

**DELEGATE'S REPORT - 65<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE,**

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK, APRIL 19-25, 2015**

OPENING KEYNOTE BY J. GARY L., NE REGIONAL TRUSTEE started with the question "Should we assume that the 36 Principles will maintain us forever?" He then talked about 12 points very pertinent in our Fellowship today:

1. Singleness of Purpose
2. Social Media – Positive and Negative
3. Diversity of our Membership (still does not reflect our society)
4. What impediments are keeping people out?
5. Diversity in our servants
6. Membership is stagnant
7. What new strategies can we use to attract new members
8. Is our printed literature still relevant?
9. Technology polarization
10. International Structure
11. Litigation
12. "let us never fear change" part of a quote from Bill W.

WORLD SERVICES: THE 23<sup>RD</sup> WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE was held in Warsaw, Poland this year. 41 countries were represented. First time representatives were from Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Romania and Iran. This meeting was closed with the Serenity Prayer in 28 languages.

There are 62 separate General Service Conference Structures around the world. Russia has been struggling with wanting 2 GSC Structures. The 2 licenses will not be renewed until Russia decides on only one General Service Conference Structure.

**PRESENTATION TOPICS:**

1. Diversity and Our Heritage of Inclusion
2. Practicing the Principles in our Hope Group – Safety and Respect (The Group Conscience is the best way to deal with group issues.)
3. Safeguarding our Traditions through the Evolution of Technology
4. Looking Back to Move Ahead (Taking Inventory is our best tool.)

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

I served on the Finance Committee. We met overtime with regard to recommendations for translation of all Conference materials into French and Spanish. GSO had provided lots of information but had not really developed a plan that could be presented. Later in the report you will see the fruits of our labors.

## **BOARD REPORTS:**

### **General Service Board Report** – Terry Bedient, Class A Trustee and Board Chair

Terry reported on a Task Force that is overseeing implementation of 14 initiatives designed to strengthen the function and cooperation of the three Boards: General Service Board, AA World Service Board, and AA Grapevine Board. He reports that all 14 initiatives are moving forward and he will email them to anyone who would like to see them.

### **AA World Services Board Report** - William N., Class B Trustee General Service Trustee and Chairperson

Billy, as he likes to be called, reported on the success of the Website Redesign and informed us that the Services Committee is not called the Technology-Communication-Services Committee. He also stated that in 2014 there was a net total of 1387 new AA Groups formed in the US and Canada. Gross Sales of literature were up 14.4% due to purchases prior to price increases and 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Big Book sales. 54% of literature sales were made online. An early reorder of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Big Book resulted in a significant write-off. This was due to an overestimate of future sales. AAWS has put new practices into place to avoid this issue in the future. Needless to say, there are a lot of these books still available for purchase.

### **AA Grapevine Board Report** – Andrew W., Class B Trustee and Chairperson

Grapevine magazine sales were down by 3126 subscriptions from 2013 and LaVina was up 234 from 2013. 2015 is budgeting for a \$14,000 loss and 2016 will budget for a larger loss under current subscription forecasts. The Grapevine Website has been redesigned to better serve the Fellowship and a mobile-friendly version of Grapevine is being developed. The “Language of the Heart” is now available in audio format. A Subscription Contest is in full force for 2015 and you can track Ohio’s progress on aagrapevine.org. “Organization-wide support is needed for this effort, to our history and to our future.”

## **FINANCIAL REPORT BY DAVID MORRIS, GENERAL SERVICE BOARD TREASURER**

“Finance Around the Picnic Table”, which means that much of the finance discussion during Conference is “preaching to the choir”. David states that “what we need is better communications about what finance really means when members talk about it around the euphemistic picnic table before and after meetings. Clear and concise communications is the key. Although our finances have grown much more complex, remember that Corporate Poverty is more a state of mind, rather than the size of our bank account. ‘Too much – and we argue over perilous wealth and lose sight of our primary purpose of carrying the message. Too little – and we risk losing the ability to carry the message at all.’”

David talked about the spiritual value of the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition: being self-supporting through our own contributions to General Service, and those contributions paying for our vital services: 1) Translations; 2) Carrying the message around the world; 3) Keeping our groups on top through the Conference; 4) Corrections work; 5) Serving our groups with literature, Box 459, GSR packets, etc.; 6) Keeping literature prices low; 7) Grapevine and LaVina magazines; 8) Cooperating with professionals (our main source of new members); 9) Public Service Announcements; 10) Website; 11) Group Records/ Archives; 12) GSO Staff; and many more services that groups could not do themselves. Our contributions are an expression of Gratitude.

