumps. Area 2 - Alaska, during the one month that flight to Russia is allowed, will go to Russia and perform 12<sup>th</sup> Step work to the Russians. So here, I am going to interject that when this panel was over and we had open discussion time at the microphone, a Russian lady with her interpreter, and Alaskan Sponsor, informed the Assembly that due to Area 2. She was able to take a train (from her home city located only 300 miles from Anchorage) across Russia to Moscow and fly from there, through L.A., to Seattle, than on to Anchorage, Alaska to arrive at her destination and be able to attend PRAASA. Do you think

that your Home Group can find a way to get your G.S.R. to PRASSA now?

Area 17 – Hawaii, by boats, loaded with Big Books and food, they carried the message to two native islands where alcoholism is so prominent, that the teenagers are raising the children because the adults are so drunk. This journey of Twelfth Step work is known as "The Crossing" in Hawaii. They do this twice a year. Hawaii's Delegate was honored to say that when they arrive now, that there are sober members of Alcoholics Anonymous with regular meetings being held on those two islands. At this point, I realized one of many more realizations. At PRAASA, our college education in Alcoholics Anonymous, one of the teaching methods as it is in every meeting we attend, the learning process is all of us coming together and sharing our experience, strength, and hope. Can we now, get all of our G.S.R.'s to PRAASA next year?

This Panel ended with many people going to the microphone and sharing such love and hope, and inspiration, that at that point I was ready to return to Area 18 with such a new motivation for Service work, and we hadn't even really began to get to the meat and potatoes of the Assembly.

### **Panel 2 – Communications within the Fellowship**

There was a reading from the *12 and 12* about the Divine Paradox. It started with the last paragraph on page 109 and went on to page 112. To quote a small piece of that: "Even the newest of newcomers finds undreamed rewards as he tries to help his brother alcoholic, the one is even blinder than he. This is indeed the kind of giving that actually demands nothing. He does not expect his brother sufferer to pay him, or even to love him. And then he discovers that by the divine paradox of this kind of giving he has found his own reward, whether his brother has yet received anything or not."

1) *Communicating the importance of the service structure – a personal responsibility.* Here it was explained that today, through sponsorship, and home groups, that as individuals, we need to be sharing our experience to show other members exactly what the service structure is. Not only talk about it, but demonstrate through your own actions by the service work that you do. Invite

people to join you in the service work and allow them to be of service with you at what you are doing. We were then reminded of Dr. Bob's 4 reasons that he did service work:

A) Sense of duty.

B) It is a pleasure.

C) Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.

D) Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.

2) *Our 3 legacies – are we carrying this message through sponsorship?* I found a very powerful concept at this panel to use with financially strapped individuals that really touched my heart. That concept is, by being in service, I am being self-supporting as well. Now this can help someone to feel apart of, but there is another aspect of importance that comes with this topic. That is, even if I am putting two dollars in the basket, to complete the self-supporting concept, I need to be in service in some way, even making coffee or being a greeter. And as a sponsor, it is my responsibility to teach the vital importance of this concept. At the Assembly, we were challenged, so I will give this Assembly the same challenge; *“How well do I carry the message?”*

3) *Sharing the message of service- what are our tools and resources.* Well the first thing that we must remember is that service is gratitude in action. So, with that comment, I got lost in thought. With the love of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I realized that, this is one of the biggest reasons that I have been in service work from the earliest moment that I came into the program. I have always been grateful for what is given to me from this program, so I so willingly will be in service back to this program. But I did get from the speaker that we utilize Sponsors, books, Grapevine/La Vina, pamphlets, the AA or Grapevine web sites, and lets us not forget that the Fellowship itself.

4) *On-line Intergroup (OIAA) – Who, what, when, where, and how?* This was another amazing explanation of how another way we can be of service to the suffering alcoholic. This service is really great for those who might not be able to attend meetings for such reasons as medical situations. I have enclosed with this report information concerning the OIAA.

5) *Preserving our history – Would the fellowship benefit from making Archives a Standing Conference Committee?* This topic is so important, that it is a proposal for this year's General Service Conference. We have addressed this already at three different times this year in preparation for our Delegate to go to New York. So I will leave this for our Delegate to report on upon his return. So as I end this first report on PRAASA, during this first panel, we were told to look at page S19 of the Service Manual to see why we need a conference. I am going to share this with you for those of you who might not have a Service Manual:

### **Why do we need a conference?**

“We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back life. “We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all its services.

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.”

Gene A.

PRAASA 2008 Part 2 as reported by Gene A.

