

ILAA NEWSLETTER – JULY, 2014

ILAA returns to Nashville, TN this year. Our 2014 Convention is only a few weeks away. How exciting to be returning to Nashville, site of the very first ABA CoLAP conference to be held in conjunction with our ILAA Conference in 1988.

HERE'S THE SCOOP ON ILAA 2014

The 2014 ILAA Conference, October 10th-12th, will be held in the new "IT" city, Nashville, Tennessee! It's a town that sizzles with American music, Southern hospitality, delicious cuisine, and solid recovery. The conference will be at the newly renovated Sheraton Nashville Downtown Hotel which is in walking distance of many attractions and restaurants.

The golf tournament will be held at the Foxland Harbor Golf and Country Club, one of the best private championship golf courses in middle Tennessee.

Speakers include Tennessee residents Seth N. of Nashville, Rob B. of Nashville, Cindy C. of Manchester, and Dave A. from Lebanon.

The Saturday night banquet, located at The Musicians Hall of Fame, will have SURPRISE musical entertainment that won't be believed.

There will be guided tour options by day, and a "Sober Honky Tonk" adventure at night.

Come join us in the city that beats to every kind of song!

Registration information and details can be found at: <http://www.tlap.org/events/6>

Marty R and Dave P share their thoughts on the first Nashville convention and the importance of ILAA in their lives

MY FIRST ILAA NASHVILLE, 1988

One sunny day in the fall of 1988, I found myself at a fascinating place called the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. I was there to attend my first International Lawyers in Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Everything was new to me - the venue, the organization, the somewhat humid heat, and all the people. I knew almost no one except Ted C. and Eli G.

I had passed my sixth anniversary of sobriety and had been attending California Other Bar meetings since the very beginning. I had heard of ILAA. In fact, at the behest of Carroll W, I had worked briefly on site selection for the ILAA conference held in Los Angeles in 1985, but for some reason, I had not attended the event. I remember feeling extremely "special" in those early days, and much too, too to attend such a function. Also, my recollection is that I never really pinned down where and when the conference was actually to occur.

So, there I was in Nashville having my very first ILAA experience. Some of the things I remember were:

–Sitting in the tropical courtyard of the hotel, watching people, and sharing with a couple of new male friends (always men for me in those days) from the mid-west.

–Sitting in a room of about 100 lawyers, all talking about god and the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. This was the most spiritual experience yet for me in recovery. My early memories are of Jack K and John H, but I know there were many others who became dear friends in the rooms in Nashville.

–Seeing Billy H (and I think Jack C) come and go (my recollection is that they were coming and going to New Orleans) to meet with the American Bar Association concerning the formation of a new Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs. I was completely in the dark about what they were doing, but as usual, Billy was doing it with a flourish that couldn't be ignored.

–Hearing announcements concerning the next year's event in Quebec City, made by men (again the men!) with a French accent. Irrestible.

I went to Quebec City the next year, and have been to every ILAA since, save one. During that period I have been privileged to serve a term as Trustee of ILAA and five years as a member of the COLAP commission. The involvement with lawyers in recovery was a very important part of my early years of sobriety. Without these groups of my peers to slide me into mainstream AA, I doubt that I would have lived to celebrate 32 years on June 6 this year. Of course, as you become an old-

timer, if you started at 46 you also become old. But what a grand way to age – with my friends in ILAA.

Some of the chairs have emptied over the years, but there have always been new people to fill them. We acquire a new regular member or two at each annual gathering from among the host group. It's great to see the locals get involved. There is still - and I guess there will always be grousing about the difficulty of acquiring more women for the group. My experience has been that the way to increase membership of women in any group is for the gals to keep coming. To come once, complain about the lack, and then not comeback, defeats the very goal they sought. In every organization to which I have belonged in my 78 years, I have started out as a minority of one or a few women, but I have kept coming back, have done my apprenticeship (I didn't expect to start at the top), and have had great success and acceptance – always!

I love the relative cakewalk through life I have been given through the twelve steps of AA, and the lawyers from all over the world in ILAA have been icing on that cake.

Marty R

LAWYERS IN RECOVERY HAVE GOT TO GO TO ILAA

In the summer of 1986, my mentor and hero Jack K asked me if I planned on going to ILAA that fall. I had never heard of the organization. He told me what it was and said "David, you've got to go." When Jack

said you had to do something, you did it, no questions asked.