What action can we take to insure our financial future?

1. Remind our group to contribute to the different AA entities (even if it is a very small amount, and tell them what that money pays for).
2. Do online contributions for the Birthday Plan (In the Birthday Plan, you can request that your contribution be credited to your group's contributions.)
3. .Doctor's Office, etc.
4. Ask your group to buy a subscription and donate it.
5. Put some of your gratitude in the basket at your group.

We are responsible when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help.....

**INVENTORY – THE RESULTS OF A 3-YEAR PROCESS OF DOING AN INVENTORY OF THE CONFERENCE:**

1. We need to do more CPC and PI work to carry the message.
2. We need transparency at all levels of service.
3. Diversity in AA and in service needs to reflect our society.
4. Groups need to be involved in making decisions.
5. Need to clearly define scope of each position
6. Consider new boundaries for Delegate's Areas and Regions so that Delegates and Trustees can better serve the groups.
7. More communication.
8. Use the Grapevine to communicate about the Conference.
9. Give a lot of report backs.
10. Do we ask the Trustees to do too much?

The full 3-year Inventory Report will come out in a few months and I have ordered some to share with those who are interested.

**ELECTION OF TRUSTEES:**

Northeast Regional Trustee – Richard P.; Southwest Regional Trustee – Yolanda F.; Canada Trustee at Large – Scott H.; Class A Trustee – Leslie S. Backus, B.A.; Class A Trustee – Peter Luongo, Ph.D., LCSW-C; General Service Trustee – Ed M.

**ELECTRONIC VOTING:**

This year we tried electronic voting on the first day of Committee Reports. It was wonderful and saved so much time. It also provided everyone with the exact numbers of votes for and against at the end of each vote. Next year the Panel 65 and 66 Delegates will try electronic voting on the second day of Committee Reports and hopefully they will vote to institute this at subsequent Conferences.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Agenda Committee :**

Advisory Actions:

- 2016 Theme “Our Spiritual Way of Life: Steps, Traditions and Concepts”

- Discussion Topics – Connecting with the Newcomer, Connecting with Each Other, and Connecting with AA as a Whole
- Workshop Topic – “Anonymity – The Spiritual Foundation”

Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the report on the Conference Agenda Process from the Trustees’ Committee on the Conference with appreciation. After a thorough and lengthy discussion, the committee asked the Trustees to explore ways to include the Conference (Delegates) in selecting Conference Agenda Items. And, to provide Delegate Conference Committee Chairs with full background materials for the last quarterly board weekend prior to the General Service Conference.

**Public Information Committee:**

Advisory Actions:

- Approved “Doors”, a new video PSA, providing that a dialog voice-over using professionals, not to exceed \$24,000. The PSA will be centrally distributed.
- Approved the 2014 Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey pamphlet.
- Recommended to discontinue the video PSAs “A Force of Nature” and “Testimonials”.
- Authorized the AAWS, Inc. Board to produce and post audio/video service material on the aa.org website.

Additional Considerations:

- Need guidance on the use of social media by AA members. Distribution of literature should correspond with the launch of the Anonymity Resource Page.
- Explore new forms/channels of presenting and distributing content using platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Google+.

**Grapevine Committee:**

Committee Considerations:

- LaVina be published as cost effectively as possible.
- Implement a communication plan to the Fellowship clarifying LaVina’s unique status as a service piece that strives to be self-supporting.
- Encouraged purchase of Subscription Gift Certificates by local service committees, groups and members to provide magazines to people in prisons, treatment centers and nursing homes.
- Suggested the AA Grapevine Board produce to books: “Armed Forces Members AA Stories” (working title) and “Voices from Early AA” (working title).

### **Policy/Admissions Committee:**

#### Advisory Actions:

- Audio recordings of the General Service Conference presentations published in the GSC Final Report and audio recordings of the trustees' farewell talks given at the closing brunch to be made available in accordance with the Archive's Policies. Access to all other GSC sessions will continue to be prohibited.

#### Additional Considerations:

- The committee reviewed a request for a representative from the GSB of AA in the Czech Republic attend the 65<sup>th</sup> GSC as an observer. The Czech Republic GSB decided not to send an observer, therefore, no action was necessary.
- The committee considered a request that a recording of the AA speakers at the opening dinner of the GSC be provided to each member of the GSC and took no action.