Here continues my second report of how I saw PRAASA and how it affected me. This is my interpretation of the information that was given out at PRAASA. Sometimes, the emotions were so strong, that I would get wrapped up in the message and after the message had been given, I would only realize that I had forgotten to continue to take notes. Then at breaks, I would find myself frantically recalling and trying to get the message down on paper before the next panel would start. So, as this first day of PRAASA continues, we go into our next Panel.

Panel - “Participation.”

1) Each member's responsibility for supporting the Home Group's participation in General Service. Once again, it was stated, but with a different twist, that the G.S.R. is the most important service position. This is the voice of the Group to the District, Area, and as well as finally ending up at G.S.O. So, it is vitally important that all members of a Home Group attend their business meetings and participate with everything that is going on. We as members, need to voice our opinions on the different topics, so that our G.S.R.'s have the most informed voice when they represent their Groups.

The discussion then lead into the necessity that if you belong to a Home Group, you should be in service to that Group in some way. You should have a service position.

If you do not, then the question was posed, "Why don't you?" With everything that happens at a group, we can find a way to be of service. For those who have been a member, we need to help the newcomer find something to do. If all service positions are filled, then create a new service for the Group. Why not? It can only make the Group stronger and make everyone feel more of a member, more a part of the family.

2) What is an active, committed Home Group Member? An active and committed Home Group member is someone who participates in their Home Group Business meetings. They are in service to their Home Group, even if it is once a week as a Greeter. One final point that really struck me was it was stated that an active and committed Home Group member is also studying the AA Service Manual. The Presenter went on to utilize the pamphlet "The AA Group." In this pamphlet, it states that as members we sustain friendships, greet the newcomers, and make myself available to other members. When was the last time you stood at the door and greeted who ever was walking through the door, newcomer, visitor, or just a fellow member that you just saw yesterday? Finally, this Presenter went as far as to bring another member's view on this topic that was found in the 1992 January Grapevine, "You Call This Unity?" In the quoted article, a member participates and shares, greets the newcomer, come early and stays late, is in service, and is there enough for other members to know who you are. So how do you rate yourself as an active and committed member of AA? Can we be doing more? I sure know that I can!

3) When is it my responsibility to say "No" to Service? This Presenter started off with stating that this needs to be a spiritual decision. For this to be a correct response to service work, we need to make the decision process as spiritual as possible. In other words, that by saying "No" to service work; it should be so that we still may grow spiritually by making this decision. Always, after praying on this and asking for guidance, consultate as many people in the program as possible. Get a broad spectrum of information about why you would say "No" to service work. And finally Pray, Pray, Pray and then have trust in the process.

We were reminded of the dangers of not being active, it was entitled "The 3 Go's:"

1. First, your Service goes

2. Second, your meeting goes then, you go

So as this presentation came to a close, we were reminded, also, "To thine own self be true."

4) GSRs to Trustees: Selecting our Leadership. Elections promote group participation and the Third Legacy Process removes the egos from those that are elected into our Service positions. There was discussion about how this whole process works all the way down to the Spirituality of placing names in a hat and allowing our

Higher Power to be expressed from the drawing of a name from that hat to be that elected servant. What was amazing was that I was sitting next to a DCM from Tempe Arizona that had a few choice words about her delegate. At the beginning of the Assembly, when her delegate was giving his report on his Area, she described that his election was a very heated and passionate election. The election for the Delegate came down to the drawing of a name from the hat. She stated that there were many people that had voted the other way. What I do know, is this Delegate gave a very passionate and powerful panel later on in the Assembly, that as I walked around later, even from members of Area 18, there was much discussion for his passion. Was our High Power using him? I think so. As it has been pointed out to me by my Service Sponsor, even if you don't like the results, have faith and trust in the process. Friday's panels finally came to a close. We had a break for dinner and then we returned to go into Roundtables that lasted until 11pm. The Roundtable that I selected that night was the Treasurer's Roundtable. There were roundtables for Secretary's, Literature Rep.'s, Delegates and Alternate Delegates, Past Delegates, DCM's, and the most attended Roundtable that night – the GSRs and Alternate GSRs. For reasons that I have stated in a previous sub report of PRAASA 2008 that I have already given to the H & I Committee I felt that the Treasurers Roundtable was the best one for me to attend.

PRAASA 2008 Part 2 as reported by Gene A. (Continued from June)

With that, I would like to give the report on the Correction's Roundtable that was conducted Saturday night. There were also B.T.G., Hospitals, CPC/PI, as well as Archives and Grapevine Roundtables being conducted.

