

**Delegate Report - Pacific Regional Forum
Aug 19- 21, 2011 Woodland Hills, CA**

This year's Additional Regional Forum was chaired by our Pacific Regional Trustee, Rod B. Opening remarks on Friday evening were made by Ward Ewing, the Chairman of the General Service Board (GSB) and a Class A (non-alcoholic) Trustee. I truly wish more of you could meet Ward and our other non-alcoholic 'friends of A.A.' I continue to be amazed at how much time they devote to our program, how much they give of themselves, and how much knowledge they have of our fellowship and the AA structure. They do this not because it's life or death for them, but because they appreciate what the program has done and continues to do in the lives of those who suffer from alcoholism. One reason the Regional Forums are my favorite is the opportunity to get up close and personal with our trusted servants in New York, and our current and past Trustees, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, to pick their brains, and to hear and see firsthand the humility and gratitude they model for us.

The Forum consists of formal presentations and informal discussions in the form of topic workshops and general sharing sessions. There is abundant time at the microphone for attendees to ask questions and to share whatever is on their mind. The responses are generally given by the presenters themselves, or members of the General Service Office (G.S.O.) and Grapevine (GV) staff, or the Trustees. Attending this year's Forum were G.S.O. staff members Adrienne B., Julio E., Ivy R., and Eva S., G.S.O. General Manager Phyllis H., GV Director Nancy H., Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (A.A.W.S.) Director Andrea B., GV Executive Editor/Publisher Ami B., La Viña Editor Irene D., General Service Trustee Robert L., and of course Ward, our GSB Chairman. All the presentations were well researched, informative and interesting. I came away with even more tidbits of knowledge than I had before. You'd think after two Conferences, one Board weekend and all the other regional events I've attended over the years, I would 'know it all' by now. Unfortunately, that just isn't the case. The general sharing sessions, otherwise known as "What's On Your Mind," are always a mixed bag ... some registering complaints, some expressing concerns, some asking provocative questions. One of the most interesting questions was directed to Ward. He was asked to describe any difficulties of being a non-anonymous member in an anonymous fellowship. His response was both witty and serious. He stated that the active AA's he knows are afraid of him -- they are afraid he knows what they are doing, and based on his knowledge of the disease of alcoholism, he does! It can lead to conflict, but it has also led to interventions which have resulted in sobriety. He also mentioned that he feels bad that he can't contribute money. Even though he feels like he has a part in the fellowship because of the time he gives, he hasn't paid his 'dues' the way the A.A. member does.

This year the formal presentations by G.S.O and the GV were on the role of the Class A Trustee, the Class B Trustee, a Grapevine Director, an A.A.W.S. Director, and the G.S.O. staff. There was also a presentation on A.A.'s finances, a video entitled "Markings on The Journey, and various young people's videos. Sunday mornings always end with sharing by past Trustees, and it's always my favorite part of the weekend. On Saturday, there were 9 presentations on various topics by current Pacific Region Delegates, and on Saturday evening there were 12 workshops facilitated mostly by current and past Delegates. The workshop I facilitated was entitled "Home Group - Maintaining a Welcoming and Safe Place." It was ironic that our immediate past Delegate, Dave A., facilitated a workshop entitled "The Welcoming Hand of AA" in 2008. I wonder if someone along the way hasn't felt so welcome

in a meeting in Oregon Area? Just kidding! It is a thought-provoking subject, however. Is your home group truly welcoming to anyone who walks in the door? What does your group do that makes it stand out from others and makes the newcomer want to return? Does your group go to extra lengths to make sure everyone who walks in the door feels safe? What extra protections do you offer our more vulnerable members such as our young people, the elderly, the newcomer and those with special needs? You would be surprised at how many wonderful ideas there are, but of course the bottom line is making sure the language of the heart is spoken in your meeting.

I listened intently to Ami's presentation on The A.A. Grapevine. As many of you know, there has been much concern about the decrease in subscriptions, the draws taken from the Reserve Fund, and the general direction of the magazine. I wish you could all meet Ami. I think you would come away with the same feeling of confidence I have that The Grapevine is making the necessary changes just as fast as possible, and the future is not as dim as some may think. I encourage each of you to go to the newly renovated Grapevine website (www.aagrapevine.org) and check it out. As mentioned in other reports, you will soon be able to access The Grapevine and other books and materials published by the Grapevine on your electronic devices. It has taken some sweat, some passionate debates and a lot of hard work and sacrifice, but I have no doubt we are on the right track and we are fortunate to have hired the right leader to get us there.

There is never enough time or space to give a full and complete report on all the topics and weekend activities. I took pages and pages of notes during the weekend, and I'd love to share them with you if you have a particular question or interest. In addition, I can send you a copy of the agenda. If you see a presentation and would like a copy of it, please let me know. I just happen to be on a first name basis with all the presenters, so I'm sure I can obtain a copy for you. 😊

I will leave you with a few things I heard. Perhaps these thoughts will lead to a workshop back in your Districts? "In A.A. we've found A way to recover, not THE way." "We don't use our 'Big Book' and '12 by 12' to hit people over the head." "Are there people not here today because they've not heard about A.A., or worse yet -- because of what they've heard that makes them not want to be here?" "A trusted servant should be open to ideas other than his own." "Why do we list speaker names on our flyers? Shouldn't we attend meetings and conferences regardless of who is speaking?" "What's your personal contribution plan for carrying the message and for your monetary contributions?" "What are you doing today to further the vision of A.A.? Am I doing everything I can?" "Everyone in A.A., is exactly equal." "Why does it take courage to talk about your own spirituality or lack of it?"

I am truly grateful that you, the trusted servants of Oregon Area, support so many of your officers to attend not just this conference, but also PRAASA and PNC. I firmly believe it benefits the Area when your officers report back to you, sharing ideas and experiences that you can then take back to your home groups if you so choose. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this manner.

Yours in loving A.A. service,

Anne M., Delegate
Panel 60 Oregon Area 58