### **Trustees Committee:**

#### Advisory Action:

- The Bylaws of The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., as amended to comply with New York State nonprofit law, be approved at the annual meeting of the members of the General Service Board in April 2015.

#### Additional Considerations:

- Reflecting on the importance of Concept XI, the committee encouraged the General Service Board and the Fellowship to identify, attract and recruit in a timely manner, a diverse, competent and qualified pool of candidates to serve as Class A (nonalcoholic), Class B (alcoholic) trustees, non-trustee directors and appointed committee members on trustee committees.

### **Finance Committee:**

#### Advisory Actions:

- Proceed with Phase I of the GSO plan to translate certain conference material into Spanish and French beginning with the 66<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. The estimated cost is \$80,000 to \$120,000. Passed 104-25.
- Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference will create a plan to translate ALL conference material and provide a progress report at the 66<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. This was passed after much discussion over several hours, and many changes to the original recommendation by the committee.
- Took no action on increasing the suggested area contribution for the Delegate expense to the Conference (currently 1,600).

#### Failed Recommendation:

- Increase the limit for annual individual contributions from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Failed 67-59). Reasons given for votes against as follows: only 20 members contributed \$3,000 in 2014; could encourage more members to contribute in basket rather than annual contribution; may make those feel less than who are unable to make that kind of contribution; could create a special class of AA members who can afford to do so.

#### **Literature Committee:**

##### Advisory Actions:

- Recommend the Trustees' Literature Committee develop literature for the AA member with mental health issues. The committee requested that a wide range of recovery experience be gathered from members with mental health issues, and from those who sponsor such members for inclusion in the literature on this topic. The committee requested a progress report be brought to the 2016 Conference Committee on Literature. Passed 99-11.  
Discussion: a) 70% of the population will experience mental health issues; b) not only for new members – helpful for those already in recovery; c) consider having a professional define mental health issues; d) this issue has been debated at the Conference for the past 3 years; e) so much mis-information in the medical field about alcoholism – huge need for professionals – should get medical input.
- Revise/Update the current pamphlets:  
“Inside AA: Understanding the Fellowship and Its Services”: A comprehensive revision to the retitled pamphlet be undertaken to better reflect the full range of AA services, and that a fully revised draft pamphlet or progress report be brought back to the 2016 GSC. Passed.  
“AA and the Gay/Lesbian Alcoholic”: Update to include a wider range of AA recovery experience from members who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and gender nonconforming, especially regarding being a newcomer and sponsorship. The committee requested that the title of the pamphlet be revised to reflect this broader scope and that a draft revised pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2016 GSC. Passed.  
“AA for the Woman”: Revise by gathering current sharing from women in AA, and suggested inclusion of stories from women in the military, single mothers, and women of diverse backgrounds. Requested that a draft pamphlet or a progress report be brought back to the 2016 GSC. Passed

##### Additional Considerations:

- Reviewed the suggestion to produce a book combining “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” with the “Twelve Concepts for World Service” and took no action. The committee noted that “The Twelve Concepts for World Service” are suitably placed in “The AA Service Manual” and are also available in a stand-alone volume. Too costly, too bulky, and not thought to inspire members to become more active in General Service.

**Other Committee Consideration:**

- ❖ Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee:
  - Review the pamphlet “The Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W., Co-Founder of A.A.” for outdated language.
- ❖ Corrections Committee:
  - Discussed the Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.) and requested the Trustees; Committee on Corrections consider the effectiveness of the criteria used in linking alcoholics behind the walls with volunteers. One specific concern was the distance requirement for participants in the C.C.S.
- ❖ Treatment Facilities/Special Needs/Accessibilities Committee:
  - Asked Trustees to consider posting content of AA literature in audio format on website aa.org.
  - Expressed appreciation for AAWS, Inc. to consider publishing “The Twelve Concepts” in ASL.
  - Suggested changing all references of “Special Needs-Accessibilities” to “Accessibilities”.

Thank you Area 55 A.A. for allowing me to represent you at the 64<sup>th</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference. My life and my love for A.A. has been deeply enriched by this experience. I still will be representing Area 55 as Delegate through the remainder of 2015, and will continue to be the best servant I am capable of. Again, thank you for all your support and for your service to this wonderful fellowship we enjoy!

Sincerely,

Nancy M, Panel 64 Delegate, Area 55 NW Ohio and Monroe County Michigan.