Since we are probably sending our B.T.G. Chair to a B.T.G.

Conference this September and I have been involved with Hospitals for over 3 years, I decided that it would benefit me to attend the Corrections Roundtable.

1. How is Bridge the Gap working?

Area 42 uses a post-card and assigns a temporary sponsor for a two week period. The temporary sponsor will not only help with getting someone to understand the basics of AA, start them in the Big Book, but take them to as many meetings as possible and introduce the newcomer to as many people as possible. The difficulty is that the prisons are very strict and make this program very difficult to be a success. So Area 18 is not the only Area that is struggling with this program. Some of the B.T.G.

volunteers will go into the prisons with the Facilitators to present the Bridge the Gap program to the inmates. The last thing that was very well taken at the Roundtable was that "One success story for Bridge the Gap is a success for Bridge the Gap." Our work was worth it to help that one alcoholic into recovery.

2. "Contact on Release." This is what Area 8 from San Diego, California refers to as "Bridge the Gap." Their program has to go through the counselors, even the Sheriff, to be able to have this program reach the inmate. They have the same problem that sometimes the inmate is released by the time the application for a "Bridge" is received. It was stated that where Area 8 has the biggest problem is getting this program to work in Treatment Facilities due to the quick turn around of 3 week treatment facilities.

"How to get volunteers."

An idea that came up that would require the facilitators to discuss this with either the Wardens or the Sheriff is if there is a possibility to grant a temporary clearance or set up as a guest pass to allow a potential volunteer to attend a meeting with a current facilitator so that they may see just what it is like facilitating meeting inside prisons and the county jails.

There was the idea of making up a flyer and post contact information and a little bit of information about where the need is and how they can help. Maybe put a little success story to it.

Ask a group to adopt a facility.

Co-ordinate a Corrections Workshop along with a 5<sup>th</sup> Tradition Workshop.

Distribution of Literature

In Northern California, the literature remains under lock and

key in their meeting room. The inmates have to request books through the prison to be able to own one and have it go in to their cells with them.

In Hawaii, the policy for literature there is, if you bring a book

in, you take the book out. So what they do is they make copies of the Big Book and they may give that to the inmates. It was asked who funds the copies, and it was stated that the H and I fund covers the cost of copying the Book.

Arizona will only give books to long term inmates.

Southern California uses \$500 to purchase and distribute literature for a 6 month period. If there is a special reason on why they need more than \$500 they may request it.

There was dead silence when I asked this question on how the other Areas distributed literature. Then someone spoke up and said "You get to give inmates literature? What Area are you from?" Someone else spoke up and stated that we need to enjoy that privilege because not all Areas get to give Inmates books. There was also that age old battle about money and how we could better serve AA if we were to just move our money to GSO and that there is no need to have a fund raiser like our barbeque. At this point, I was once again, reminded of the honor and privilege that I have to be in service to all of Area 18 and what we are able to do for the still suffering alcoholic. Overall, as was pointed out to me by another one of our Area Officers, Area 18 has great potential to be and incredible Area. We are still small enough that by attending PRAASA with an open mind and that desire to listen, we can learn to shape our Area and to overcome the hurdles that the Areas with larger population of Alcoholics have already experienced. The key here is to get our people to PRAASA so that we may begin this learning process. We need more people to attend "the college education of Alcoholics Anonymous" as our Pacific Region Trustee, Madeline stated at the beginning of this Service Assembly. I want to state again, Thank You to the Area 18 West H and I Committee for allowing me to be of service and attending PRAASA so that I may come back and spread the Spirituality that "We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we have not even dreamed." I pray that you all have the experience of PRAASA and receive the energy and the touch of your Higher Power as I have. Remember, Keep it Simple, Gene A.

The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety. These legacies of suffering and of recovery are easily passed among alcoholics, one to the other. This is our gift from God, and its bestowal upon others like us is the one aim that today animates A.A.'s all around the globe.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 151

## **Home of PRAASA 2013      Are you involved?**

How better to be of maximum use through service than to carry the message of hope to the next suffering alcoholic. We who have been to a Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (PRAASA) know how energy charging an experience it can be. We in Idaho have the opportunity to attend PRAASA in Boise in March 2013 without costing our groups, districts, or area large amounts to fund our travel expenses. I am so excited to be able to encourage my sponsees and everyone I can reach, to attend this uplifting event, that will possibly impress each to stretch a little more. I just love meeting others in the Pacific Region who is active in service. I have gained much knowledge to the position of DCM, secretary, and even the archives. That only benefitted the fellowship as a whole.

