

DELEGATES REPORT OF THE 61ST GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

The 61st General Service Conference was held at the Crown Plaza on Times Square in New York from May 1st through the 7th 2011. The week was filled with activities. The Panel 61 Delegates gave their Area Highlights. The Colorado delegate reported that recently volunteers asked callers who requested information about meetings if they had ever been to an A.A. meeting. If the caller hadn't, the volunteer requested if an A.A. member could take them to a meeting which increased their 12 Step calls 400%. Panel 60 Delegates gave presentations about *Diversity in A.A.*, *An Informed Group Conscience: The Voice of A.A.*, *Sponsorship*, and *A.A. in a Digital Age*.

All conference members met in small groups to discuss *How to Increase Participation in A.A. – Striving for Self-Support in All Our Affairs* as a workshop topic. I heard two really profound things during this discussion. First, A.A. is not someplace we go to and it is not something we do. A.A. is something we become a part of – it is an opportunity to give back and become a part of the greater whole. The second thing that struck me was when a young delegate said that being of service gave her the ability to walk through fear because of responsibility. I considered how much I have changed by filling the role God assigned and was consumed with gratitude for all those who have shared this journey with me. Thank you for believing in me when I didn't always have confidence in myself.

The Conference heard board reports from Ward Ewing, Chair of the General Service Board, George M., Chair of A.A.W.S. and Ken B., Chair of A.A.G.V. Ward reported about the International Convention, forums and the World Service Meeting in Mexico, that the Big Book is now translated in 61 languages, the hiring of the Grapevine Executive Editor/Publisher and A.A.W.S. staff restructuring. Ward also shared about the status of the E-Book presentation and a more detailed presentation was given by our technology consultant, Charlie Shell. Although the project is still being developed, A.A.W.S. budgeted about \$400,000 to this project to be paid over the next two years. Most of this expense will be used to change the infrastructure of A.A.'s website to accommodate the new technology. Apps are being developed for Apple and the Android and they are hoping to launch sometime this Fall. George reported about A.A.W.S. activities including publication, contributions (including on-line) and group services. He expressed concern for our future financial stability because of the effect of inflation if our literature sales and contributions remain the same. Ken reported about ad hoc committees, staff downsizing, fiscal losses and the fellowship survey. Amber E., our Grapevine Managing Editor, presented a tour through the newly designed website. A feature she was excited about was the ability to post stories that have been approved for publication but have not yet been printed. All of the board reports will be in the Final Report and I will be happy to reproduce copies if requested.

Terry Bedient, Treasurer of the General Service Board, gave a Power Point presentation about our finances and I have the presentation if you would like me to share it at your group. Basic points of the 2010 presentation:

- Contributions were \$6,408,421
- General Service Office Functional Expenses were \$8,642,112 (down 1.61% from 2009)
- This equals a cost of \$6.29 per member or \$137.45 per group.
- Group Service Activities were \$3,035,842
- While the amount of group contributions rose in 2010, the percentage of registered groups has been about the same for the last three years
- Excess revenue from literature sales was \$3,488,425
- LaVina ran over budget \$75,481 (expense incurred by the General Service Board as the result of a previous General Service Conference Advisory Action)
- Grapevine ran over budget \$399,037
- The International Convention in San Antonio netted \$844,545
- When all was said and done, the General Service Board realized \$1,625,317 to the good
- The Reserve Fund has \$15,271,820 (although only \$14,368,427 is available due to the pension and benefit fund). This equates to **11.3** months of operating expenses.
- Projections were given regarding slight additional contributions, slight additional sales and contributions and moderate marketing (engagement) for the Grapevine.

Area 56, Southwest Ohio, 2010 Contributions to the General Service Board

- \$42,846.90 Group Contributions

- \$3,320 Member Contributions
- \$1,001 Special Contribution (district, intergroup, conferences, etc.)
- \$50 Special Meeting (unregistered groups)
- Total contributions of \$47,218.26 from Area 56
- 44.1% of our 582 registered groups contributed

Sharing sessions were opportunities for conference members to voice concerns and ask questions.

Some topics brought up (these are not advisory actions, just concerns from the fellowship):

- The reports given by the two corporate boards were filled with opinions as much as fact. Delegate requested that in the future, chairs stick to the facts.
- Discussion about returning to the Crowne Plaza in the future with our financial uncertainty
- Concerns about affiliation and anonymity with the E-Publishing project
- Request for a united vision with AAWS and AAGV (one catalog, one website)
- Hope Video concerns with anonymity principle being violated
- Concerns about Grapevine and LaVina fiscal losses
- Concerns about adhering to our principles of self-support
- Number of A.A. members declining in U.S. and Canada
- Concern about not being able to review committee recommended pamphlet changes before the floor votes on them
- Process of unregistering groups who are blatantly breaking traditions
- Concerns about conflicts between the AAWS Board and the GV Board

We ended committee work on Tuesday and started Committee Reports, Discussions and voting on Committee Recommendations from Wednesday through Friday at 6:56p.m. The entire list will be printed in the Final Report and the items Area 56 discussed at our 2011 Mini-Conference are posted on our website, aaarea56.org. Here are a few you may be interested in:

- The theme for next year's conference is "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age"
- The *A.A. in Correctional Facilities* pamphlet was updated to include references to the Big Book.
- The Grapevine will be available through Apps (similar to the E-Technology program AAWS is undertaking).
- The spirituality pamphlet is still underway and clarifying wording was added: "The committee expressed support for the trustees' efforts to develop a pamphlet which reflects the wide range of spiritual experiences of A.A. members and asked that a draft pamphlet or progress report be brought to the 2012" committee. Also the adjective 'successfully' was dropped before the word 'sober'.
- A Concept 5 procedure was adopted
- The policy about actors having full faces was passed.
- The Conference will undergo an inventory for the next 3 years
- We will have a new pamphlet for Alcoholics with Special Needs
- The name of the TF/SN/A will be changed to the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities
- There will be 2 vacancy positions on the Grapevine Board

Some Committee Additional Considerations you may be interested in:

- The Finance committee asked a simple document of Self-Support/financial talking points to be posted on the web site
- That the Grapevine Board only propose balanced operating budgets to the G.S.B.
- The term "treatment facilities" be replaced with a more appropriate reference such as "Treatment Committee," "Treatment Committee Kit," "A.A. Guidelines on Treatment Committees," etc. wherever it appears in service material
- The trustees' Archives Committee develop an informational piece on basic archival preservation procedures

It was an honor and privilege to serve Area 56 and Alcoholics Anonymous at the 61st General Service Conference. Please let me know if you would like me to present a report to your home group, district or function. After all, I'm *your* Trusted Servant. Alicia R.