

## RAMBLINGS OF A DCM

My participation in AA has been extremely busy the last month. I attended the Special Regional Forum in Woodlands Hills, CA, the assembly in Tucson and participated in the Convention in Flagstaff as the registrar. It has been rewarding, tiring and a lesson in humility. I truly appreciate the support of District 03-301 in allowing me to be of service in this way. I learned at the forum, that 2 to 3 weekends dedicated to AA is normal for our delegates. Wow, that's intense!

### **Regional Forum**

The Pacific "Additional" Regional Forum was held in Woodland Hills, CA on August 19 – 21, 2011.

I arrived at the hotel approximately 3:30 P.M. The Opening Session started at 7:00 P.M. The General Sharing Session ended at 10:00 P.M.

Saturday was a full day as morning session started at 9:00 A.M. and the final workshop ended at 9:45 P.M. There were a number of presentations and Q&A sessions as well as workshops on numerous topics. The Sunday session started at 9:00 A.M. and finished at 11:30 P.M.

We also watched several Young People videos that looked very good.

### **Facts**

1. Regional Forum: 723 attendees, 373 first timers
2. E-books will be available for purchase from GSO on 11/15/11 for the iBook hardware and on Droid products 12/1/11.
3. Self Support: It takes \$6.29 per year, per member to sustain GSO. Contributions are actually \$4.50 per member per year.
4. % of groups contributing to GSO
  - a. 88%, 1954
  - b. 66%, 1974
  - c. 43%, 2010

My conclusion:

You can make a difference. Encourage your group / district to contribute on a regular schedule. The principle is to contribute something, even if it's a small amount.

5. The next regional forum will be in Fairbanks, Alaska, September 13 – 15, 2012

### **My experience:**

1. I arrived too tired to effectively participate in all proceedings. I went to bed early Saturday night.
2. The people from GSO are extremely bright and knowledgeable of AA literature and history. They have been chosen well for their leadership skills.
3. They use humor well and often don't answer a question directly, but explain the experience of AA.
4. A lesson in humility: Watching the attendees, including delegates, GSO staff and trustees provides an example of how to be a good AA member. First, we must be of service. The good ones have read & lived the AA literature.  
Goal: To be a better AA member, read the literature, talk through issues and practice the principles of AA. This will necessarily require much prayer and meditation.

5. The Chair of the General Service Board closed with one primary concern:  
Our membership has plateaued. ....
6. From a past delegate: “What am I doing to further my vision of AA?”

Remember, the highest we ever get in AA is sober, any higher & we would have to start over.

#### **Lessons learned / re-learned**

1. If at all possible, arrive rested and ready for two full days of AA service.
2. Take someone with or go with someone. It is much more beneficial to attend with others, than to isolate. I attended a PRAASA several years ago and was more alone in a crowd of AA people than if I had stayed home. This was my responsibility / choice, not theirs.

#### **Concept 4**

1. Right of Participation, voting in proportion to responsibility
2. When you accept a position, it is your responsibility to learn the requirements
3. It is the responsibility of the previous person in that role to help the new person.
4. All pamphlets are available on the AA website  
(<http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=5>).
5. The Big Book has been translated into 62 languages, 3 other languages are currently being translated.

#### **Inventory**

1. Include all members that are willing to participate. Is it representative? If not, what can we do to include others?
2. Look at the defects evident from the inventory.
3. Look at the opposite of the defect. This can be helpful.
4. Explain why members should care about an inventory.
5. Have a neutral party as facilitator.
6. *Ask for minority opinion.*
7. “If you have a problem with the group conscience, the problem is between you & your higher power, not between you & the group.”

#### **Concept 3 – GSR “Right of Decision”**

1. If someone says that a tradition violation has occurred, ask them which one. Discuss it, read the literature, discuss it again. What does our literature say?
2. GSRs are to take both sides of a discussion back to the group & vice versa.

#### **“Varieties of Spiritual Experience”**

1. Spiritual Experience – What does it mean?
  - a. A deep feeling of connection – we give it a name.
  - b. “Acknowledged Mystery” – It is OK to not have all the answers, or a name for our higher power.
  - c. We are “Spiritual beings, having a human experience”

#### **Self Support**

1. Money in the basket is service & provides a sense of participating.
2. Put something in the basket, even if it’s only a nickel, because you believe in what you are doing.

3. Contribute to GSO & Area.
4. Promote the birthday plan: Send one dollar to GSO for each year of sobriety.
5. Provide information: Where does the money go? A one page report should be sufficient for groups.

### **Leadership**

Choose good leaders for all positions – GSR, Treasurers, DCMs, DCMCs, Delegate, Trustees, ...

Read Concept IX (Long Form).

### **Closing remarks – Chairman, General Service Board**

1. He learned a lot.
2. There is concern about the lack of significant growth in the last 10 to 15 years.
  - a. Why?
  - b. What can we do?
3. AA has grown by 60,000 members the last 3 years, but longer term there is no growth. The general population has grown at a faster rate.
4. There are many other 12 step groups. They are growing.
5. In the 70' & 80' courts & others started to intervene and send alcoholics the treatment & AA.
6. In some cases, the courts are now not referring to AA because AA is perceived as religious.
7. Alcoholism is a physical disease, yet the solution is a spiritual program.
8. We have a problem with how people perceive us, many attend for 2 to 3 years, then leave. CPC & PI can be part of the solution.
9. There is a relationship between service & long term sobriety.
10. Do we lose new-comers because we focus too much on "God"?
11. What can we do?
  - a. The tone of the weekend was our Primary Purpose – The heart is 12 Step work.
  - b. Technology & communication are tools, like Bill used the telephone.
  - c. Grapevine & La Viña are tools for carrying the message to a new generation.
  - d. We should share our story as individuals with our doctors, therapists, etc.
  - e. Hope comes when one alcoholic hears their story from another alcoholic.
  - f. Live the basics
  - g. Welcome anyone with a desire to stop drinking.
  - h. The focus of the forum was clear – Carry the message.

If you ever get a chance to attend a Regional Forum, **GO**.

You will be impressed and learn much about AA on a beyond our normal experience.

**Thank you for letting me be of service, Keith A.**