At the Assembly/Convention I thought I had a January edition to promote PRAASA; as there is no January newsletter, I was heartbroken to say the least.

How can we get people excited about attending PRAASA? At the PRAASA planning meeting it was suggested we do a newsletter anyway. After much discussion the end result was to have an email newsletter go out in January. Therefore, enclosed here in this email are the wonderful responses received for your reading pleasure. Enjoy the experience, strength and hope in each article and attend PRAASA!

Ralayne H.

Idaho Area 18 Newsletter Editor

## **PRAASA Report**

This was my first PRAASA. Therefore, I didn't realize that PRAASA actually starts on a Thursday night with an early bird kick off meeting and panels scheduled to begin on Friday morning. So, I had made my flight to arrive on Friday afternoon and missed all the panels for Friday. When Terri P. – District 8 DCM and I landed, I turned my phone on and had received a text from Barry S. – Chair to remind him about PNC. I texted back, what is PNC? The Pacific Northwest Conference....never heard of it! Well, it's only the oldest conference in the US. So much to learn!!

So, Terri and I were wondering the best way to get to Bellevue from the airport. I asked her if she wanted an adventure and try to find the Spanish AA van. She said sure, so we called the number and the van came and picked us up curbside! Our driver's name was Orlando and he was going to be shuttling people back and forth all weekend. As we were leaving the airport, he said we might have to go to the Hispanic Intergroup to run an errand. Sure enough, we were on the freeway when he got the call. So, he turned the van around and Terri and I got to see the Hispanic Intergroup in SeaTac!! The gentleman met us at the van and waved to us and gave Orlando a box of Espanol schedules to take to PRAASA. We then ran into 5 o'clock traffic....will we ever get there?

We arrived at the hotel just in time for dinner break. So, we all gathered in the lobby (about 15 of us) and headed out to find a place to eat. Have you ever tried to get seating in a restaurant for 15 people on a Friday night – without reservations? But, we did. And we got back to the hotel just in time for the last panel of the evening. We walked into this huge room with about 800 people. I was immediately overwhelmed with gratitude and awe. I looked around at all these people...I could sense that every one of them was in love with AA and wanted to serve a fellowship that saved their life. I am one of those people and I belong!!

After the last panel was over, it was time for Roundtables. I found the Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Roundtable. There

were about 20 of us in the room. The moderator asked for topics and there were many.

1<sup>st</sup> Topic – Are we efficient in attending professional conferences such as NAACP, AARP, etc.? It is important that AA raise the awareness that we exist but that this isn't the first line of recommendations of professionals. We could be more affective in other areas.

2<sup>nd</sup> Topic – Are we educating our CPC committees with what we are here to do? It is important that the AA fellowship knows how the CPC committees' serve. So it is the committees' responsibility to educate and train our representatives and let the fellowship know what we are all about. We are here to carry the message of AA to the professional community that is on the front lines when the still suffering alcoholic comes to them. It's our job to let those professionals know that AA exists and where to find us.

3<sup>rd</sup> Topic – Take a professional to lunch suggestions. Have a very specific agenda when the professional is invited to attend a luncheon/workshop. It was suggested to have an AA presentation in place with information specific to AA – what we do/what we don't do, how we do it, where you can find us. Remember, we are anonymous, but not a secret. Another suggestion was to conduct a skit for the luncheon/workshop. Many recovery skits can be found on [recoveryskirts.com](http://recoveryskirts.com).

4<sup>th</sup> Topic – How best to start a CPC committee? Start with flyers introducing the work of the CPC committee and include when, where and why you are meeting. Potlucks are always a good idea to get people to come! Once your committee has been started, prioritize the projects. It's best to focus on one project and do it well than to be all over the place and not be able to be effective. Some committees rotate on after two years and then the knowledge is gone. So suggested rotation would be to leave some knowledge behind for the next incoming rotation. Also suggested was to gather alcoholics in the profession such as lawyers (the other bar ☺), doctors, counselors, etc. to share how best we can work together.