I drove from Buffalo to Toronto and got to meet many of the men who were to become my role models over the coming years from all over the US and Canada - Eli and Ted from California, John and John from Ontario, Mike from Texas, Ed from Louisiana, Don from Oregon, Dave from Tennessee and many many other lawyers. I received my first exposure to Ray O'K captivating all these lawyers from around the world in the same fashion as he did in New York. It was magical.

The next year I drove to Philadelphia with Peter M from Buffalo and we got to have our first exposure to Billy H from Kentucky who was absolutely taken with the experience, strength and hope (and revelries) of the old timers in attendance. As is well documented, Billy set out to convince the ABA to form a commission on lawyer addiction and the first workshop was held September 28-30, 1988 followed closely by ILAA September 30-October 1, 1988. Both meetings were held at Opryland in Nashville - still by far the largest hotel at which I have ever stayed.

It was in Nashville that year that Jack K succeeded Stell H from Atlanta as Chair of the ABA commission. I remember Jack asking me to join him in his room prior to his first meeting as chair and revealing to me how nervous he was. Jack K human? I was stunned. Jack, of course, exceeded the ABA's expectations in every way during the years of his leadership.

On Friday that week the rank and file drunks began to arrive and we shall never forget

four young sober lawyers who had no room reservations talking the lovely southern belle at the front desk into giving them the Presidential Suite at the Hotel. Billy H was there with his life sized teddy bear in tow - Billy of ABA fame... What a show. We were treated with excursions to the original Grand Old Opry and enjoyed a wonderful evening of country music at the new Grand Old Opry.

Nashville was the first exposure of my wife JoAnne to the ILAA crowd and she quickly became fast friends with Julia Br, Audrey K, Kathleen L, Dottie A, Delphine MacD and so many wonderful men and women whose company and homes we have shared and enjoyed over the years. ILAA has validated my belief that lawyers can be in recovery from alcoholism and can be honest, successful, happy, joyous and free and have a hell of a good time.

Dave P

Reflections on San Diego - 2013

In 2013 I was asked to present the Sunday "Spiritual Breakfast" talk at the International ILAA Convention in San Diego, CA. Having never attended an ILAA Convention before, I felt compelled to pen my thoughts and to express my heartfelt gratitude to each person who contributed to my experience through organizational detail and loving personal communication.

Truly, the guiding Spiritual Principle practiced by the organization and the individual members is unconditional love. The "old-timers" welcome the newcomers recognizing that the future of the organization demands a careful impartation

of "the solution" in a way that the newcomer understands. All others engage in selfless service knowing that it is our insurance against relapse and our real purpose as recovering alcoholics.

I played in the golf tournament and was impressed with the practice of "rigorous honesty" by people from all over the world. I can't remember when I laughed so much playing golf. Certainly, I will be welcomed by my new friends should I venture across "the pond".

Personally, I was in the midst of making difficult decisions that have everything to do with my larger purpose in life. Some of you may remember that I was working as the CEO of a recovery, treatment and mental health hospital at the time of my talk. Since that time I have left that position to become the Spiritual Director of a large church in Claremont California and to dedicate myself to providing direct services to those lawyers in need by taking on the position of Southern California Consultant to the Other Bar. I feel "home" at last, living out my true purpose in life. What I experienced at the ILAA Convention was instrumental in helping me to make this important decision. I want to help people directly and to "pull on the same end of the rope" with members of the Other Bar while we collectively help to save lives and create meaningful careers.

This is my Thank You for the part that each of you played in my decision to create a meaningful career for myself and to once again serve my passion. The Convention shined like a beacon on the truth:

"Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people

about us."
Alcoholics Anonymous p. 77

Love and Light,
Rev. Greg D, J.D., CAS

Heard at ILAA

A sponsor and sponsee were lost at sea and washed ashore on a deserted island in the Pacific Ocean. After a week of struggle, they prepared to accept the obvious demise they would soon face.

As they looked longingly to the horizon hoping against hope for a ship to appear, a magic lamp washed ashore and was deposited at the sponsee's feet. He scooped up the lamp and tossed it in the air as an expression of his joy.

The sponsor, being much wiser in these matters, caught the lamp before it hit the ground and feverishly began rubbing it.

Suddenly a cloud of smoke billowed from the lamp and sure enough, a Genie appeared and told them that he would grant two wishes.

The sponsee stood in awe of the genie, thinking this program really works, but he could not make a wish. The sponsor told him, I will show you how to do this, and he stepped forward and said, "I wish I was back home at my regularly scheduled AA meeting." He is whisked away and the sponsee is left alone on the beach.

The sponsee being left alone on a beach in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with no food or drink is terrified, he looks at the Genie and says, "I wish my sponsor was here."