5<sup>th</sup> Topic – The day before I left for PRAASA, I received a phone call from a group that was asked

by the Elmore County Drug Court to purchase a stamp for the court cards. So my question to the roundtable was when does cooperation become affiliation and are these kinds of requests infiltrating into our fellowship? Oh boy...did I open a can of worms! It seems that this is a very hot topic with many areas present. According to one gentleman, there was a court ruling that 'sentencing people to AA' maybe against the law in your area because AA has been considered a religion (which I thought was very interesting). There is a judge in Area 6 that is a Class A Trustee that could shed more light on this. I have yet to find out who it is but, I'll be looking into that! Another comment was that the courts should have their own meeting and take attendance and not expect AA to be the accountability force. But the bottom line is that it is up to us to educate and inform these professionals as to what we do and don't do. Suggestions were to reach out to the colleges for future professionals (dentists, doctors, lawyers, nurses, EMTs, etc.) and convey to them from the very beginning of their professional careers about AA.

The next mornings' panels started at 8:00am. I was asked to be on Panel 7 – Diversity-Are We Inclusive? My topic was Members with Physical Disabilities. When I was asked a couple of weeks prior, I was immediately struck with fear!! How can I present a topic that I know nothing about?!? But, the General Service Office has so much information on the [aa.org](http://aa.org) website that I was able to gather some great information, plus interview our current Special Needs committee in the Boise area. My next fear was speaking in front of 1000+ people. But, I'm telling you this...Idaho Area 18 there and was so supportive!! I am so blessed to have you all in my life!!! After the panel, the most incredible thing happened. People were coming up to me and thanking me for giving them information that they weren't aware of or didn't know that GSO offered. They were asking me about more information and how they could help and I was so moved....it just brought me to tears. How could a drunk like me, help so many people with just a little time and research on a topic I knew nothing about?

My HP rocks!!! It felt so good to give!!! That was an incredible day full of panels and fellowship. That evening, after the banquet/AA speaker meeting, I attended the PI Roundtable. It was the same format. The moderator asked for topics but it basically turned into a general sharing so I'll just bullet point the things I captured.

- Find people who've done PI work and talk to them about their experience.
- Create pamphlets specific for the audience that you will be addressing. Know your audience.
- At middle schools, take a panel of about 4-5 people and let students ask questions.
- Contact middle and high school health classes.
- Have booths at Salvation Army, recovery conferences, etc.
- Be proactive and have workshops for the fellowship. Hand out basic PI literature such as Speaking at Non AA Meetings and Anonymity pamphlets. Make it a general sharing session and brainstorm ideas and talk about the literature.
- Young peoples' CPC/PI.
- Place placards inside buses.
- Radio and TV PSAs in English and Spanish. \$10 PSAs available from GSO.
- Choose what you want to do and do it well.
- Ads in college newspapers.
- Come up with 101 ways to carry the message ☺.
- Don't sneak literature into places. Go through the correct channels to get permission.

Whew! It was a very informative Roundtable! There was someone taking notes and they were going to send it out but I still haven't received anything.

The next day was so cool with the 'What's on your mind?' general sharing session, the Ask It Basket

(try to stump the Area Delegates) and the Past Trustees Panel. It was time to say goodbye to everyone and head to the airport. It seemed like a very short trip but one that will last a lifetime!! Thank you for the opportunity to serve Idaho Area 18!!!

Love to all!  
Shannon

## MY PRAASA EXPERIENCE OVER THE YEARS

**PRAASA is one of those things in life that without experiencing it you will never know. It can't be described it has to be lived. It is an Area assembly, the best service workshop, and speaker meeting on steroids you have ever been to. It is over a thousand service junkies getting together talking about the most current topics of AA. Always and I mean always focused on what's best for the newcomer.**

**Each PRAASA I have ever been to has been a different experience. No matter what position I was holding, or not holding at the time I took something new back with me. From my first time to my last it has been a reenergizing experience, (I have been lucky enough to attend over a dozen). Only at PRAASA do I come away feeling it to this magnitude.**

**I think the thing I enjoy the most is the new friends I meet every time from all over the Pacific region. It consists of 5 Areas from California, 2 from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, and Alaska. What you learn from this is every problem you may have at the Group, District, or Area level has a solution from someone there who has experienced it.**

**I relish every year the coming of PRAASA and especially can't wait for this one. They only come to Idaho about every 15 years and this year it is in Boise. If you have been putting off PRAASA in the past don't miss it this year. For less than two drinks in a bar you may be able to change your sobriety for years and decades to come. DON'T MISS IT!!!!**

**Tony Tunison**

**Area 18 Archivist**

**Panel 56 Past Delegate**

Corrections Panel PRAASA 2012 (Friday night  
03/02/2012)

Moderator; Mary B. Area 69  
Opened with Serenity Prayer  
Mary, asked for topics of discussion.

Topics Suggested;

1) Getting Volunteers;

Attend District and Group meetings. Create flyers to encourage volunteers. Participate in Workshops to encourage volunteers and train volunteers. When new volunteers participate match them up with an experienced facilitator for the first 6 months at least. Try to refer volunteers to the institutions that need volunteers (sometimes they want to participate in a facility that already has an abundance of volunteers). Set a good example. Have facilities watch CD from GSO. Approach YPAA's for service in the youth facilities. Let potential volunteers know there is nothing to be scared of. We are just providing a meeting to inmates of the facilities. Be Serene.

2) Relationship between AA and Correctional Facilities;

Build relationship between facilities and AA. Use the Correction Chair & CPC as intermediaries between facilities and AA. Invite Professional to Correction workshops created for their participation. Plan these well in advance with Wardens, Judges and other professionals to give them ample time to get it on their calendar. Read Corrections workbook, kit and other GSO material.

3) Training Facilitators;

Provide training to volunteers (facilitators) who take in meetings. Pair up inexperienced volunteers with experienced volunteers. Train volunteers common sense rules of Institutions. Train volunteers to follow the rules set by the Facilities.

4) Bridge The Gap / Temporary Contact Person / Pre-Release Contact Program ;

BTG appears to be mostly geared to Treatment. Pre-Release is geared to Corrections. BTG forms can easily be edited to accommodate corrections. Correction workbook states both programs are interchangeable.

5) Organization of Corrections Committees in our area;

Have a central contact for Facilities to contact rather than multiple individual volunteers that may not be all on the same page. Multiple contacts leads to much confusion.

6) Spirit of Rotation;

Important to rotate volunteers to different meetings. After chairing the same meeting for a while volunteers take ownership of meetings and sometimes forget it is an AA meeting. Rotation allows others to serve. Volunteers need opportunities. Guidelines should be worded to encourage rotation.

7) Suggestions for sobriety time to facilitate Correction meetings;

Most states have guidelines that stipulate sobriety. Pair up inexperienced with experienced facilitators.

8) Overcoming resentments against Correctional Officers and other Law Enforcement;

Abide by Correction and Facility Guidelines. Respect the Institutions Employees. When we visit an institution we are their guests and they will get the final say.

9) Remote / Dark Facilities; What can we do?

Send a committee or volunteer to the facility to gather as much information about the needs of a facility, and participating AA members in the area. Possible Tele conference meeting for those places extremely remote?

Provide literature & or Grapevine subscriptions. Provide numbers if possible for inmates to call (be careful with this suggestion). Pen Pals.

Closed with the Serenity Prayer

We did not get to all suggested topics.

Thank you all who participated!

Darel P. Area 18

## ATTITUDE

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that 24 hours. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one thing we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We ARE in charge of our attitudes!

-Charles Swindol  
Indian River Central Office newsletter  
This was discovered in Bob. P.'s 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Big Book and submitted by Brad P.

### Favorite PRAASA memories:

I flew into LAX one Friday morning early. As I followed the exit signs I was reminded of the time in my youth when coming to LAX was an afternoon activity for some of my friends and me. We were living in California and I was particularly fascinated by the activities of an International Airport. This particular Friday, I had made my way to the escalator leading down to the Baggage and Ground Transport arena. As I peered down upon the moving throng I spied a sign and two women waving and grinning. Welcome to PRAASA 2010. This way please. Being the shy, retiring person I am I waved my way through the crowd shouting "that's me! I am so glad to see you. Thanks for greeting me." What a tremendous feeling of being at home on the planet.

I love this city, they are expert people movers. At PRAASA my favorite experience was attending a Workshop on Predatory Behavior in AA. They had set aside a room for about 40 people at 11:00 p.m. There were about 300 people who showed up trying to get in. This brought the subject to light and was addressed at the morning meeting of the Assembly. Home Groups say "can you hear us now?" to the Pacific Region Assembly. Yes, they can and did.

One winter morning at 3:30 A.M. I made my way across town to Jason's house. Darel came along, packed us up and we were off to Seattle. Just a brief 8 hour drive to Washington on the first weekend in March. Being the girl, I brought food for the trip. Being the guys, they brought the car and the map in their heads information.

I had promised my friend Brian that I would be there to cheer him on when he took the stage for Idaho. Darel kept his promise to get me there on time. With Jason's help I was able to register and be in my seat as the delegates approached the podium area stairs. I was so happy to be there for my Delegate, and call his name out in encouragement as he took the stage (he he).

One of my favorite things at PRAASA is the first year Delegate Reports which begin at the start of the Assembly. There are reports from each of the delegates letting us know how the structure of their districts handles serving the particular needs of AA's fellowship in their populations.

My other favorite part was to serve as a time keeper, and have my name and Area on the program. They even gave me the microphone for a brief reading (silly people).

I hope to see many of you at the 2013 PRAASA. I have been honored to serve as the Greeter Chair for this event and am so encouraged by all the volunteers who are getting ready for our guests. Today is December 31, 2012. As we sashay into the future together we will smile and wave along the way. Welcome to PRAASA 2013. This way please.

Sincerely, Janet H.

I was the GSR of my home group at the beginning of the rotation in March 1994. I was attending the third district meeting I had attended when my life was changed forever. At this meeting the DCM, secretary, and three other members were to share an experience with the group that opened my eyes to a way of living that I had never dreamt. This experience I would come to know as the "PRAASA glow."

In 1994 the District 4 committee meeting was held on the third Saturday of the month which in March happened to be two weeks after PRAASA 1994 in Juneau, AK. The five trusted servants in that meeting that day had all attended this PRAASA and were happier than I had ever seen a person in my 29 years of life. They attempted to describe the fellowship, service, and love that had happened during the weekend in Juneau with each of us verbally and each spent most of the time crying, giggling, and saying "Wow, you just cannot take it all in." The look in their eyes told more than words could possibly say. Each of their experience was so compelling I knew I must go to this thing called PRAASA.

Over the next few months each committee meeting spent part of the agenda discussing PRAASA. The first thing we were taught was PRAASA stood for Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly. At this event more than 800 alcoholics got together to talk about A.A. as a whole, the upcoming General Service Conference, and what was going on in the home groups of each of the attendees. The level of excitement kept growing and growing in those who had attended and fanned the flames of desire in me to have the experience that they had had. In November talks were started about carpooling to the upcoming 1995 PRAASA to be held in Tacoma, WA. I had no idea how I was going to do it but I was in.

In March of 1995 I traveled with five other alcoholics by car from Boise, ID to Tacoma to be changed. I was amazed. The love these drunks had for each other and the still suffering alcoholic was so deep and complete. The willingness, knowledge, trust that was shared turned me into a "service junky" instantly. I had the privilege to read "How It Works" at the Saturday evening banquet while celebrating my fourth sobriety birthday; I knew I must celebrate my sobriety with this group again and again. I was changed that weekend and have the opportunity to reaffirm that change at many PRAASAs since. I have become a part of a worldwide fellowship that has no boundaries where I feel safe and loved.

In 2013 it will be my privilege to serve Idaho Area 18 as their Area Chairperson and be a part of an Area that will welcome hundreds of alcoholics to Idaho Area 18 for PRAASA in Boise, ID. My hope is that all who read this will come and be a part of the largest service conference in A.A. and that maybe your life will be touched and changed the way mine was in 1994. Bill's written words on page 89 of the Big Book say it all:

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends- this is an experience you must not miss.

I look forward to seeing you all March 1-3, 2013 at PRAASA 2013.

Barry S.  
Idaho Area 18 Chairperson

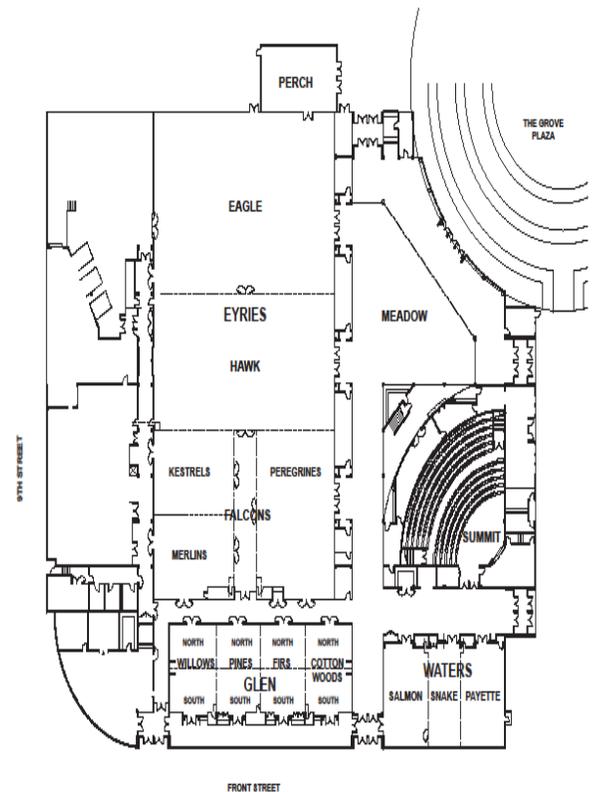
As recounted by Mike W. “damned ol redneck from Parma, Idaho”, when asked if he had a PRAASA experience to share for the emailed Idaho 18 Newsletter.

“It was thirteen years ago, I believe when Boise hosted the last PRAASA. As the Idaho Area 18 Delegate, it was my job to take our bid to host PRAASA in Boise, Idaho back to GSO in New York. This was two years out. We got the bid and started to look for a place to house the event. We put in a bid for the Riverside Hotel and got it. At the Forum in Salt Lake City held at the Riverside Hotel we were housed outside in a tent, much like second class citizens and were concerned about our Boise contract and our treatment there for the event. We in the planning committee had put in the bid that we could back out of the contract up to one year without paying. As the planning progressed it became clear that personalities before principals had gotten in the way. The person I was dealing with at the Hotel made me mad and you know what drunks do when they get mad. We withdrew our bid because we would not be treated like that. Oh, but where will we go? At the time there was a lot downtown Boise with two huge holes dug and nothing else happening. We contacted the person in charge of the planning for the event center to secure a bid for our event. We did a lot of praying and had an abundance of faith, asking for Gods guidance and direction, that this would be finished in time. My Higher Power took care of many things that myself and the committee could not do or handle ourselves. Now that is a lot of faith! The end of the story is we were the first event housed within the new facility known today as the Center On The Grove. Who would have guessed that two huge holes would become a 7 story hotel in time for our PRAASA event? “The Grove Hotel is hosting our guests again thirteen years later.

"My favorite part of PRAASA'. I have only been to one but I will tell you a little bit about my experience.

"My favorite part of PRAASA was being able to fellowship with hundreds of other people who are into service in AA in the Pacific Region. The enthusiasm of everyone was catching and exciting. It was great to hear experience, strength and hope from those who have been in service for many years. It fired me up to get involved in the program that gave me the wonderful life I have today." ~Kimmie P~

Floor plan for the Grove convention center



## 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bridging The Gap Workshop

Hyatt Regency Schaumburg  
1800 E Golf Road  
Schaumburg, Il 60173

The Twenty-third Annual Bridging The Gap Workshop Weekend will consist of presentations and discussions on BTG topics of interest to the registered participants such as "Starting a BTG Committee", "Creating a Volunteer List", "Making Presentations to Facilities". Participants will be A.A.'s involved or interested in 12th step work through various General Service and Intergroup Committees like Treatment, Corrections, CPC, PI, H&I, etc. Professionals involved with BTG work will also present. A.A.'s from across the U.S. and Canada will attend, many sharing their experiences on BTG topics.

FRIDAY 3:00p - 7:00p Registration & Hospitality Gathering

7:00p -8:30p Speaker  
8:30p -10:00p Attendee Introductions; National BTG Topics

SATURDAY 9:00a - 12:00p GSO Update; Professional Panels

1:30p -5:00p Topic Presentations  
7:00p -8:30p Speaker  
8:30p -10:00p National BTG Topics Workshop

SUNDAY 9a-12p Ask it Basket; Business Meeting; Wrap-up

For Hotel Reservations Call Direct 847 605 1234 . Refer to Bridging The Gap Workshop special rate \$93+tax. Hotel rates good before and after event date. Pre-Registration \$35. On-site Registration \$40. Day pass only \$25. This is a self-supporting contribution for the workshop, printing, mailing and coordinating expenses through the year. CDs will be available for purchase, even if you are unable to attend. Make registration checks payable to BTGWW c/o Diana A., and mail to: 12070 Hierba Pl San Diego, Ca 92128.

..\$35 Pre-Registration enclosed and/or sponsorship, unable to attend donation, other amount \$35\_\_\_\_\_ Other \$\_\_\_\_\_ \$40 at the door\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 day pass\_\_\_\_\_ (check one)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations- \_\_\_\_\_  
SpecialNeeds \_\_\_\_\_  
ServicePosition/Committee \_\_\_\_\_

What is your Area# \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to give a presentation? What topic? \_\_\_\_\_ Staying at hotel: yes

.no. I am interested in purchasing CDs .

Transportation needed from the airport to the hotel:

yes .no.

Any questions contact coordinator@btgww.org  
www.BTGWW.org